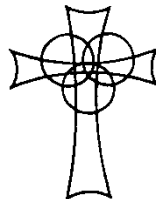




MIDWEEK DEVOTIONS & STUDY

*Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712*



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*A Member Congregation of
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*

Midweek Devotions and Bible Study
Wednesday in the Twenty-Fourth Week after Pentecost
November 18, 2020



Service of the Word in the Time of the Closing of the Church Year

✠ In the Name of Jesus! ✠

The Opening Versicles:

Psalms 51:15, 70:1 and 63:7

- P** O Lord, open my lips,
C and my mouth will declare Your praise.
- P** Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
C make haste to help me, O Lord.
- P** You have been my help,
C and in the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy.
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

- P** ¹Blessèd is the man
 who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
 nor stands in the way of sinners,
 nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
- C** ²**but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.**
- P** ³He is like a tree
 planted by streams of water
 that yields its fruit in its season,
 and its leaf does not wither.
 In all that he does, he prospers.
- C** ⁴**The wicked are not so,
 but are like chaff that the wind drives away.**
- P** ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
- C** ⁶**for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.**
- C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

^{7:15}In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing. ¹⁶Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself? ¹⁷Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time? ¹⁸It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them.

¹⁹Wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.

²⁰Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

²¹Do not take to heart all the things that people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. ²²Your heart knows that many times you have yourself cursed others.

²³All this I have tested by wisdom. I said, "I will be wise," but it was far from me.

²⁴That which has been is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out?

²⁵I turned my heart to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the scheme of things, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness that is madness. ²⁶And I find something more bitter than death: the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her.

²⁷Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, while adding one thing to another to find the scheme of things— ²⁸which my soul has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found.

²⁹See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.

^{8:1}Who is like the wise?
And who knows the interpretation of a thing?
A man's wisdom makes his face shine,
and the hardness of his face is changed.

²I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him. ³Be not hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand in an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases. ⁴For the word of the king is supreme, and who may say to him, "What are you doing?" ⁵Whoever keeps a command will know no evil thing, and the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way. ⁶For there is a time and a way for everything, although man's trouble lies heavy on him. ⁷For he does not know what is to be, for who can tell him how it will be? ⁸No man has power to retain the spirit, or power over the day of death. There is no discharge from war, nor will wickedness deliver those who are given to it. ⁹All this I observed while applying my heart to all that is done under the sun, when man had power over man to his hurt.

¹⁰Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity. ¹¹Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. ¹²Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. ¹³But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

P This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

The Scripture Study for the Day:

Questions to guide our study...

1. What are the two extremes in life that we want to avoid in our lives? What then is the "middle course" for us to follow? How does this show wisdom? (7:15-20)
2. In 7:21-22, we hear two proverbs from Solomon about what we hear from others about ourselves. What are we to do when we hear such reports?

3. Why does it seem that Solomon despaired of ever becoming wise (7:23), yet still set out to understand and search out wisdom (7:25)?

4. Many times in Ecclesiastes, Solomon points out the meaninglessness of wisdom, because both the wise and the foolish perish. Why then does Solomon in 8:1 seem to praise the wise person and how wisdom shapes their life?

5. What advice does King Solomon give about the governed's relationship with those who govern them? (8:2-9)

6. In this fallen world, it often appears that things are always backwards—the evil doer appears blessed and the one who lives a righteous life seems to be cursed. What word of hope does Solomon give to the believer in 8:10-13?

The Prayers:

P Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us make our prayer in the power of the Spirit, looking to Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith.

That with the noble fellowship of the prophets we may discern the signs of Your kingdom in our midst, we pray to You, O Lord;

C **Lord, hear our prayer.**

P That with the glorious company of the apostles we may proclaim Your Gospel throughout the world, we pray to You, O Lord;

C **Lord, hear our prayer.**

P That with the white-robed army of martyrs we may be ready to suffer for the truth's sake, we pray to You, O Lord;

C **Lord, hear our prayer.**

P That with all who are anointed by Your Spirit we may bring good news to the poor and freedom to the oppressed, we pray to You, O Lord;

C **Lord, hear our prayer.**

P That with the saints in light we may aid the sick, bind up the brokenhearted, and comfort all who mourn, we pray to You, O Lord;

C **Lord, hear our prayer.**

P That within the whole company of Christ's pilgrim people we may come to the inheritance of the saints in glory, we pray to You, O Lord;

C **Lord, hear our prayer.**

P In communion with all the saints, let us commend the world, ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.

Open prayer may be offered and silence is kept.

The Lord's Prayer:

P Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:

C **Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

The Collect of the Day:

P Let us pray.
Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

The Collect for Peace:

- P** O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** Amen.

The Closing Prayer:

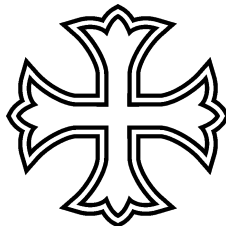
Eric Milner-White (1963), after John Donne (1631)

- P** We pray:
- C** **Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitations of Your glory and dominion, world without end.**
- Amen.**

The Benediction:

- P** The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.
- C** Amen.

If you were unable to send questions to Pastor Schiebel via messaging during the Facebook Live video, you can email your questions to him at trinity-elc-pastor@verizon.net.



Acknowledgments

Brief Service of the Word from Lutheran Service Book Agenda and from Common Worship: Daily Prayer.

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