

Week of Trinity 20

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: *First Petition*
(*Luther's Small Catechism*)

Hymn of the Week: *Soul Adorn Yourself With Gladness (TLH 305)*

Monday - Introit (Prayer of Azariah 1:4, 7, 20, 19; Psalm 48:1, 9-11) **Read Daniel 3.**

Our *Introit* comes the apocryphal *Prayer of Azariah*, which is included in the Greek translation of the book of Daniel 3. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, whose names were changed by the king of Babylon to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, were servants in the court of the king with Daniel. They refused to bow down to worship the golden image of the king. They were therefore thrown into the fiery furnace. They were, however, saved by the Son of God himself who appeared in the furnace with them, not allowing even their hairs to be singed. We recite these portions of the prayer of Azariah, or Abed-Nego: "The Lord is righteous in all His works toward us, for we have not obeyed His commandments. Glorify Your Name, O Lord: and deal with us according to Your great mercy." This is a wonderful confession of God's mercy, which he extends to us apart from any of our own unworthy merits.

We continue with Psalm 48, which again extols God for his mercy toward his people. His right hand is full of righteousness. This is his Son Jesus Christ, who fulfilled righteousness for us poor sinners and now sits at the right hand of the Father pleading for us. This is the feast he has prepared for us, and he invites us all to partake of his righteousness freely. We pray that we would not treat it lightly, but that we would always be mindful of his loving kindnesses toward us.

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Isaiah 55:1-9) **Read Isaiah 55.**

Our Old Testament lesson comes from Isaiah 55 in which the thoughts and ways of God are compared to the thoughts and ways of men. As far as the heavens are above the earth, so far are God's ways from our ways

and God's thoughts from our thoughts. This is true, and it is crucial for us to understand. It is what we may call the fear of God. A child is told by him mom to clean his room. He quickly learns not to ask why. He respects his mother and therefore doesn't question her.

But God does not want us to remain as little children who thoughtlessly obey a list of demands, who must be driven by bit and bridle like a donkey. No, God desires us to come and eat at his table, to have fellowship with him, to pay without money, without our own merits, but only with his divine grace and favor. He wants the wicked to repent and find peace and pardon in God's promise. It is in this context that Isaiah says that God's thoughts and ways are far above our thoughts and ways. Our human reason cannot fathom the depth or height of God's mercy in Christ. In fact, human reason calls it foolishness that God would offer up his only begotten Son into death to save us who were his enemies. Sure, natural man might be moved by the theme of self-sacrifice. The outward aesthetics and pomp of religion is attractive to people. And yet, God does not see only the outward apparel. He sees the hidden adorning of the heart. He sees faith and every fruit that proceeds from faith. This faith is the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness. Only God can see it. He reveals the true fruits that come forth from it. Human reason will always minimize this great gift of God, treating it as nothing more than some outward ceremony or human tradition. But faith clings to what is high above human reason. Faith clings to the true mercy of God in Christ. Faith therefore eats and drinks the good food of Christ's righteousness at the banquet of the blessed drawn by God's Word from all nations. Human reason cannot ponder this. But the righteous shall live by faith, trusting that as far as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him, and so much has he pardoned their sins (Ps 103:10-12).

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Wednesday - Gradual (145:15-16)

Read Psalm 145.

Those who are familiar with one of our common table prayers would recognize our *Gradual* taken from Psalm 145:

The eyes of all look expectantly to You,
And You give them their food in due season.
You open Your hand
And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

This is a fitting verse for this week's theme. God has prepared everything for us in his Son, just as he provides for every one of our earthly needs in due time. He is generous in all he does. This is a common theme we observe throughout the church year. In the second week after Trinity we hear of a similar parable of Jesus in Luke 14, which shows how God's gracious invitation continues to call people to faith even after many reject it. This week's Gospel lesson is Jesus' parable in Matthew 22, a similar parable of a feast. People despise it. Yet here, we have a warning even of those who make it into the feast. A man came in without the wedding garment. He represents those who are in the church who do not actually believe what the Word of God says. They treat the bread of life lightly as a common thing to be despised. Our *Gradual* reminds us that everything is provided by God, even the desires of the smallest bugs. So don't despise his Word and sacraments! He who provides for everything you need in your body has also prepared eternal food for your soul.

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Thursday - Epistle (Ephesians 5:15-21)

Read Ephesians 5.

What does it mean to walk not as a fool but as wise? It means to listen to wise counsel. And this requires you to admit that you are not wise in yourself, but that you need to learn wisdom from someone else. You must first recognize the fool within before you can receive the Wisdom from without. This is how we are to approach God's Word. And it is in this way that we walk as wise, understanding the will of God. It is God's will that we be fools to the world's standard of wisdom, repenting of our unbelieving reason, which we learn from the world.

The wisdom of the world is foolishness to God (1 Cor 3:19). And why is this? It is because the wisdom of this world takes the best things and uses them in the worst way. They take good gifts from God, like family, community, and material blessings, and they turn them into gods. They even take good religion and turn it into idolatry (Isaiah 1:14). A university student learns how to study. He learns discipline and other good habits. But he thereby sees himself as wise in his own eyes, rejecting his first love given to him in his baptism. He is a sophomore, a wise fool, amounting to nothing but going to hell smart. But those who are wise in Christ understand what the will of the Lord is. They are humbled by their own unworthiness, fearing God's righteous judgments. They are therefore filled with the Spirit of life when they hear the Word

of Christ crucified for them. While the world calls them fools, while they might suffer the loss of all things, they have everything they need when they talk about God's Word together, singing hymns which teach them the faith. They each submit to their given station in life out of fear of God, because the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10). They therefore increase in learning (Prov 1:5).

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Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 130:1-2)

Read Psalm 130.

Our *Alleluia verse* is from Psalm 130, and it prepares us for our Gospel lesson in a very appropriate way. Our Gospel lesson is a warning against despising God's invitation in his Word and Sacraments. He has prepared all things needful for our soul's salvation, sending his Son into the flesh to die for us, and continuing to nurture us with his Word, his body, and his blood. How should we approach such worship of God? Follow the example of David who writes: "Out of the depths I have cried to you, O LORD! Lord, hear my voice!"

These are the words of one who hungers and thirsts for what God has prepared. He cries from the depths of his soul, recognizing his sin, and pleading for the only thing that can truly satisfy his soul. God opens his hands and satisfies the desires of every living thing. He who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, yearning for the constant assurance of God's favor in Jesus Christ, is satisfied by the meal to which God invites him. He is clothed in the mercy of Christ. And he finds forgiveness in no one else, since the Lord alone is to be feared.

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Saturday - Gospel (Matthew 22:1-14)

Read Matthew 22.

Jesus teaches us two things about God. First, God is merciful. Second, God will not be mocked. In mercy, he chose Israel as his own people, calling them into his kingdom. But many went on to live as if God didn't exist, following the popular fads of the culture by sacrificing in the high places rather than at the temple. They acted as if their own expressions of worship were good enough, that their own planting and trading brought them their daily bread. But there were those who were much more

religious. Like king Joash of Judah, they took the temple stuff seriously. But they were quick to throw the prophets under the bus when they preached what was unpopular (2 Chron 24). God's vengeance was fierce against them. Yet, despite their unbelief, he was still faithful (Rom 3:4). In fact, such rejection was how God would fulfill his mercy on all sinners. His Son, clothed in our flesh and blood, sealed the invitation to the wedding feast with his own bitter suffering and death. So God called even more people to his feast, inviting all nations through the preaching of his gospel.

And still, there are those who do not bear fruits of repentance. They hear about Jesus' death and resurrection but treat it as mere knowledge of history. They don't depend on this precious gospel. They keep their membership and boast of their confirmation. But they treat the righteousness of Jesus as a letterman jacket that shows they are part of the club, rather than armor against all sin and guilt. Sure, they don't completely ignore the church. They don't kill the messenger. They just care more about the tent than they do of God's Word (Heb 13:10). Thus Jesus teaches that these complacent fools are treated the harshest of them all. They are bound hand and foot and thrown into outer darkness. God will not be mocked by apathy. So we learn from our Lord to repent in true fear of him. And humbled under his mighty hand, we find that he who calls us is very near to us. Though all men be liars, God remains faithful to his Word. So seek him while he may be found, and call on him while he is near.

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Soul, Adorn Thyself with Gladness

Rev. 19 : 8

Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele

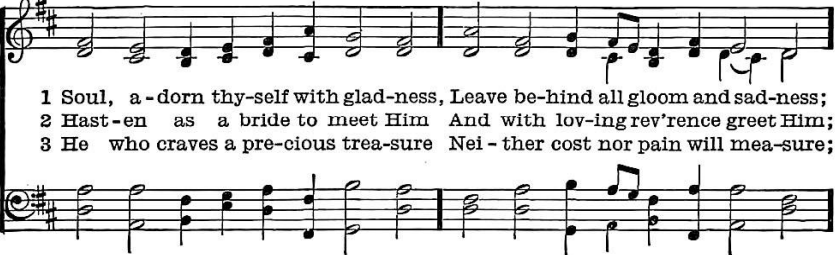
Johann Franck, 1649

Tr., Catherine Winkworth, 1853, alt.

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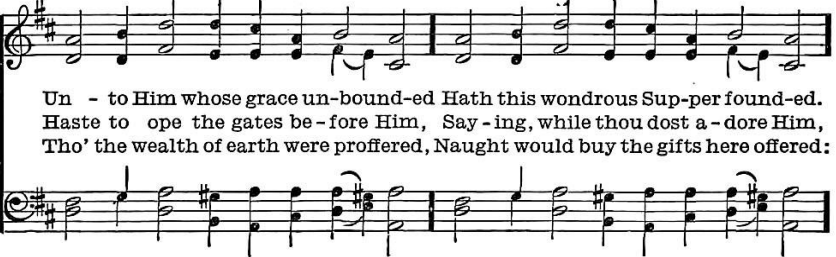
Johann Crüger, 1649



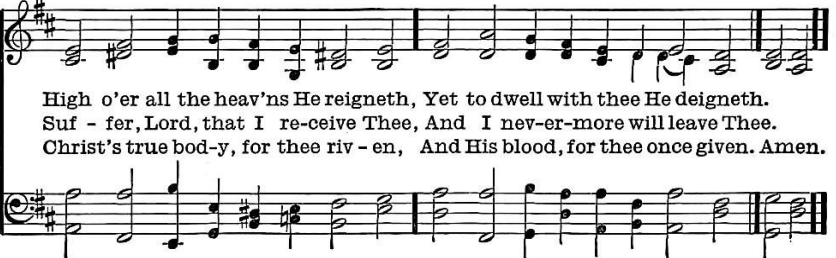
1 Soul, a - dorn thy-self with glad-ness, Leave be-hind all gloom and sad-ness;
 2 Hast-en as a bride to meet Him And with lov-ing rev'rence greet Him;
 3 He who craves a pre-cious trea-sure Nei-ther cost nor pain will mea-sure;



Come in - to the day-light's splendor, There with joy thy prais-es ren-der
 For with words of life im-mor-tal Now He knock-eth at thy por-tal.
 But the price-less gifts of heav-en God to us hath free-ly giv-en.



Un - to Him whose grace un-bound-ed Hath this wondrous Sup-per found-ed.
 Haste to ope the gates be-fore Him, Say-ing, while thou dost a-dore Him,
 Tho' the wealth of earth were proffered, Naught would buy the gifts here offered:



High o'er all the heav'ns He reigneth, Yet to dwell with thee He deigneth.
 Suf-fer, Lord, that I re-ceive Thee, And I nev-er-more will leave Thee.
 Christ's true bod-y, for thee riv-en, And His blood, for thee once given. Amen.

- 4 Ah, how hungers all my spirit
For the love I do not merit!
Oft have I, with sighs fast thronging,
Thought upon this food with longing,
In the battle well-nigh worsted,
For this cup of life have thirsted,
For the Friend who here invites us
And to God Himself unites us.
- 5 In my heart I find ascending
Holy awe, with rapture blending,
As this mystery I ponder,
Filling all my soul with wonder,
Bearing witness at this hour
Of the greatness of God's power;
Far beyond all human telling
Is the power within Him dwelling.
- 6 Human reason, though it ponder,
Cannot fathom this great wonder
That Christ's body e'er remaineth
Though it countless souls sustaineth
And that He His blood is giving
With the wine we are receiving.
These great mysteries unsounded
Are by God alone expounded.
- 7 Jesus, Sun of Life, my Splendor,
Jesus, Thou my Friend most tender,
Jesus, Joy of my desiring,
Fount of life, my soul inspiring —
At Thy feet I cry, my Maker,
Let me be a fit partaker
Of this blessed food from heaven,
For our good, Thy glory, given.
- 8 Lord, by love and mercy driven
Thou hast left Thy throne in heaven
On the cross for me to languish
And to die in bitter anguish,
To forego all joy and gladness
And to shed Thy blood in sadness.
By this blood redeemed and living,
Lord, I praise Thee with thanksgiving.
- 9 Jesus, Bread of Life, I pray Thee,
Let me gladly here obey Thee.
By Thy love I am invited,
Be Thy love with love requited;
From this Supper let me measure,
Lord, how vast and deep love's treasure.
Through the gifts Thou here dost give me
As Thy guest in heaven receive me.