

Week of Reminiscere

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: *Third Article of the Creed (Luther's Small Catechism)*

Hymn of the Week: *From God Shall Naught Divide Me (TLH #393)*

Monday - Introit (Psalm 25:6, 2, 1-2, 7-8, 11)

Read Psalm 25.

Reminiscere means "Remember!" It is the first word of our *Introit*, which comes from Psalm 25:6, "Remember, O LORD, your loving kindness and your mercy, for they have been from of old." This is what the thief on the cross requested of the Lord, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." (Luke 23:42) This is the request of faith, simply that God would remember his steadfast love and mercy and thereby remember me, a poor and unworthy sinner.

This woman in our Gospel lesson is a Canaanite woman. Her ancestors were conquered and killed by the God of Israel who carried out his wrath and judgment through his armies, who pushed the surviving Canaanites as far north as Sidon (Josh 11:8). She recognizes Jesus as the God of Israel who has the power to save and condemn. She fears his wrath, and yet she embraces him and trusts in him. She knows him as the Son of David who would come to shepherd his people, Israel (Ezek 34:23-24). And through faith in her Lord, she is included among the offspring of Abraham (Gal 3:29), trusting in the same promise given to him. Through faith she sees her gracious Lord even when he seems harsh and insulting. She embraces him as her kind and merciful Savior. Even though her ancestors perished in the way when his wrath was kindled but a little, she took refuge in him and was blest (Ps 2:12). Because he who bore her sins, died for her, and rose again is true to his promise to raise her up on the last day, the power of the devil who oppressed her daughter was also conquered.

So while he seems to torture us with silence, we hold God to his promise, which he still proclaims. Though he often appears to say no to our prayers, we wait for what is good, since he gives us everything by taking away our sins. Like poor dogs who can only eat what their master feeds them, we

are nurtured by the very body and blood that earned us a seat at God's Kingdom. Though he seems, to carnal eyes, to forget, he remembers his mercy, and so he remembers us.

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Genesis 32:22-32)

Read Genesis 32.

God wants us to hold him to his promises. Like Jacob who said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me," God also has us cling to him. He teaches us through trials and afflictions that he is the only One who is to be feared just as he is the only One who saves (Ps 27:1). This is why he gave Jacob's wrestling match as an example of faith when he called the straying children of Israel back to the truth. The prophet Hosea writes:

Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept, and sought favor from him. He found him in Bethel, and there he spoke to us— That is, the Lord God of hosts. The Lord is his memorable name. So you, by the help of your God, return; observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually. (Hos 12:4-6)

Jacob feared his brother Esau. This is why God wrestled him. He did not want him to strive merely with men, but with God. He wanted Jacob to fear the One who promised him every blessing through the coming Seed, not a worldly prince. Jacob feared man, but he learned to fear God instead. While seeking to appease his brother with gifts in order to fill his face with favor, God revealed his own face to him. While Jacob was struggling with the anticipation of his brother's wrath, God had him wrestle instead with the One who promised to bring him back to his father's land. This is the land where his Seed would put away all wrath. So God spoke these words through his prophet Hosea to the children of Israel and Judah who feared the surrounding nations and their gods more than him. Don't fear them. Don't strive with them. Instead wait on God and hold him to his promises! We therefore also learn from the example of Jacob to wait on our God continually. Because as the psalmist says (25:3), none who waits on the Lord shall be put to shame. Whether it is Jacob, the woman with a demon possessed daughter, or any poor Christian enduring the spiritual attacks from the devil, the world, and his own sinful flesh, those who hold God to his promises will not be put to shame.

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Wednesday - Gradual (Psalm 25:17-18)

Read Psalm 25 again.

The *Gradual* comes from Psalm 25 just as the *Introit* does. As we move through the lessons from Holy Scripture, beginning with Moses' account of Jacob wrestling with God and moving onto St. Paul's admonition to walk in sanctification and purity, the *Gradual* teaches us that the forgiveness of sins is central to our entire life under the cross of Christ. As we live under the cross we must fight against our sinful nature. We must bear the insults of a world that does not know Christ. We must bear the pressures of the devil who tempts us to join the world and forsake Christ. But we learn to wrestle with God as Jacob did by learning how to pray from Psalm 25. And we learn that the root of all of our afflictions, the center of all of our enemies, is sin. So we sing to God: "The troubles of my heart have enlarged; bring me out of my distresses! Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins."

This truly is how God delivers us from all of our afflictions. It is essentially what Jacob was asking for when he prayed to God to bless him. He feared his brother with whom he was not reconciled, but God reconciled Jacob to himself by taking away his sins. This is precisely what we are praying for when we ask God to keep us holy and undefiled from the filth of this world. He rescues us from the filth of sin by forgiving us for Christ's sake. This is the heart what the Canaanite woman prayed for when she asked Christ to heal her demon possessed daughter. The power of the devil is sin. You who think of sin but lightly, thinking that it is a minor affair, consider this woman's prayer. Her daughter was under the control of a demon. Is this not what it is to be ruled by sin? So you see that the forgiveness of sins is no small thing. It is the casting out of demons. It is won by the blood of Christ. And it is what our faith clings to throughout our lives. Throughout the gradation of the Christian life, in growth as well as in failures, the forgiveness of sin in Christ Jesus remains our solid foundation. By it we can bear whatever God places on us, because we know his favor in Christ.

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Thursday - Epistle (*1 Thessalonians 4:1-7*)

Read 1 Thessalonians 4.

The world desensitizes the conscience. This is something that should concern us. It is difficult to listen to the radio without at least some kind of sexual innuendo, and the other forms of media are much worse. Meanwhile, cohabitation among couples has become the norm. Sex was

divorced from procreation, and now it has been divorced from marriage. The world is increasingly obsessed with the obscene. And no matter how much he flaunts his generosity, man's heart is still greedy. By a show of right, sinful man is an expert at figuring out how to give less to his neighbor in need. Now, of course it is impossible for us to separate ourselves from the world entirely (1 Cor 10:5), but we should be aware of the will of the world. And then we should consider what the will of God is: our sanctification.

This means that God has set us apart. He has claimed us as his own peculiar people. Through faith our hearts are purified by the blood of Christ (Acts 15:9), and we are counted as clean by God. So if God has made us his own temple (1 Cor 6:15ff), then this is our identity. Therefore, refusing to be conformed to the world is not just a moral battle or culture war. It is a spiritual battle of your heart and mind. When a young couple avoid defiling the marriage bed and instead wait until they are married, they are not just obeying some random rule that Christians are supposed to obey. They are recognizing that they have not been called to impurity but in holiness. When a Christian does not try to overcharge or get out of helping his neighbor with his own goods, he is not just showing generosity; he is showing that he does not belong to a cheap and unfaithful god, but to the generous Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who forgives us our sins and clothes us with steadfast love and mercy. As we grow in our calling in Christ we learn to abhor what is evil and hold fast to what is good. This is all part of sanctification, being purified by fire as we learn to fight temptation. So even as St. Paul would warn us of God's wrath he also reminds us of what kind of a calling by which we have been called.

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Friday - Verse (Psalm 106:1-4)

Read Psalm 106.

To keep justice and do righteousness is not merely doing outwardly good things. It is, rather, to guard God's Word with all your heart and to rejoice in it with the realization that it is impossible to sing of all his wondrous deeds. It is to give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever. And it is to ask God to remember his favor and to visit you with his salvation. Now, don't misunderstand this. Doing righteousness and keeping justice doesn't mean that you simply remember the right answers about what the gospel is while, in the meantime, you just do whatever your sinful, lazy flesh wants to do. No, to keep justice and do righteousness is both internal and external. To keep justice is to guard by faith what is good, to hold God to his Word, just as the Canaanite

woman did with Jesus. To do righteousness is to act on this in your daily duties in life.

But what does this doing righteousness look like? It doesn't always look all that special. In fact, it is often filled with toil. A father does righteousness when he disciplines his children, battling against his prideful flesh that only wants to serve itself. A worker does righteousness when he serves an overbearing boss, struggling against the resentment of his heart. A pastor does righteousness when he cares for his parishioners, praying against the frustrations that overwhelm his conscience. You do righteousness when speaking well of your brother, learning to forgive him in your heart. Doing righteousness always includes the inward keeping of God's justice. And since we live in the flesh and the world, this doing of righteousness must suffer at the hands of the devil. Jacob does righteousness when he battles the Man in the wilderness, guarding God's promise to bless him. The Canaanite woman does righteousness in asking Christ for mercy for her daughter, keeping his mercy close to her heart despite his harsh words. God's justice was fulfilled in Christ's saving death. So to do one's duty while trusting this gospel is to do righteousness while keeping justice. In other words, it is to give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever. Amen.

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Saturday - Gospel (Matthew 15:21-28)

Read Matthew 15.

The Canaanite woman crying after Jesus for mercy was truly unexpected. The Canaanites were far from worshipers of the true God. Almost 1,400 years prior to this, God led Joshua and all Israel on their conquest of the land of Canaan. God commanded them to kill all the Canaanites. This was God's judgment against them for their unbelief. A remnant of Canaanites fled up to the region of Phoenicia in Tyre and Sidon by the Mediterranean Sea. About five hundred years later, the two most wicked queens, Jezebel and her daughter Athaliah, descended from that area, causing the people of Israel to worship Baal. Athaliah even tried to wipe out the entire royal line of David leading to Christ. She was literally an anti-Christ, setting herself up in the temple of God above all worship. Then, by the time Jesus appeared, the Canaanites from Phoenicia were worldly cosmopolitans of Israel's occupiers, the Roman Empire. And she is coming to Jesus. Plenty of folks claim to believe in Jesus, but then they endorse all sorts of worldly perversions, adultery, murder, and false worship. Even if we can see that they are being cruel, we should

understand why the disciples were a bit skeptical. And Jesus seemed to have the same cold reaction as they did.

But Jesus didn't send her away. Instead, after remaining silent, he spoke harshly to her. "I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Jesus was testing this woman's faith with words that are too harsh for anyone to handle. A faith that relies only on human feelings and sentiments could never survive these testing words of Christ. People have given up the faith over much milder encounters. This woman's daughter is literally being controlled by a demon. But her faith is not simply looking for an understanding shoulder to cry on. Her faith clings to the only one who can help her. She doesn't care if Jesus calls her a dog. She confesses that faith is simply that which receives from the hand of God through his promise in his Son. Such faith, even if it only grasps the crumbs of God's mercy, is strong as it relies on the tested cornerstone of the crucified Christ.

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Sanctification

(The Christian Life)

CONSECRATION

393

From God Shall Naught Divide Me

Josh. 24: 16

Von Gott will ich nicht lassen

Ludwig Helmbold, 1653, cento

Tr., Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.

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

Von Gott will ich nicht lassen

"Christliche Tischgesänge"

Erfurt, 1572

1 From God shall naught di - vide me, For He is true for aye
2 When man's help and af - fec - tion Shall un - a - vail - ing prove,
3 God shall be my Re - li - ance In sor - row's dark - est night;

And on my path will guide me, Who else should of - ten stray.
God grants me His pro - tec - tion And shows His pow'r and love.
Its dread I bid de - fi - ance When He is at my right.

His right hand hold - eth me; For me He tru - ly car - eth,
He helps in ev - 'ry need, From sin and shame re - deems me,
I un - to Him com - mend My bod - y, soul, and spir - it -

My bur - dens ev - er bear - eth Wher - ev - er I may be.
From chains and bonds re - claims me, Yea, e'en from death I'm freed.
They are His own by mer - it - All's well then at the end. A - men.

4 Oh, praise Him, for He never
Forgets our daily need;
Oh, blest the hour whenever
To Him our thoughts can speed;
Yea, all the time we spend
Without Him is but wasted,
Till we His joy have tasted,
The joy that hath no end.

5 Yea, when the world shall perish
With all its pride and power,
Whatever worldlings cherish
Shall vanish in that hour.

But though in death they make
The deepest grave our cover,
When there our sleep is over,
Our God will us awake.

6 What though I here must suffer
Distress and trials sore,
I merit ways still rougher;
And yet there is in store
For me eternal bliss,
Yea, pleasures without measure,
Since Christ is now my Treasure
And shall be evermore.