

DEVOTION FOR THE WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 119:57-64

You are my portion, O Lord; I have promised to obey your words.

I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise.

I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes.

I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands.

Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget your law.

At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws.

I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts.

The earth is filled with your love, O Lord; teach me your decrees.

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

Old Testament Reading: Numbers 24:1-25 *The Lord turns curse to blessing*
New Testament Reading: Acts 4:1-37 *Peter and John testify before the council*

“JESUS: THE CORNERSTONE OF FAITH & FOUNDATION OF SALVATION”

Peter and John testified to the ruling council about their faith in Jesus and the salvation that comes through faith in His name. This council was controlled by the party known as the Sadducees. There is a children’s song that suggests they were sad, because they didn’t believe in the resurrection. And so they were sad, you see! They didn’t believe in the resurrection, but when they investigated Peter and John they were more angry than sad. They were angry the disciples were teaching the people about the resurrection. They were still angry Jesus had bested them in a public debate about the resurrection. They were furious that Jesus had proven His point most powerfully, by rising from the dead.

They arrested the two apostles, locked them up for the night and waited to question them in the morning. As they waited in prison, Peter and John had time to remember. They would have remembered Jesus’ humbling of the Sadducees, as they debated scripture and the power of God in the temple. They would have remembered Jesus’ religious trial in the house of the high priest and how the Sadducees secured His death sentence the next day. Now they wanted to talk to them! This thought should have made them cower in fear! On previous occasions they had cowered in fear, but this time they were not afraid. When they were summoned they fearlessly declared that this Jesus, whom the council rejected, was both the cornerstone of faith and the foundation of salvation. They said, *“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.”*

Salvation is in no other name, because Jesus alone bore the sin of the world on the cross. Salvation is in no other name, because Jesus alone rose from the dead, the first fruits of those who believe; and testimony that God accepted His sacrifice for the sin of the world. Jesus is not a human prophet like Mohamed, or an enlightened human teacher like Buddha; He is the Eternally Begotten Son of God. He alone is the Saviour, because as God and a human, He did what only He could do; take away the sin of the world and make peace between human beings and our Creator. This is the message Peter and John shared with the Sadducees and the ruling council. This is the message of the church in all ages: that God gave Jesus for the salvation of every human soul; and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, even Sadducees!

“THROUGH JESUS’ BLOOD & MERIT” (Public Domain)

Through Jesus’ blood and merit, I am at peace with God.
What then can daunt my spirit, however dark my road?
My courage shall not fail me, for God is on my side.
Though hell itself assail me, its rage I may deride.

There’s nothing that can sever from this great love of God.
No want, no pain whatever, no famine, peril, flood.
Though thousand foes surround me, for slaughter mark His sheep.
They never shall confound me, the victory I shall reap.

For neither life’s temptation, nor death’s most trying hour.
Nor angels of high station, nor any other power.
Nor things that now are present, nor things that are to come.
Nor height, however pleasant, nor darkest depths of gloom.

Nor any creature ever shall the love of God
This ransomed sinner sever; for in my Saviour’s blood,
This love has its foundation; God hears my faithful prayer.
And long before creation, named me His child and heir.

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, you encouraged John and Peter and inspired them to faithfully and clearly testify to Jesus and the salvation that is in Him alone. Bless us also to firmly believe, more fully understand and better share the name of Jesus, in our witness to others. May we rejoice in the sharing of Jesus’ name, whether we see its effect in the birth of faith, or whether we suffer for the sake of our testimony to Him. Even as you empowered the believers in Jerusalem, bless us to speak the word of God with boldness. 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

Jeremiah 31:3

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.”