

PRAYER SERVICE

CHAPTER 2 – The Fall and Promise of the Savior

Jesus Christ: Source of Our Salvation

THEME

Reader One:

Adam and Eve, our first parents, were seduced by Satan into thinking that they could “become like God.” They preferred their way over God’s way, their will over God’s will, and their ideas over God’s instruction. Their self-centered choice led to a life of isolation and separation from God.

How often have we done the same things? How often have we preferred our ways to the way of God just?

God, however, has not forsaken us. God has sent us a Savior – the one who will “crush” the head of Satan. We are not abandoned. By Jesus’ Life, Death and Resurrection we are saved.

Let us examine our hearts today.

FIRST READING – Genesis 3: 1-13, 14

Reader Two:

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden’?” The woman answered the snake: “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.’” But the snake said to the woman: “You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil.” The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? He answered, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid." Then God asked: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat? The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it." The LORD God then asked the woman: What is this you have done? The woman answered, "The snake tricked me, so I ate it."

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

PSALM – Psalm 51: 3-4

Reader Three:

Response: Have mercy on me O, Lord.

Have mercy on me, God, in accord with your merciful love;

in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions.

Thoroughly wash away my guilt;

and from my sin cleanse me.

Response: Have mercy on me O, Lord.

For I know my transgressions;

my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone have I sinned;

I have done what is evil in your eyes

So that you are just in your word.

Response: Have mercy on me O, Lord.

Turn away your face from my sins;

blot out all my iniquities.

A clean heart create for me, God;

renew within me a steadfast spirit.^f

Response: Have mercy on me O, Lord.

For you do not desire sacrifice - or I would give it;

a burnt offering you would not accept.

My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;

a contrite, humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.

Response: Have mercy on me O, Lord.

Have mercy on me, God, in accord with your merciful love;

in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions.

Thoroughly wash away my guilt;

and from my sin cleanse me.

Response: Have mercy on me O, Lord.

SECOND READING – Romans 17-18

Reader Four:

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans.

For if, by the transgression of one person, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ. In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so through one righteous act acquittal and life came to all.

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL - John 6: 47-51

Reader Five:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION

Questions are suitable for journal reflections or to be considered during a moment of quiet time. Quiet, meditative music is most helpful here.

Reader Six:

In what ways am I in need of salvation?

In my personal life?

My academic life?

My social life?

My family life?

In what ways have I hardened my heart to the ways of God?

Was it through insensitivity to others?

Was it through selfishness and self-centeredness?

Was it through indifference toward my family?

Was it through indifference to my religion?

In what ways have I deafened my ears to hearing the Word of God in my life?

Was it through constant noise and distraction?

Was it through constant chatter and gossip, online or off?

In what ways have I believed the lies of Satan?

Was it by believing that “more stuff” will make me happy?

Was it by doing or saying anything to be popular?

Was it by speaking ill of another so that I may appear superior?

Was it by isolating myself so that I can “do my own thing.”

In what ways have I bought into the lie that says “I am not worthy?”

PETITIONS

Reader Seven:

Response: Save us, O Lord.

That God may grant us the grace to subdue our pride and desire to always be the center of attention and replace it with true understanding of our self-worth, we pray to the Lord.

Response: Save us, O Lord.

That our desire for wealth and power may be tempered by generosity and love, for this we pray.

Response: Save us, O Lord.

That resentment and sadness at another’s good fortune may turn into genuine love and appreciation of the other, for this we pray.

Response: Save us, O Lord.

That the tendency toward vengeance, anger or retaliation may be moderated by the docility and sweetness of the Holy Spirit, for this we pray.

Response: Save us, O Lord.

That we may recognize our bodies and Temples of the Holy Spirit, and treat ourselves and others with dignity and respect, for this we pray.

Response: Save us, O Lord.

That we may be sensible in our use of the good things of the earth, and including social media and electronic devices, and that we may use all these things for the glory of God, for this we pray.

Response: Save us, O Lord.

That our tendency toward indifference, not meeting our responsibilities to family, school, and friends, may be replaced with a holy energy and enthusiasm for all things good and true, for this we pray.

Response: Save us, O Lord.

CLOSING PRAYER

Reader Eight:

Lord, Our God, we ask all of this through the mercy and love of your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ who suffered, died and rose so that we might have eternal life. May we never forget that our salvation is not due to our own efforts, but has been won for us by the self-giving and loving death of Our Savior on the Cross. May we have a keen awareness every moment of God's saving action in our lives. And, may we be empowered to bring this awareness to the whole world with enthusiasm and missionary zeal. We offer our thanks in your name.

Response: Thanks be to God.