

Devotion for Pentecost 7

Psalm 85

Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin.

You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.

Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us!

Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people,
to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.

Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen*

Ephesians 1:1-23

Christ is the head in whom the church receives spiritual blessing

- 1) What is God's purpose in Christ Jesus?
- 2) What mystery is revealed in Christ Jesus?
- 3) What is the hope to which God calls us in Christ Jesus?

Mark 6:14-29

The death of John the baptizer

- 1) Why did Herod mistake John the baptizer for Jesus?
- 2) Why did Herod execute John even though he "feared him"?
- 3) Why would people have thought John was the prophet Elijah returned?

A Mystery Made Known

Ephesians 1:9-10

"Making known to us the mystery of His will,"

In the world a mystery is something hidden, unknown, a conspiracy or a deception. But in the scriptures a mystery is the manifestation of God's forgiveness, his mercy and loving kindness, displayed in many ways to every living creature. His compassion expressed publicly and most poignantly in the cross of Jesus. In his infinite mercy God gave Jesus to share in our humanness, and to take our place in suffering the consequences of sin on the cross that in him we would be redeemed from the control and curse of sin, so that we would live with him in peace and with one another in brotherly and sisterly kindness.

Most people when they see a spider want to step on it. We find its appearance repulsive. We fear what it might do to us. God responds to human sin and its wicked expression not by crushing us, but by redeeming us from its curse and transforming us from objects of wrath into children, dearly loved for the sake of Christ. God acts in mysterious ways in the sense that He doesn't think like us, or do what we would expect another human being to do. The mystery of God in Christ is that He does not treat us as our sins deserve, but forgives us of their iniquity and heals us of their wounds. This is a mystery of the highest level. It's not a problem to be solved. It's a revelation of divine love to be received in the heart through faith and responded to with heartfelt thanks through a life of praise to God and service to others.

“God Moves in a Mysterious Way “

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**God moves in a mysterious way. His wonders to perform.
He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.**

**Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace.
Behind a frowning providence, faith sees a smiling face.**

**His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.**

**Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His work in vain.
God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.**

**You fearful saints, fresh courage take, the clouds you so much dread,
are big with mercy and will break in blessings on your head.**

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for your powerful providence in our lives as you ensure that all things work to our good and for our eternal benefit in Christ Jesus. Bless us always to hold to the revelation of your love in Christ Jesus in the midst of things which we cannot understand. We see your glory glowing dimly, as a candle burning in a darkened room. Enlighten us by your Spirit with the light of Christ until, we see His face and behold your glory in eternity. In Jesus' Name Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Benediction

1 John 3:1

“Behold what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God.”

Bible Knowledge Quiz

- 1) Who was the woman who instigated Herod to execute John the baptizer?
- 2) Who was the woman who sat at Jesus' feet to listen to His teaching?
- 3) Who was the woman from whom Jesus cast out 7 unclean spirits?

Answers to last week's quiz

- 1) Built a replica of Jerusalem and siege works. Placed a barrier between himself and the replica. Lay on his side 390 days, cooked on dung and ate meager rations to symbolize the diet of the besieged (Ezekiel 4:1-17).
- 2) The psalmist prayed seven times a day (Psalm 119:164).
- 3) The prophet Habakkuk stationed himself on the tower of the watchpost to wait for the Lord' answer to his prayer (Habakkuk 2:1).