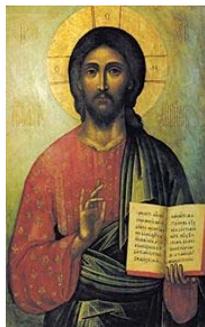


Week of Trinity 4

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: *How Can Bodily Eating and Drinking Do Such Great Things? (Luther's Small Catechism)*

Hymn of the Week: *O God, Thou Faithful God (TLH 395)*



Monday - Introit (Psalm 27:1-5)

Read Psalm 27.

The Lord is the light of my salvation; whom shall I fear? These words from our *Introit* come from Psalm 27. God is the one who is to be feared, because God is the only one who kills and makes alive. He is the only one in whom there is forgiveness. Therefore, he is feared (Ps 130:4). What if we fear God, then we should not be afraid of anything else. Of course, our sinful nature is always fretting over the troubles of life. Our enemies of sin, death, and the devil are always attacking our faith. But Psalm 27 reminds us that we are to fear God rather than our enemies. Listen to what the Psalmist says: "Do not hide Your face from me; do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation." This is the true confidence of faith and godly fear. We recognize that if God remains angry with us then we have no hope. But at the same time we recognize that he is the God of our salvation. He has been our help.

If you fear and trust God in this way, then there is no one or thing on this earth left to fear. So we sing in our *Introit* from the same Psalm: "Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war may rise against me, in this I will be confident." There is nothing to fear in this world, because God has given us salvation from sin, death, and hell. Giving his only begotten Son to die for us he has mercy on us. His Word declares this to us every Sunday and every day of our lives. So when the trials of life rise upon you, do not seek refuge in the approval of the world. Instead seek what God has promised you. Seek his house where his saints gather to hear his Word. It is here where you receive instruction and encouragement for your daily life. It is here where you hear your Lord's voice pardoning you and saving you, and

making his face shine upon you with all his favor. So even though your heart faints from the troubles of this world, God gives you confidence to seek him and wait on him through faith in his Son.

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Genesis 50:15-21)

Read Genesis 50.

Genesis 50 concludes the history of the beginning of the world and the patriarchs. God promised after the fall into sin that a Savior would be born of the woman, and he would destroy the power of the devil who keeps mankind enslaved to sin. This promise was renewed even after God destroyed most of mankind with a flood. God called Abraham, promising that through his seed all people would be blessed. He promised the same to Isaac and Jacob. Now the physical offspring of Jacob has been saved by a famine and kept alive. However, this was not before much sin, betrayal, and heartache. Joseph was one of twelve sons of Jacob, hated and envied by most of his brothers. They sold him into slavery in Egypt. They lied to their father, Jacob, allowing him to believe that Joseph was killed by a wild animal. Imagine thinking that your son was killed by a beast! This was the offspring of Abraham. Was this the seed through which all the world would be blessed? Of course not! This seed was no better than any other seed, stained with sin and destined to death.

But it is through the example of Joseph where we find the true Seed promised by God. Joseph trusts in God's protection the entire time. The Lord is with him the entire time. And when his brothers come back, after testing them to see if they were repentant, Joseph freely forgave them. Joseph was in a position of authority as ruler in Egypt. He was placed there by God to rule as God's civil servant to punish the wicked and reward the good. Yet Joseph says, "Am I in the place of God?" He empties himself of any honor, humbles himself, and forgives his brothers. This is a foreshadow of the true Seed who would be born of the line of Joseph's older brother, Judah. Jesus, the true Seed of the Woman, the true Offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, put aside his own rights, suffered insult, and entrusted himself to his Father who judges justly. He did this to show mercy on us poor sinners. He therefore teaches us to live the same way. As God worked good through the evil of those who crucified Jesus, so does he work good when we must suffer wrong in this life. May we therefore follow the example of Joseph even as we rely on the redemption of Christ!

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Wednesday - Gradual (*Psalm 79:9-10*)

Read Psalm 79.

Our *Gradual* comes from Psalm 79, a Psalm of Asaph. It was written during a time of distress and attacks from surrounding nations. This could be written by Asaph himself, whom David appointed as a musician in the temple (1 Chron 25). It is unclear what the context was for this Psalm. Perhaps it was written by the descendants of Asaph after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem (cf. Psalm 137). Either way, it was because of their sin and idolotry that God sent such attacks from the surrounding nations. The following is the section of the Psalm crying out in repentance to God (vv 80-10): "Do not remember against us our former iniquities; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake! Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Let the avenging of the outpoured blood of your servants be known among the nations before our eyes!" Our Gradual mashes it together, saying, "Make atonement for our sins, O Lord lest the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name, deliver us."

Here we learn how to deal with an evil world. When we see how our enemies rise up against us, we learn that such attacks are God's own chastisement. We therefore learn to repent and rely on God who made atonement for our sins through the death of his Son. When we consider how many sects there are within Christendom who teach falsely about who God is or even blaspheme the name of our Lord we should recognize this as God's judgment. When churches sanction the murder of the unborn or try to cushy up to the Christ-hating world, this should remind us that God's wrath is quite real, as we beg him (v 5), "How long, O Lord? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealousy burn like fire?" While our own prideful anger would thirst for carnal vengeance, we learn to yearn for God's judgment. And we learn to rely on Christ's atonement. He will sanctify his name, just as surely as he raised his Son from the dead.

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Thursday - Epistle (Romans 8:18-23)

Read Romans 8.

St. Paul teaches us that we wait for what is already ours. Earlier in the same chapter of our Epistle lesson, St. Paul says that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. In other words, we know by the witness that the Holy Spirit brings -- we know by the very gospel of Christ -- that we are presently the children of God. God has given us his Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out to him as his dear children. And yet, while we presently have this adoption and live as God's children with the confidence of faith (2 Cor 5:6-7), we also wait in hope for this adoption to be revealed.

This waiting consists of suffering. And what kind of suffering? St. Paul says a few verses prior, "If you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." This putting to death of our sinful desires is part of the suffering we as Christians must endure. This is the death we are given in our baptism in which we were buried with Christ, dead to sin, so that we might share in his life (Rom 6:3ff). While we wait for what is already ours we endure suffering, which comes from our own sin, the devil, and the world. As with faith, hope is also not seen. But the difference between faith and hope is that while faith possesses right now our salvation (Eph 2:8), hope waits for that hidden salvation to be revealed. As St. Paul says (Rom 8:25), "If we hope for what we do not see, then we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." While your sinful desires continue to rage against your faith, the devil attacks your conscience, and the world sneers at your confession, you are simply waiting for the labor pains to be over. You know that all of this God is working out for your good (Rom 8:28). In fact, the creation itself is eagerly waiting to be freed of its bondage, eagerly waiting for you, God's dear child, to be revealed. When we look at creation through the suffering of Christ, then we don't simply hear of earthquakes, rumors of wars, and other disasters. We hear the cries for God's mercy, as we eagerly wait with confidence for what Christ's death already guarantees to us.

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Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 9:4, 9)

Read Psalm 9.

Psalm 9 is where we get our *Alleluia verse*, and this is a song about God's judgment. When God judges he also redeems. He judged Egypt and rescued Israel. He judged the faithless rulers of Israel and rescued a

remnant. He bore all judgment in himself in order to redeem the whole world of sinners. And now, when his Word is rejected and mocked by scoffers he promises to bring judgment and to redeem those who seek him. So we sing: "You sat on the throne judging in righteousness; the Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed in times of trouble." This sets us up for our Gospel Lesson from Luke 6 in which Jesus teaches us to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful. He teaches us not to judge and not to condemn, promising that we will not be judged and condemned. God does not judge us according to our sins. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. He judges in righteousness, according to the righteousness of his Son by which he saves us and forgives us of all our sins.

In Romans 8, Paul speaks of this coming glory and redemption of the coming judgment. We bear our afflictions in this life, resisting sin and temptation while being separated from the world. And this cross does not compare to what God will bring to light. No matter what we must bear in this life we know that God sits on his throne judging in righteousness. It is with this confidence that we learn from Jesus to leave all judging to God and his Word, and in the meantime to be merciful and generous toward one another for Christ's sake. This is what it means to become like our teacher. It is first of all to take refuge in him in times of trouble. He is hospitable, forgiving, and merciful toward us. He is a refuge for all who are oppressed by the assaults of the devil, the world, and the sinful flesh. As we take refuge in Christ, we also learn from his example, learning to suffer with those who suffer and rejoice with those who rejoice. In the meantime, we let God be the righteous judge.

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Saturday - Gospel (Luke 6:36-42)

Read Luke 6.

Don't judge, lest you be judged. These are probably some of the favorite words our godless culture loves to tear out of context. They take this to mean that we are not allowed to say that anything is wrong. So if someone is sleeping around or shacking up instead of getting married and being chaste, then we aren't allowed to oppose it. If someone defends the right of a woman to have an abortion then we can't condemn it as murder. Remember, don't judge!

But this is nonsense. This isn't what Jesus is talking about at all. Of course God's law is very clear about sexual immorality and murder (5th and 6th Commandments). Jesus is not telling us to refrain from

confessing what God's Word clearly teaches. We would be making ourselves judges over God. He is, rather, teaching us how to live the Christian life. Don't judge lest you be judged. This is another way of saying what Jesus says just prior -- Be merciful. And how are we to be merciful? As our Father in heaven is merciful. Jesus teaches us that the Christian life is carried out under God's mercy. He cares for us in both body and soul. He has given up his own Son into death to save us from sin and hell. He continues to give us his Holy Spirit who comforts us with forgiveness and salvation through his Word and sacraments. We can therefore leave all things to his direction. If someone commits a crime against you, then let God be the judge. He has set up the authorities for this very purpose (Rom 13; 1 Pet 2). If a child is being rambunctious or rude, let God be the judge. He has set up parents to discipline their children. And if you notice an overwhelming abundance of incompetent governments and parents in this world, then, again, leave it up to God. God has shown you mercy. He is patient toward you. Therefore, Christ teaches us how we who have received mercy are to live. And by teaching you to show mercy toward your neighbor, he teaches you that you still need it. He directs you to see the plank of sin and unbelief in your own fleshly desires and find your refuge in the mercy of God.

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395

♩ God, Thou Faithful God

1 Kings 3: 5

6. 7. 6. 7. 6. 6. 6. 6.

O Gott, du frommer Gott

Johann Heermann, 1630

Tr., Catherine Winkworth, 1858, alt.

O Gott, du frommer Gott

"Neuermehrtes Gesangbuch"

Meiningen, 1693

1 O God, Thou faith-ful God, Thou Foun-tain ev - er flow - ing,
 2 Grant Thou me strength to do With read - y heart and will - ing
 3 Oh, let me nev - er speak What bounds of truth ex - ceed - eth;
 4 If dan - gers gath - er round, Still keep me calm and fear - less;

Who good and per - fect gifts In mer - cy art be - stow - ing,
 What - e'er Thou shalt com - mand, My call - ing here ful - fill - ing;
 Grant that no i - dle word From out my mouth pro - ceed - eth;
 Help me to bear the cross When life is dark and cheer - less;

Give me a health - y frame, And may I have with - in
 To do it when I ought, With all my might, and bless
 And then, when in my place I must and ought to speak,
 And let me win my foe With words and ac - tions kind.

A con - science free from blame, A soul un - hurt by sin!
 The work I thus have wrought, For Thou must give suc - cess.
 My words grant pow'r and grace Lest I of - fend the weak.
 When coun - sel I would know, Good coun - sel let me find. A - men.

5 And let me with all men,
As far as in me lieth,
In peace and friendship live.
And if Thy gift supplieth
Great wealth and honor fair,
Then this refuse me not,
That naught be mingled there
Of goods unjustly got.

6 If Thou a longer life
Hast here on earth decreed me;
If Thou through many ills
To age at length wilt lead me,
Thy patience on me shed.
Avert all sin and shame
And crown my hoary head
With honor free from blame.

7 Let me depart this life
Confiding in my Savior;
Do Thou my soul receive
That it may live forever;
And let my body have
A quiet resting-place
Within a Christian grave;
And let it sleep in peace.

8 And on that solemn Day
When all the dead are waking,
Stretch o'er my grave Thy hand,
Thyself my slumbers breaking.
Then let me hear Thy voice,
Change Thou this earthly frame,
And bid me aye rejoice
With those who love Thy name.