

HIGHER THINGS REFLECTIONS



TRANSFIGURATION AND PRE-LENT

FEBRUARY 10 - MARCH 5, 2019

2019 Reflections

Transfiguration and Pre-Lent

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A Short Form for Daily Reflection

Adapted from Luther's Small Catechism

Make the sign of the holy cross and say

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Read the Psalm for the Day (A table of daily psalms can be found in Lutheran Service Book, page 304).

Read "Today's Reading" if there is one listed.

Read the Daily Lectionary selections.

Read the Reflection for the Day.

Say the Apostles' Creed.

Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Pray one of these little prayers:

In the Morning:

I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray Thee to keep me this day also from sin and all evil, that all my doings and life may please Thee. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.

In the Evening:

I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast graciously kept me this day, and I pray Thee to forgive me all my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.

In the morning go to your work with joy, singing a hymn, as the Ten Commandments, or what your devotion may suggest. If it is evening then go to sleep promptly and cheerfully.

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

February 10, 2019

Today's Reading: Matthew 17:1-9

Daily Lectionary: Job 6:14-30; John 3:22-4:6

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." (Matthew 17:5-9)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" Here is the answer to the question, "What is God like?" We beheld His glory as the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth, and the height of that glory was the cross. God became man, went to the cross, and the agony of the hell that is sin's punishment. Jesus died for the ungodly. He died for those afraid of God and fleeing from God. He died for sinners. He died for you.

There is no greater love imaginable, and that is what God is like: abundant grace. There is nothing lovable about you as sinners, but God loves you in this way—He died for your sin so that your sin might be set aside, forgiven, and you may be made God's own children. When sin, which puts you in the wrong with God, is answered for and forgiven by His beloved Son, your guilt and dreadful fear before God is gone. Forgiven, you are no longer afraid of God. Jesus gives us the answer to the question of what God is like. He shows us God is holy and just, kind and forgiving. Because of His dying on the cross, your sins can no more drag you fearfully from God but are forgiven and you, washed white in the blood of the Lamb, stand before God as His glad children and call Him, "Abba, Father."

God has made Himself known to you. He has expressed Himself in Jesus of Nazareth, His beloved Son. He has chosen to be available through the things of our human world, through words, and water, and bread and wine. These are where He has chosen to be found. Hear it. Believe it. Receive it. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

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. (Through Jesus' Blood and Merit, LSB 746:1)

Monday of the Week of Transfiguration

February 11, 2019

Today's Reading: Exodus 3:1-14

Daily Lectionary: Job 7:1-21; John 4:7-26

Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:13-14)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. There is no one like God. Moses tries to fight this—to argue for more information. He wants more control over his future, and over God. But it gets him nowhere. God can't be brought to heel.

We don't teach Him. We don't teach ourselves what is good and what is evil. Instead, as Moses learned, we surrender ourselves to Him. He will lead us in the way that is pleasing to Him. Things must go, not the way we think or feel they should, but according to His understanding. Moses returned to Egypt with God's Spirit and Word. You have the same treasure poured over you.

Use your Baptism. Drown yourself—your lack of understanding about sin, guilt, grace, God's agony, forgiveness, and so on—and He will give you understanding. You don't understand and you don't know the way you should go. Like Moses, who was sent back to Egypt and didn't know how it was going to go for him, you, too, must yield to God's knowledge. He knows how and in what way you will reach the right goal.

This is the way of the Cross. You can't find it. He must lead you like a blind man. Not you, not Moses, not anybody in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth can rescue you from what's coming. Only God's Spirit and Word will teach you the way you must go. You don't follow your works or imagination. You don't choose the way you go. You don't choose the afflictions that fall on you. Surrender yourself to the LORD, give up on yourself, and He will be your hiding place. He will protect you from trouble. He will move protectively around you with songs of deliverance as He does for you every day. His mercies are new every morning. He will never leave you or forsake you. You are His, His own, and He cannot deny Himself. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

Lord, give us faith to walk where You are sending, On paths unmarked, eyes blind as to their ending; Not knowing where we go, but that You lead us—With grace precede us. (Saints, See the Cloud of Witnesses, LSB 667:5)

Tuesday of the Week of Transfiguration

February 12, 2019

Today's Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Daily Lectionary: Job 8:1-22; John 4:27-45

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:17-19)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Before God, no one is guiltless. Everybody is guilty, especially those who do good works imagining that in this way they can escape from the causes of their guilt. No one can rescue himself from guilt. Therefore, blessed are those whom God forgives freely by grace, not those who are sinless or believe they can work their way out of guilt. But who are they?

No one is sinless. Even though we may not see sin at work in us or we try to cover it up so others can't see it, God clearly sees it. Your whole history is in a strand of your hair. The details of your fingernails explain you. The lining of your stomach is a document. The calluses on your hand tell all your secrets. Your teeth give you away. Your accent. The wrinkles around your mouth and eyes. Everything you do shows your hand. You are a sinner. A hopeless case. Things will never get better for you. On your own you're unable to desire or pursue what God calls "good." There is only One who is good: God. There is only One whose work is good: Jesus Christ. He alone is God—good and righteous and loving.

Blessed are you then when God covers your sin by the blood of the Lamb. He doesn't see, doesn't remember, doesn't want to know about your sin now, but completely forgives by grace. You don't cover, forgive, or forget your sins. You look at, recognize, remember, and judge them for what they are: the things that you fear, love, and trust more than God. You understand the truth about the things we consider the very best in ourselves: that these are the things God considers most damnable. So you bring them to Him. You don't hide and cover your sin. You confess it and God covers and washes it away with the precious blood of Christ. By His blood God forgives you and makes you acceptable to Him. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, Takes all our sins away; A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they. (Not All the Blood of Beasts, LSB 431:2)

Wednesday of the Week of Transfiguration

February 13, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 9:1-35; John 4:46-54

“..who has redeemed me a lost and condemn person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil.” (Small Catechism: The Creed, Second Article, Part 2)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. To be “redeemed” is to be “bought back.” You have been bought back! You had to be bought back. That can’t go without being said. You may not have ever felt that way. You may not think you are completely evil. But you were. On your own, you were and are lost. You were condemned by God.

We don’t really want to be bought back. We like to live in our sins. We want to do them. They are the sick chains that we wear around our necks. It’s why we do them daily and much.

But the Lord still buys you back. That’s what it means that He is the Lord. He’s the One who redeems you. He pays for your sins with His holy life. He is punished in your place. He dies so that your death would be swallowed up in His death.

Jesus didn’t just die for you. He rose for you, too! He lives, now, for you. All your life—your redemption—is connected with His resurrection. As surely as He lives, you live, too.

You are His. You are! It’s not believable. It seems crazy. But you are God’s own child. You didn’t buy it. You didn’t earn it with what you do. No, you are who you are and you are worth what you are worth because He pays His life for you.

You live now because He lives. You are holy because He is holy. You are righteous because He is righteous. You are a good works machine by faith because He is a good works machine for you. You do God-pleasing things. He’s doing them through you for others.

Death doesn’t own you anymore. The devil can’t touch you—He can try but He has to get through Jesus first. And that’s not going to happen, not after Easter. Your sins can never damn you. They died with Him. You live. You will live forever and ever, for you have been redeemed with the holy, precious blood of Christ. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

Word eternal, throned on high, Word that brought to life creation, Word that came from heav’n to die, Crucified for our salvation, Saving Word, the world restoring, Speak to us, Your love outpouring. (Word of God, Come Down on Earth, LSB 545:2)

Thursday of the Week of Transfiguration

February 14, 2019

Today's Reading: Exodus 34:29-35

Daily Lectionary: Job 10:1-22; John 5:1-18

And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. (Exodus 34:33)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Have you ever had something stuck in your teeth and you didn't know it? Or a pen mark on your face, but didn't realize it? It can be embarrassing. Not for you, but for those who notice it. If it weren't, they wouldn't be shy about telling you that you had something in your teeth or on your face, right? Hopefully, someone cares about you enough to let you know.

Moses didn't know that the skin of his face was shining. He had been up on Mt. Sinai, speaking with God. When he came back down to talk to the people, his face was shining. But he couldn't wash it off. His face was shining because he was in the presence of God. The people couldn't take it. They did not want to look Moses in the face. Why? Because it was embarrassing. Not for Moses, but for them. They knew of their sinfulness, and even just the residual effect of speaking with God was too much for them. When Moses was done speaking, he put a veil over his face so that they would not have to look at it. Moses would only remove it when he went in to speak to God, and when he would then tell the people what God had said. Otherwise, he stayed veiled.

If Moses, who just simply spoke with God, had the consequence of a shining face, what do you think Jesus looked like when He was born? You would think that His face and body must have been glowing continually. That would make sense. But that's not what happened. At the Mount of Transfiguration, His face shone. But only then. Why? Because like Moses, Jesus put on a veil. Unlike Moses, it wasn't a veil of cloth—it was our flesh. Jesus humbled himself. Paul writes in Philippians, "Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Why did Jesus veil Himself in our flesh? So that He could go to the cross and die in your place, paying for your sinful flesh. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

Remember, Lord of life and grace, How once, to save our fallen race, You put our human vesture on And came to us as Mary's son. Alleluia! (O Savior of Our Fallen Race, LSB 403:3)

Friday of the Week of Transfiguration

February 15, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 11:1-20; John 5:19-29

Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? (Job 11:7-8)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Poor guy! When we read through the account of Job, it's hard not to cringe at calamity after calamity that comes upon him: devastating loss of loved ones, wealth, health, reputation. And to top it off, his closest friends were the worst sort of folks to have around when going through a crisis. Zophar, one such "friend," thinks he's encouraging Job in Chapter 11 by telling him "You deserve worse!" Huh?

From a certain point of view that's true. After all, we are—*all* of us—sinners, and that includes a "righteous man" like Job. And as such, we rightly deserve the wrath of a holy God. We deserve worse. But does that bring comfort amidst trials? Not so much. Does that strengthen faith? Um...no. There's a time and place for that kind of counsel and this definitely wasn't the time. So what do we do with Zophar's question? What *can* we know?

We can know the deep things of God through Jesus Christ, His Son! We know through Christ that God loves us, that He took on flesh, lived a perfect life and died a perfect death to satisfy the wrath we deserved. We deserve worse; Jesus took upon Himself the WORST. And then He rose again on the Third Day!

In addition, we also know that Jesus still is our advocate. He is the High Priest who is ever at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us. And knowing that He, as our High Priest, sympathizes with our weaknesses, when we face the trials of this life, we can be confident as we approach the throne of GRACE in time of need (Hebrews 4:15-16). That is true comfort.

Eight chapters later, Job himself declares that *he* knows something indeed: "I know that my Redeemer lives and at the last He will stand upon the earth." And so He has, for Job and for you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

Since we have a priest who suffered, Knowing weakness, tears, and pain, Who like us was tried and tempted, Unlike us, without a stain—Since He shared our lowly place, Let us boldly seek His grace. Love's example, hope's attraction, Faith's beginning and its end, Pioneer of our salvation, Mighty advocate and friend; Jesus, high in glory raised, Our ascended Lord be praised! (Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus, LSB 529:2, 4)

Saturday of the Week of Transfiguration

February 16, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 12:1-6, 12-25; John 5:30-47

I love you, O Lord, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. (Psalm 18:1-2a from the Introit for Septuagesima)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. A good, sturdy snow fort is a necessity in a neighborhood snowball fight. As long as you have a place to retreat to for protection, you are safe. The problem is that it's awfully hard to make a good, sturdy snow fort. Big brothers and big sisters can find weaknesses and expose them, and soon, your fort is demolished and you are running for real cover. Where do you run? You run to a fortress; you run to your house. You are only safe once you are inside under the protection of mom and dad.

Our problem is that we often think we can build our own fortresses for protection. We trust in our own wisdom. Paul writes in Ephesians that we are constantly under attack—not from big brothers with snowballs, but from the devil and his "flaming darts." He writes, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Satan is smart—not in a wisdom-of-God sort of way, but in that he knows where to attack you. He's worse than the big sister who knows the weakness in your fort. He knows the weakness of your flesh and the weakness of the world. Peter tells us that Satan prowls around like a lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). So what can you do? You can take refuge in God. He is your fortress. He covers you in the whole armor of God: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6).

Left by yourself, you are an easy target. In Christ, your fortress, you are not. In Christ, your sins are paid for. The blood of Christ covers you. We pray with the psalmist, "I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer." In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon; He helps us free from every need That hath us now o'ertaken. The old evil foe Now means deadly woe; Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight; On earth is not his equal. (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, LSB 656:1)

Septuagesima

February 17, 2019

Today's Reading: Matthew 20:1-16

Daily Lectionary: Job 13:1-12; John 6:1-21

And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" (Matthew 20:6)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. The Lord calls all sorts into His kingdom: the sinners, the tax collectors. This is just how the Lord works. It has been this way from father Adam until the present day. From the moment Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord has been seeking to draw sinful man to Himself. Christ claims us as His own and surely pulls us out from under the power of the devil. How does He do this? He calls us with a word. For Adam and Eve it was the word of promise: "I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15).

So it was in the Old Testament: more promises given, until the time when the Promised One, the Son of God, came and took on our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. Yet the Word still goes out. Jesus sends the Twelve, and they in turn send out more men. And so now you have the Word placed into your ears by your pastor. Still the Word of Christ comes to you. Calling you to Him. Calling you from your sins. Calling you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The Lord continues to call. From the early morning hours of this world until the final trumpet call, the Lord is calling both young and old to rest, but above all those souls who are distressed. So it is with you. From your infancy Christ has called you, calling you His own in Baptism. By His Word read, preached, and absolved over you He continues to call, and He calls you to partake of His Body and Blood for your forgiveness, life, and salvation. From the early dawn of life until it's twilight the Lord calls you. He gives you His gifts, and not just for you, but for the whole world. He calls even at the eleventh hour; even to the last possible moment of life the Lord's Word and gifts ring out. No matter what your age, the Lord calls you and will give you the gift of His deliverance, now and forever. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

O Lord, we implore You favorably to hear the prayers of Your people that we, who are justly punished for our offenses, may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness, for the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Collect for Septuagesima)

Monday of Septuagesima

February 18, 2019

Today's Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

Daily Lectionary: Job 13:13-28; John 6:22-40

Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?" (Exodus 17:2)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Life is tough. It's definitely no cake walk, and it just never gets any easier the older you get. Some say that it's always darkest before the dawn, but what happens when the dawn is even darker? As it was with the people of Israel, so it is with us. Consider them: in bondage in Egypt. When the supposed savior, Moses, shows up, things get even worse! No straw. More bricks. Then plagues that make their masters hate them more. Finally salvation, but alas no water. Surely it was God's intention just to kill them.

So the complaining goes. The despair. The unbelief. It's how we are. Oh, sure...we're faithful for awhile. When the going gets rough, we finally turn to God, we pray, we confess our unworthiness. Then, no answer. What then? We grumble, complain. "Why are you doing this to ME, God? What have I ever done?" As if our prayer was the meal ticket to get what we want. It was better before. And so we tempt God to make our situation better. We demand it, as if we deserved nothing but the best treatment of God. "Why, God? It's not like I have justly deserved Your TEMPORAL and eternal punishment, right?"

We surely do deserve these things, but yet God does not give them. God is gracious and merciful to you and me—sinful beings that we are—purely "for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death" of His Son, Jesus Christ. We shall soon hear how Jesus Himself was tempted by the devil to spurn God, to tempt God to save Him. But Christ endured that temptation and didn't give in, for you. He went to the cross, and dwelt in your despair and unbelief, and then shed His blood to redeem you—blood which is poured over you in Baptism, given you in His Supper, and by His faithfulness you are justified by faith in Christ.

Now nothing can keep you down, really. The world may be tough at times, and it may only get worse, but in the end, Christ still stands, and He stands for you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

Why should cross and trial grieve me? Christ is near With His cheer; Never will He leave me. Who can rob me of the heaven That God's Son For me won When His life was given? (Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me? LSB 756:1)

Tuesday of Septuagesima

February 19, 2019

Today's Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:5

Daily Lectionary: Job 14:1-22; John 6:41-49

But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. (1 Corinthians 10:5)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Is the Lord pleased with you? It's a question may ask ourselves from time to time. How do you know the answer to that question? Most often we look to our daily lives in order to see what God's attitude is toward us. Am I well-liked by my friends? Is my family getting along? Am I healthy? Is my life running on all cylinders? If anything goes wrong in our lives, we tend to think God is not pleased with us—that He's angry with us. Maybe we've done something wrong to make God upset. We think, "What have I got to do to make Him happy again?"

Our faith wavers in the sight of trouble. We disbelieve God's goodness toward us by what we see in our lives. And then, in our lack of faith, our hearts turn away from the Lord and we become just like the Israelites—turned away from God, idols and all.

But your standing before God isn't based on things you can see. It's not based on what you've done and left undone. Whether you think your life is going well or going badly, the fact remains the same: God is well-pleased with you, in Jesus. Only in Jesus do you actually know the Father's attitude towards you. It is in the cross of Christ that you truly know the Father's disposition—His love for you. Christ's body was scattered in the wilderness outside of Jerusalem—His body hanging dead on the cross for your sins, your unbelief, your doubt and despair. All the things that would make God not well-pleased with you were placed on Jesus.

Yes, the Father is pleased with you. You, like Israel, have passed through water. Your Baptism ever stands as a witness of God's pleased-ness with you. And as He rose, so you shall rise from the dead. No matter what you see in your life, remember that the Word washed down your forehead, cleansing you with His blood and robing you in His righteousness. The entire world could fall apart around you but still, God is well-pleased with you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress; Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head. Lord, I believe were sinners more Than sands upon the ocean shore, Thou hast for all a ransom paid, For all a full atonement made. (Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness, LSB 563:1, 4)

Wednesday of Septuagesima

February 20, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 15:1-23, 30-35; John 6:60-71

He has redeemed me...that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true. (Small Catechism: The Creed, Second Article, Part 3)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. The words from the catechism above are the answer to the question, “Why did He do it?” Why did Jesus do what He did? Why did the Son become man in the womb of the Virgin? Why did He flee to Egypt? Why did He grow up obedient to Mary and Joseph? Why did He teach and preach, heal, and raise the dead? Why did He let Himself be arrested? Why did He submit to such torture and suffering? Why did He allow Himself to be crucified? Why did He give up His last breath on the cross? Why did He leave the tomb behind on the Third Day? All of it—every last bit of His life, His work, His talking, His doing, His accomplishing—was so that you would be His own.

And what then is your life when Jesus has saved you? To live under Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. Righteousness, because His righteousness was put upon you in Holy Baptism. Innocence because you have been absolved—declared innocent of all charges and sins. Blessedness because you have feasted upon His Body and Blood and will be raised up on the Last Day to see the Lord face to face.

How do we know this is true? How will it happen to us? Because Jesus rose from the dead. Everything He did would be nothing if that tomb wasn't empty on Easter and Jesus wasn't alive. But it was empty. And He is alive. Death was defeated. That means sin has been defeated. And along with it goes all unrighteousness, guilt, and sadness. Jesus has done this. When we confess the Apostles' Creed, that's what we're saying about what Jesus has done. We confess who He is and what He has done and we learn that it was all done for our sakes. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

O love, how deep, how broad, how high, Beyond all thought and fantasy, That God, the Son of God should take Our mortal form for mortals' sake! (O Love, How Deep, LSB 544:1)

Thursday of Septuagesima

February 21, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 16:1-22; John 7:1-13

The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. (John 7:7)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Jesus avoided Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Why? The Jews didn't want to hear the truth. Out of the human heart comes all kinds of evil. No matter how good you look on the outside, the Lord knows the truth of what's going on inside.

The world won't admit that it is evil. It's not that people don't believe that there is real evil in the world. That's quite evident. We see it in senseless acts of violence like terrorist bombings and mass shootings. We see plenty of that on a regular basis in our day. But our definition of evil often stops there. God's goes deeper. Evil is there in the grumbling of the hired workers at the vineyard. It's there in the grumbling of Israel. It's there in yours, too, even in the sins you think are so small and insignificant.

Holy Scripture calls us to examine ourselves and recognize the evil within our own hearts. But that's precisely what the world cannot do. Okay. Maybe we can admit that we're not perfect. Sure, I make mistakes, but I'm nothing like the Boston bombers. Some even defend evil and explain it away. It goes something like this: It was just his upbringing, his poor circumstances, or his social situation that led him to do what he did. That's all just a denial of the truth. Paul said that when he wants to do good, evil is right there with him (Romans 7).

Jesus turns on the lights. He exposes our evil hearts. But Jesus didn't come to condemn the world; He came to save it. He came to save you! That's the Good News. God has an answer for evil: His beloved Son! He took upon Himself not only the evil of those who crucified Him, who hammered the nails, but your evil, too, and He left it buried in the grave.

Look for Him at the feast of His Body and Blood, where He shows Himself openly to the world, to you, not as One who is evil, but as One who loves you, who has taken all your evil upon Himself and repaid you with forgiveness, life, and salvation. Jesus is God's answer to all the world's evil. He is God's answer for you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

A feast of love for us You are preparing; We who were lost, You give an honored place! "Come, eat; come, drink, and be no more despairing—Here taste again the treasures of My grace." (As Rebels, Lord, Who Foolishly Have Wandered, LSB 612:3)

Friday of Septuagesima

February 22, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 17:1-16; John 7:14-31

So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?" (John 7:30-31)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. "His hour had not yet come." We encounter that phrase numerous times in the Gospel of John, as if when writing it, John was able to confidently make that little observation. Surely, he had heard Jesus use that same expression over the three years they were together, like in John 2:4 when Mary asked Jesus to handle the wine shortage at the wedding feast in Cana: "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come!" This is echoed in other accounts. No, the time wasn't right.

As Jesus nears the end of his ministry with His closest followers, we read John's account of Jesus's frame of mind prior to washing the disciples' feet in John 13:1: "Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." The time was close at hand.

When it comes to Christ's ministry, timing is everything. You have the luxury on this side of the cross of looking back (the New Testament) to see how God intricately weaved all the pieces together, culminating in the death and resurrection of His Son.

You don't have that same advantage as you look ahead in your own lives with hope and trust. As you wait on the Lord to answer your prayer or to act on His promises, you trust that He will provide at the very best moment. Does that mean you'll have to wait on His timing for a while? Yes. But don't get frustrated or angry because He hasn't done it yet. Instead, rejoice that in due season, your God will act.

For that's just what He did for your forgiveness, didn't He? Jesus went to the cross at the perfect time, while you were yet a sinner, so that He could achieve your forgiveness for you, save you from death and the devil, and give you eternal life in heaven. And remember that sometimes His timing is very predictable, like when He gathers you each Sunday around Word and Sacrament. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

When You woke that Thursday morning, Savior, teacher, faithful friend, Thoughts of self and safety scorning, Knowing how the day would end; Lamb of God, foretold for ages, Now at last the hour had come When but One could pay sin's wages: You assumed their dreadful sum. (When You Woke that Thursday Morning, LSB: 445:1)

Saturday of Septuagesima

February 23, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 18:1-21; John 7:32-53

You have saved us from our enemies, and have put to shame those who hated us. In God we boast all day long, and praise Your name forever. (Psalm 44:7-8, from the Introit for Sexagesima)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. It is never fun to be on the losing team, especially in a long-running rivalry or an over-hyped championship game. Unfortunately, someone DOES have to be on the losing side in a winner-take-all contest. That's the reality.

For the Christian, it almost seems to be a daily occurrence—the world around you is openly hostile to the faith, and it will do anything it can to cause you to stumble in its quest to cause you to fall from the faith.

So tomorrow morning, no matter how you feel—even if it seems like you've been on the losing end for YEARS—know that you are going into the winning team's locker room. As you pass through the doors of your church, you enter the winner's circle.

God your Father has saved you from your enemies. He has won the battle for you. Jesus has triumphed over sin, death, and the devil, and he has given you the trophy to keep. He has given you that very life itself—the life He breathed early on that first Easter morning as He rose from the dead.

On the Last Day, when the final score will be proclaimed for the final time, all who opposed and hated the Word of Life will be put to shame as the multitudes from every tribe and nation stream through the gates of the New Jerusalem and take their places before the throne of the Lamb who was slain.

Your baptismal robe will shine brightly in the glory of God our Father, He who won the victory for you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

We worship You, God of our fathers, we bless You; Through trial and tempest our guide You have been. When perils o'ertake us, You will not forsake us, And with Your help, O Lord, our struggles we win. (We Praise You, O God, LSB 785:2)

St. Matthias, Apostle

February 24, 2019

Today's Reading: Acts 1:15-26

Daily Lectionary: Job 19:1-12, 21-27; John 8:1-20

And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:26)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Twelve tribes. Twelve Apostles. But what's this? There are only eleven! Judas betrayed Jesus and hanged himself. His spot was open, and the Lord, when He calls a people forth from the world, does it with a Twelve. Twelve tribes of His Old Testament people. Twelve Apostles to preach the Gospel on Pentecost and to the ends of the earth. Judas is gone and Matthias gets his place. And that's the last we hear of Matthias.

We don't need to know anything about Matthias other than that he was an eyewitness to what Jesus said and did and that he was called by Jesus through the Church. We know why Matthias was called. The Lord sent His apostles into all the world to preach the Gospel to all of mankind. The Good News. The Apostles were heralds to the world that the God who had made everything had come in the flesh and died for sinners and risen from the dead. That's what those eleven were sent to preach and Matthias was given a place among them to do the same.

That's because the Lord wants to make sure you hear what He has done so that the Holy Spirit will bring you to faith in His promises. The Lord wants to make sure the forgiveness He has for you gets to you, gets delivered and bestowed upon you. Yes, Jesus died for you, but it doesn't do you any good unless that salvation is delivered to you. So the Lord sends preachers.

The fact that Matthias is chosen and numbered with the Eleven means the Lord is looking out for this world of sinners. He wants the ends of the earth to hear the Good News that He brings forgiveness and life. He wants the washing of new birth to come to all people. That's why He sent the Apostles and why He continues to send pastors into the world. Thanks be to God for Matthias, a faithful preacher the Lord sent to save sinners. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

For one in place of Judas, Th' apostles sought God's choice; The lot fell to Matthias For whom we now rejoice. May we like true apostles Your holy Church defend, And not betray our calling But serve you to the end. (By All Your Saints in Warfare, LSB 517:13)

Monday of Sexagesima

February 25, 2019

Today's Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13

Daily Lectionary: Job 20:1-23, 29; John 8:21-38

[My word] shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. When the Lord speaks, things happen. That's just the Lord's way of doing things. The Lord sends out His Word, and it does what He wants it to do. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. The Lord does what He says, and what He says bespeaks what He does. This is a comfort to us in a world of unknowns: We know what the Lord is doing because He told us, and we can trust that Word because He cannot lie.

But who among us really cares? I mean really. The world definitely doesn't care, and there are plenty of Christians who go down that road. But we are the true champions of His Word! Of course we are. We have the true doctrine! We cling to it always! We don't let classes, work, family obligations, our busy schedule get in the way of continually being in the Lord's Word; nothing could ever keep us from the Divine Service. Of course not! Except when something does come up or when it gets added to the end of the "to do" list. The Lord sends His Word, and we turn only a half-interested ear.

So the heavenly Father sends the Word, the personal Word, Jesus. The eternal Word who is One with the Father and the Holy Spirit comes and takes on your flesh and bears your sin. He was always in the Word for you. His Father's business took priority, and His business was saving you. Jesus, the Word made flesh, by His death on the cross, fulfilled the Word which God had written in the Old Testament, promising your salvation. His resurrection on the Third Day justified you. Now the heavenly courtroom word is "not guilty," and His Word endures forever.

The Lord sends out His Word, Jesus, and He does what He's supposed to do: save you. And the Lord still sends His Word out and it does what it's supposed to do for you: It baptizes you, it absolves you of your sins, and it gives Jesus' Body and Blood to you for your forgiveness, life, and salvation. The Word does what it says, and it does it for you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

Stay with us Lord, and keep us true; Preserve our faith our whole life through—Your Word alone our heart's defense, The Church's glorious confidence. (Lord Jesus Christ with Us Abide, LSB 585:6)

Tuesday of Sexagesima

February 26, 2019

Today's Reading: 2 Corinthians 11:19-12:9

Daily Lectionary: Job 21:1-21; John 8:39-59

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. God is for you. He's got nothing against you, in Jesus. The Father's feeling toward you is one of love, mercy, and kindness. Your heavenly Father is happy with you. He is gracious toward you. In Christ, He has blessed you with so many wonderful gifts, not just of soul, but also body. So it was with Paul. God had blessed Paul with seeing a vision of the heavenly places. He had blessed Him with a fruitful ministry as a pastor and Apostle. Yet in all these blessings there was a danger for Paul: pride.

You see, Paul was not some super Christian with great faith. Paul could get puffed up in these great blessings: "I've seen heaven. I've done so much awesome stuff." We may want to do the same thing: look to what we have and not think of Him who gave it to us. So for Paul, the Lord afflicted Him with a "thorn in the flesh," and said to him: "My grace is sufficient for you." His grace and favor was enough for Paul. The Lord perfects His strength in weakness.

What about you? The Lord may afflict you with His Law in many ways. Most assuredly He's given you a pastor who preaches the law that condemns your sin and unbelief for what they truly are: sin and unbelief. This pastor is also sent by Christ to give you another word: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." This grace is given to you in font, Word, Absolution, and Supper. Such weak things truly give the strength, and power of God, that is, they give you the forgiveness of sins won by Jesus on the cross where the strength of God was really shown in the weakness and death of the eternal Son, Jesus.

The Lord sends His grace and favor to you. He guards and keeps you forever. Things might be rough, and His Law fierce, but His grace is sufficient both now and forever. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

O my Savior, help afford By Your Spirit and Your Word! When my wayward heart would stray, Keep me in the narrow way; Grace in time of need supply While I live and when I die. (Chief of Sinners Though I Be, LSB 611:5)

Wednesday of Sexagesima

February 27, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 30:16-31; John 9:1-23

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. (Small Catechism: The Creed, Third Article, Part 1)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. One of the reasons that people believe Baptism is a sign of our faith instead of God's work, is that ultimately they believe they can save themselves. Maybe you've heard from your friend that to be saved you must "accept Jesus into your heart" or "give your life to Christ." That sounds good. It may even sound doable. But it's not. The Bible says that we were dead in our trespasses and our sins. Dead people can't do anything. Corpses can't make decisions.

You are saved because the Holy Spirit has saved you. He has called you by the Gospel. It may be that the Gospel was first delivered to you in the water and Word of Holy Baptism. It may be that you heard the Good News of Jesus later in life and were baptized. It doesn't really matter. The point is that it was the Word that your ears heard by which the Spirit gave you faith which declares, "Jesus died and rose...for me!"

Jesus accomplished your salvation. He did what needed to be done. Came into your flesh. Took your sins. Made them His own. Died for you on Calvary. Rose on Easter. That's Jesus doing the saving. But now you need the salvation delivered to you. That's where the Holy Spirit comes in. He delivers those gifts to you by the means God has chosen: the water and Word of Holy Baptism, the preached and taught Word, the Supper of Christ's Body and Blood. We call those the "B.A.G.S." Baptism. Absolution. Gospel. Supper. And in those "B.A.G.S." the Holy Spirit is carrying Jesus' forgiveness to you.

No, you don't choose Jesus. He chooses you. No, you don't give your heart to Jesus. He gives you a new heart. No, you don't join the Church. The Holy Spirit brings you to faith and gathers you into the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit has saved you. He saves you by giving you Jesus' gifts. That's all a gift to you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

Lord, 'tis not that I did choose Thee; That, I know, could never be; For this heart would still refuse Thee Had Thy grace not chosen me. Thou hast from the sin that stained me Washed and cleansed and set me free And unto this end ordained me, That I ever live to Thee. (Lord, 'Tis Not That I Did Choose Thee, LSB 573:1)

Thursday of Sexagesima

February 28, 2019

Today's Reading: Hebrews 4:9-13

Daily Lectionary: Job 31:1-12, 33-40; John 9:24-41

The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Do you want the Word of God discerning your thoughts? The intents of your heart? What's going on in there? Would you want anyone or anything mulling around in there besides you? Consider what the Word of God discerns about your thoughts and intents. Your sins. Your wants. Your desires. What you think and concoct in your head about those around you, even your friends and loved ones. There the Word of God comes and calls it what it is: sin. And the judgment is death.

Left to ourselves this would be our lot: death. By our rejection of God's Word, we are subject to God's rejection of us. It is right for Him to cast us away from His presence forever. But He doesn't. He sends His Son, Jesus, to take away your sins. He discerns those thoughts and intents and then takes them on Himself. He bears them in His body to the tree, and there His blood washes over them giving you eternal redemption before the Father. On the cross He sends out another living and powerful, an alive word which springs forth out of death: "It is finished!" And, by His resurrection, He proclaims another word: "I have conquered sin and death."

The Lord sends His living and powerful Word to you, too—a Book which is not a dead letter, but a living and active Word to sustain your soul. A living Word combined with water to make you living, in Him. Christ's own words remove your bonds of sins. He proclaims: "This is My body, given for you; this is My blood, shed for you." And so it is. All of His Word is living and active for you and is coming to you to make you living and active, in Him. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

*Preserve Your Word, O Savior, To us this latter day, And let Your kingdom flourish;
Enlarge Your Church we pray. O keep our faith from failing; Keep hope's bright star
aglow. Let nothing from truth turn us While living here below. (Preserve Your Word, O
Savior, LSB 658:1)*

Friday of Sexagesima

March 1, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 33:1-18; John 10:22-42

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.” (John 10:27-30)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. The Good Shepherd comes to speak to you. He has not come to persuade you that He is worth following. He does not come to convince you to elect Him as your shepherd. He comes to reveal to you that God always preserves you even though you never notice it or offer thanks and praise to Him.

Only the faithfulness of Christ to His promise secures you as a lamb of His flock. He does this by removing faith from where it does not belong, and placing it upon Him as the proper and only place of true, saving faith. Now when the sheep hear the voice of Jesus, it is revealed that He carries them and leads them by His strong hand: forgiveness, life, and eternal salvation. If it is not God's strong hand, if His reward is not already with Him, if there is still something we must do to be welcomed into the sheepfold, then we run endlessly back and forth between pride and despair. Pride, because we don't doubt that we deserve to be a part of the flock. Despair, because all we do is doubt that we belong there. But faith is never comingled with pride or despair. Faith clings to Christ. It is created and sustained by the Spirit of the One who promises He will never leave us or abandon us to the law and death.

The world is shocked by the fact that God's promise is so certain. The world lives on a tightrope which is stretched between pride and despair. The Church lives upon the words and work of God, and Her reward is already with Him, who gently gathers and freely carries us into His kingdom of grace forever. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen

As true as God's own Word is true, Not earth nor hell's satanic crew Against us shall prevail. Their might? A joke, a mere facade! God is with us and we with God – Our victory cannot fail. (O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe, LSB 666:3)

Saturday of Sexagesima

March 2, 2019

Daily Lectionary: Job 33:19-34:9; John 11:1-16

Be my rock of refuge, a fortress of defense to save me. For You are my rock and my fortress. Therefore, for Your name's sake, lead me and guide me. (Psalm 31:2, from the Introit for Quinquagesima)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. There's the Lord doing His saving, again: His refuging, His fortressing. Refuge. Salvation. That's the Lord. That's what He does, in Jesus. He is Salvation: your Salvation, your Rock, and your Redeemer. When you are in the trouble of your sins, He has mercy upon you. For His Name's sake He does it.

It certainly can't be for your own sake! What have you got that you can claim for yourself? Oh sure, you've got things you're good at, and people may like you for those things. Maybe it's sports, smarts, a caring personality, or whatever else you think highly of yourself about. Yet, what does that get you before the Lord? Nothing. That's why it's for His own Name's sake that He helps you. Remember? Sins. Yes, sins. Big ones, in fact, they are all big ones before the Lord. But He sends His Son, Jesus, to save you. For His own Name's sake, He bears His Name and your accusation to the cross where He died for your sins. There, for His Name's sake, He takes away your sins, bearing them in His body on the tree.

And that cross is a strong fortress of God's mercy, and He brings that fortressing to you. Rising from the dead, Christ now gives His fortressing, refuging gifts to you. You've been baptized into Christ: His death and resurrection. No matter what sin oppresses you, no matter what sin you've fallen into, your Baptism remains as an unassailable castle, a fortress against the attacks of the devil and your flesh. The Lord continues His forgiveness to you for His Name's sake because He's put His Name on you. And so God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, does His refuging, His fortressing for you. In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

A mighty Fortress is our God, A trusty Shield and Weapon; He helps us free from every need That hath us now o'ertaken. The old evil Foe Now means deadly woe; Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight; On Earth is not his equal. (A Mighty Fortress is Our God, LSB 656:1)

Quinquagesima

March 3, 2019

Today's Reading: Luke 18:31-43

Daily Lectionary: Job 34:10-33; John 11:17-37

Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." (Luke 18:42)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. This is what faith does. It saves. It clings to Christ. Faith receives from the Lord all things as gift, no matter what is given from the hand of the Lord. Faith still speaks its "Amen." The merits of Christ's death and resurrection for you: "Amen." "I baptize you..." "Amen." "I forgive you all your sins..." "Amen." "Take eat, this is My Body; take drink, this is My Blood..." "Amen." Such is the way of faith. Such is the faith given you by the Lord.

Yet what of this blind man? He received His sight. We wonder: "Why doesn't my faith get such wonderful benefits? What do I have to do? How do I make my faith stronger to get these things?" This is not the question of faith, but of unbelief. We doubt the Lord's goodness for us when things don't go our way, especially if we're sick, or someone we love is sick, or even dying. But faith doesn't seek out anything except what the Lord has to give. Faith doesn't try an end around to get what you want. Faith can certainly ask for things, but the Lord gives what He gives and faith says, "Amen."

Jesus healed the blind man. He may heal you or your loved one, or He may only heal on the last day. Our flesh wars against what faith desires. We truly want from the Lord whatever He gives, but we war over what we want. This is why Christ continues to give His gifts to us. His font, Absolution, and Supper free us from the bonds of our sin and unbelief, and they defend us from all evil of body and soul. Such is the blessing of the Lord's Supper—it keeps us in both body and soul.

Sure, the body may fall apart, get run down, and die, but it will surely be raised on the Last Day. Faith believes that in Jesus this will happen. To this, faith says, "Amen." In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

O Lord, we implore You, mercifully hear our prayers, and, having set us free from the bonds of sin, defend us from all evil; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Collect for Quinquagesima)

Monday of Quinquagesima

March 4, 2019

Today's Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Daily Lectionary: Job 36:1-21; John 11:38-57

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. (1 Samuel 16:13)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. The people of Israel had wanted a king. The Lord wasn't a good enough king for them. The Lord gave them a king. He gave them Saul. But Saul was a bad king. He did things that the Lord hadn't given Him to do, and He didn't do things the Lord had given him to do. So Saul had to go. Yet, the Lord didn't plunge His people into darkness, into the chaos of anarchy. He provided a new king for His people. He gifted them with a faithful king, a man after His own heart: He anointed David by the hand of Samuel. Yet the Lord is still king of His people.

That's what the Lord does: He's King. He rules through David in spite of David's sins, and He preserves David's line to save David, and to save you. David's line is preserved so that David's Lord can be born from his line. Jesus, the true king of heaven and earth, comes and is born of the Virgin Mary. He comes to reign for you. He comes to reign by dying. He comes as the true King of the Jews and to die for your sins and the sins of the whole world. He died for all of David's sins, even David's most disgusting and heinous sins. So it is for you, too. No matter what burdens you, it is borne by Jesus the true King—borne by Him as He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried for you.

And as a true King, Christ still cares for His people, He cares for you. He gives you clean water, food for the journey, and royal pronouncements. He's washed your sins away in His holy font. He's given you His Body to eat and His Blood to drink. He's pronounced you innocent, forgiven in His sight and the Father's. If the King has said and done it, you know it's got to be true! In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

O Jesus, King most wonderful! O Conqueror renowned! O Source of peace in effable, In whom all joys are found. (O Jesus, King Most Wonderful, LSB 554:1)

Tuesday of Quinquagesima

March 5, 2019

Today's Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Daily Lectionary: Job 37:1-24; John 12:1-19

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. Our sin just gets in the way. It gets in the way when we are dealing with one another, and—what's far worse—it gets between us and God. When it comes to loving God and our neighbor we fall short, way short. Thus, we confess, "I have not let His love have its way with me, and so my love for others has failed." Yet Christ, through His death and resurrection—His great act of love for us—has put away our lovelessness, our weak love, our self-centered love. Your envy, rudeness, and pride stand forgiven in His sight.

We believe and trust that this is true. He has baptized us. Fed us with His Body and Blood. Our faith looks to Jesus Christ alone. We are justified before God by this God-given faith. We, with eyes of faith only, see that we are righteous and pure before God our heavenly Father. Yet this doesn't keep the old Adam down. He always rears his ugly head. Because of Him "we know in part." As Paul says, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly." That's the work of our old Adam each time we sin and go astray—the mirror is darkened. We don't see the mercy of gracious favor of God as we ought. We don't see Jesus.

But Christ still says to you, "I forgive you all your sins." Your Baptism still stands as an eternal rock upon which you may stand against the assaults of the devil, the sins of the old Adam, and the tricks and cunning of the world. Christ's Body and Blood will not fail you. By faith He dwells in you and you in Him, and He will certainly raise you up on the Last Day. It is true that "now we see in a mirror, dimly," but because you are in Christ we shall see "then face to face." Jesus' blood and merit tell you that this is so. One day faith will give way to sight. You and Jesus, face to face forever. And what a sight it will be! In the Name + of Jesus. Amen.

May Christ our intercessor be And through His blood and merit Read from His book that we are free With all who life inherit. Then we shall see Him face to face, With all His saints in that blest place Which He has purchased for us. (The Day is Surely Drawing Near LSB 508:6)

*Martin Luther's Morning and Evening Prayers taken from
the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther*

Unless otherwise noted, Biblical quotations are from the ESV.

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