

PRAYER SERVICE

CHAPTER 4—The Message and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ: Source of Our Salvation

THEME

Reader One:

Lord Jesus, you came that we may have life! You came in Word and Deed and through signs and wonders in order to proclaim Salvation and the Kingdom of God.

You said, “For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be,” indicating to us that “one’s life does not consist of possessions.”

You taught us that God’s love for us is immense. You shared that our primary concern in life should be not on what we have, but on who we are as the Father’s beloved children, with the priority of serving you above all else.

Your healing and loving ministry was meant for all people, rich and poor, young or old, sinner or saint, without distinction—to *all* people.

Thank you, Lord for saving us and giving us the empowering grace to participate in the Kingdom of God here on earth and to live with you in Eternity.

FIRST READING: Joshua 3:5–7, 14–16b, 17

Reader Two:

A reading from the Book of Joshua.

Joshua also said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will perform wonders among you.” And he told the priests, “Take up the Ark of the Covenant and cross ahead of the people”; so they took up the Ark of the Covenant and went before the people.

Then the LORD said to Joshua: Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

The people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan, with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant ahead of them. When those bearing the ark came to the Jordan and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were immersed in the waters of the Jordan—which overflows all its banks during the entire season of the harvest—the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

The priests carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood on dry ground in the Jordan riverbed while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until the whole nation had completed the crossing of the Jordan.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 145:1–10, 14, 19–21

Reader Three:

Response: I will praise your name forever and ever.

I will extol you, my God and king;

I will bless your name forever and ever.

Every day I will bless you;

Response: I will praise your name forever and ever.

Great is the LORD and worthy of much praise,

whose grandeur is beyond understanding.

One generation praises your deeds to the next

and proclaims your mighty works.

Response: I will praise your name forever and ever.

They speak of the splendor of your majestic glory,

tell of your wonderful deeds.

They speak of the power of your awesome acts

and recount your great deeds.

They celebrate your abounding goodness

and joyfully sing of your justice.

Response: I will praise your name forever and ever.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,

slow to anger and abounding in mercy.

The LORD is good to all,

compassionate toward all your works.

Response: I will praise your name forever and ever.

The LORD supports all who are falling

and raises up all who are bowed down.

He fulfills the desire of those who fear him;

he hears their cry and saves them.

Response: I will praise your name forever and ever.

SECOND READING: Acts 2:1–10

Reader Four:

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple area for the three o'clock hour of prayer. And a man crippled from birth was carried and placed at the gate of the temple called "the Beautiful Gate" every day to beg for alms from the people who entered the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. But Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." He paid attention to them, expecting to receive something from them. Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, [rise and] walk." Then Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles grew strong. He leaped up, stood, and walked around, and went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the one who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with amazement and astonishment at what had happened to him.

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:16–20

Reader Five:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given

to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

MEDITATION

Have the students spend the next few minutes reflecting quietly, or writing in their journals a response to each of questions that follow. Quiet reflective instrumental music would be helpful.

Reader Six:

Before Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, he responds to the scholar of the Law who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit Eternal Life. Jesus simply answered, “Who is your neighbor?” and then tells the story.

- Who is YOUR neighbor? How would you answer that question?

In the parable of the great feast, Jesus speaks to the guests of the party who desire to sit in places of honor. Jesus says to them, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- What comes to your mind about yourself when asked this question? How does it make you feel? Are you ever the guest who wants the best seat? Do you ever take the “lower”? Why or why not?

In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, Jesus tells of the landowner who pays the workers who were hired at the end of the day, the same amount of money as the workers who were hired much earlier in the day. The “early” workers complain. Jesus asked if they are jealous because he is generous. “Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

- How generous are you? Are you complaining and envious of others’ success? Do you constantly look for injustices? Are you often critical and demanding, or understanding and forgiving?

PETITIONS

Reader Seven:

Response: Thank you, Jesus.

Lord, we ask for the grace to be able to see all people as our brothers and sisters, despite differences in background, culture, age, economic status, or religious beliefs, for this we pray to the Lord.

Response: Thank you, Jesus.

Lord, we ask for pure, humble and grateful hearts, for this we pray to the Lord.

Response: Thank you, Jesus.

Lord, we ask for the spirit of generosity and an understanding spirit, for this we pray to the Lord.

Response: Thank you, Jesus.

CLOSING PRAYER

Reader Eight:

We pray for a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon each of us so that we may follow you with all our hearts, minds and souls. Make us your disciples! Help us to embrace our daily crosses, joining our sufferings to yours so that our lives may become prayers offered to you. Help us to reach out with compassion to our neighbors who are in need of your healing touch. When we are far from you in our thoughts, remind us of your great love for us. Teach us to look beyond our daily trials to the glorious Eternal Gift that awaits us in Heaven. We ask this of the Father who created us, in the name of the Son, who redeemed us, and through the power of the Holy Spirit who sustains us.

Response: Amen.

