

### **Week of Trinity 3**

*First recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the weekly section of the Small Catechism. Then read the Proper and assigned Scripture reading followed by the devotion. Conclude with singing the hymn of the week.*



**Weekly Catechism section:** *What is the Benefit of This Eating And Drinking? (Luther's Small Catechism)*

**Hymn of the Week:** *In Thee Alone, O Christ My Lord (TLH 319)*

### **Monday - Introit (Psalm 25:16, 18, 1-2, 5, 15, 20)**

#### **Read Psalm 25.**

Psalm 25, which serves as the content for our *Introit*, teaches the connection between afflictions and sin. St. Paul says that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). This includes all the of the things, which accompany death. This includes all the afflictions. They are consequences, indeed God's own chastisement, because of sin. And it is necessary for us to be afflicted so that we learn to repent of our sins. As St. Paul also says in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."

So we learn from the Psalmist that when we are afflicted we should think of our sin. Therefore, our main prayer when we ask God to look upon our affliction is that he would take away that which causes death and pain. We pray that he would take away our sin. There is never a time when a Christian is not learning to repent of his sin and find his refuge in God's promise to forgive him for Jesus' sake. There is never a time when a Christian is not learning of his waywardness and his need for Christ, his true Shepherd, to bring him back by his gracious Word. There is never a time when a Christian does not learn to lean on Christ's act of atonement whereby he suffered and died to take away the world's sin and turn God's wrath away. And why? Because there is never a time when a Christian must not strive against the devil, the world, and his own sinful flesh. He must always face death and the preceding afflictions. But when he faces them in faith in God's gracious promise in Christ then he is not put to shame. So we wait on God continually, just as the Psalmist says, praying (Ps. 25:20), "O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in you." Jesus is the God of our salvation because he bore both the sin and affliction of our sin. As long as we must bear afflictions

and learn to fight against sin, our Lord remains imminently relevant and vital for us. His gospel remains at the center of our lives and the ground on which we rest even in all toil and strife.

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## **Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Micah 7:18-20)**

### ***Read Micah 7.***

Who is a God like you? This is what the prophet Micah asks. A God who pardons iniquities and turns away his wrath is a God unlike any imagination of man. Sure, there are those who imagine that God looks the other way when people sin, and they call this love and mercy. But God is just. As the prophet says, "He will subdue our iniquities." In other words, he will take possession of our punishment. He will tread it underfoot by paying what his justice demands. There is no god of man's imagination who does this, who is justly angry at sin, punishes sin, but then subdues that very punishment. He does not ignore our sins. He casts them into the depth of the sea. This involves judgment. Just as Jesus says that someone who causes someone else to sin should have a millstone tied around his neck and be thrown into the sea, it is an act of condemnation to be thrown into the sea. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, fulfilled Micah's prophecy by taking our sin upon himself.

What kind of God do we have? We have the only true God who seeks out his own and dies for them. He reveals himself in his only begotten Son who is full of grace and truth. And so he gives truth to Jacob. That is, he fulfills his promise to Jacob that he shall indeed be blessed. He gives mercy to Abraham. That is, he shows mercy to all who believe as Abraham believed. He fulfills his Word that he spoke to our fathers in the faith from days of old. He does what he says he would do. There is no other god like this. All other gods are of human invention. The true God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God who from eternity has sought us to be his own. He numbers himself among us, having assumed our flesh as his own, since he is not ashamed to call us brothers.

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## **Wednesday - Gradual (Psalm 55:22; 16; 18)**

### ***Read Psalm 55.***

Psalm 55, which is the source of our *Gradual*, is a lament of David against close companions who have betrayed him. One of David's counselors, Ahithophel, helped David's son, Absalom, lead a rebellion. David laments about this betrayal: "For it is not an enemy who taunts me — then I could

bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me — then I could hide from him. But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng." In the midst of lamenting over false brethren like Ahithophel, David takes comfort in the help and salvation of God. So we sing the songs of David, "Cast your burdens on the LORD, and he shall sustain you; I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me. He has redeemed my soul in peace."

The Pharisees and Scribes were false brethren, ridiculing Jesus for sitting with sinners. But Jesus was being a brother to them by being honest about their sin and God's judgment. He would bear their sins on the cross of Calvary. We also ought to bear with one another. This is what a brother is supposed to do. He is to rejoice when his brother repents of his sins and is restored to the faith. He isn't to be cynical toward his confession, suspicious of his intentions. Instead, you can bear a brother's burdens when you are honest about your own burdens. You can bear with his weaknesses when you are truthful about your own sinful weakness. And you can rejoice in his salvation when you take comfort in the fact that God does not count your sins against you either. Those who refuse to do this do not have faith that Jesus forgives sins. They might mouth the gospel, but they can't find joy in it. Even sincere Christians can fall into a form of this grumbling when, after hearing the gospel, they are discontent, finding something to complain about. But don't let the cares and troubles of life overwhelm you. Instead, cast your burdens on the Lord who bore your sin in his own body.

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#### **Thursday - Epistle (1 Peter 5:6-11)**

##### ***Read 1 Peter 5.***

Our battle in the Christian life is not against flesh and blood (Eph 6:12). It is against the devil, who, as St. Peter says, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Even if your house burns to the ground, you are abused physically or emotionally, or any kind of calamity comes upon you whether by natural disaster or by an enemy of the truth, your battle is spiritual. The battle is a battle of faith. The devil knows your sin. He knows that you are prone to wander. He often gets sheep to wander away after something bad happens in their lives. A sheep is eaten up by this devilish lion when he concludes that God must not really care about him. Thus Satan takes advantage of our sinful desires, and he devours those who cannot resist.

But St. Peter teaches us to resist the devil through faith. We defeat the devil by taking refuge through faith in the forgiveness of sins. Whatever our affliction might be, we learn from God's discipline that our real problem is our sin, the only weapon the devil has against us. But with the Psalmist we sing in our Introit (Ps. 25:16, 18): "Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, for I am desolate and afflicted. Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins." Christ rescues us from all evil by taking away our sins. This is the source of all our protection against this wicked generation (Gal 1:4). It is by taking refuge in our Savior from sin that we cast all of our anxieties on the God who has humbled us, showing us our sin, that he might exalt us at the proper time. As a faithful shepherd looking for his lost sheep, Christ our Savior bears with us in our battle against the devil's attacks. He cares for us as he humbles us under the mighty hand of our heavenly Father. And this discipline and care from God is something we share with our brother sheep throughout the world who also take refuge in Christ their Shepherd. So as we remain sheep dependent upon him, then our faith is strengthened, and the devil's attacks remain in vain.

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### **Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 18:1-2)**

#### ***Read Psalm 18.***

Psalm 18, which serves as the content for our *Alleluia verse*, is what David sang after God rescued him from Saul and all his enemies. We sing the first two verses: "I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer." The simple theme throughout the propers of this Sunday are that God saves the helpless. He pardons iniquities. He cares for the afflicted. He receives sinners to himself. This is a simple theme, but one that should never get old for us. Our *Alleluia* serves as a bridge between the Epistle lesson and the Gospel lesson. The Epistle, from 1 Peter 5, teaches us to be sober minded and watchful against the devil who seeks to devour us. Peter teaches us to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, casting our troubles on him. The Gospel lesson, from Luke 15, is the parable of the lost sheep and lost coin. Jesus says that there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who reaches repentance than over ninety nine who need no repentance. This is the kind of God we have, as we hear from Micah 7. He humbles us, he warns us against temptation, he cares for us. When we go astray he searches us out. And when he brings us back, he rejoices. He insists that everyone else rejoice that he has delivered his beloved children from destruction.

In Psalm 18, David describes all of what God did to save him and deliver

him. He then ends with God's promise to preserve his royal line through David. He accomplished this in Christ, the Son of David, the King of kings. God went through great lengths to save David. And this is given to us as an example, so that we would also trust in the God of mercy and compassion who goes to great lengths to save us.

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## **Saturday - Gospel (Luke 15:1-10)**

### ***Read Luke 15.***

St. Paul said (Phil 1:15,18):

Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill... What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

St. Paul gives us great comfort with these words. Even when people sneer at the gospel we have much reason to rejoice when they, in their contempt for it, nevertheless preach it. So even when the gospel is condemned we should rejoice in so far as it is being proclaimed. This is what the Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545-63) did when they condemned those who teach this pure gospel. They declare:

If anyone says that by faith alone the impious is justified, in such a way as to mean that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will, let him be anathema. (Trent, Session 6, Canon 9)

Sinful man is justified -- forgiven of all his sins -- only through faith in Jesus who made full satisfaction for our sins. None of his own works help him obtain this (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 6:9). Even though they condemned this precious gospel they nevertheless articulated it. And for this we rejoice. Therefore we also rejoice in the words of the Pharisees. With malice toward Jesus they said, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." In other words, "This man receives sinners into his favor without the movement of their own will." The sinners did nothing. Jesus received them. He died for them. He called them to faith. He covered them with his own righteousness (Rom 4:5; Gal 3:27; Is 61:10). So listen to the gospel, even if it comes out of the mouth of the Pharisees or anyone else who persecutes the true church from within or from without! Jesus receives sinners. Whether this is spoken in envy or goodwill, we have reason to rejoice.

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In Thee Alone, O Christ, My Lord

Rom. 3: 25

8. 7. 8. 7. 8. 8. 8. 4. 8.

Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ  
Johannes Schneesing, 1542, ab., asc,  
Tr., Arthur T. Russell, 1851, alt.

Allein zu dir  
Separate Print, Nürnberg, 1542  
Harm., Johann S. Bach, †1750

1 In Thee a-lone, O Christ, my Lord, My hope on earth re-  
2 My sins, O Lord, a-gainst me rise, I mourn them with con-  
3 O Lord, in mer-cy stay my heart On faith's most sure foun-

main-eth; I know Thou wilt Thine aid af-ford,  
tri-tion; Grant, thro' Thy death and sac-ri-fice,  
da-tion And to my in-most soul im-part

Naught else my soul sus-tain-eth. No strength of man, no  
To me a full re-mis-sion. Lord, show be-fore the  
Thy per-fect con-so-la-tion. Fill all my life with

earth-ly stay, Can help me in the e-vil day;  
Fa-ther's throne That Thou didst for my sins a-tone;  
love to Thee, Toward all men grant me char-i-ty;

Thou, on - ly Thou, canst aid sup - ply. To Thee I cry;  
 So shall I from my load be freed. Thy Word I plead;  
 And at the last, when comes my end, Thy suc - cor send.

On Thee I bid my heart re - ly.  
 Keep me, O Lord, each hour of need.  
 From Sa - tan's wiles my soul de - fend. A - men.