

FAMILY HOME DEVOTIONS

October 12-18, 2026



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Monday

Psalm 49

Why Should I Fear in Times of Trouble?

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

49 Hear this, all peoples!

Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,

2 both low and high,

rich and poor together!

3 My mouth shall speak wisdom;

the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

4 I will incline my ear to a proverb;

I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre.

5 Why should I fear in times of trouble,

when the iniquity of those who cheat me surrounds me,

6 those who trust in their wealth

and boast of the abundance of their riches?

7 Truly no man can ransom another,

or give to God the price of his life,

8 for the ransom of their life is costly

and can never suffice,

9 that he should live on forever

and never see the pit.

10 For he sees that even the wise die;

the fool and the stupid alike must perish

and leave their wealth to others.

11 Their graves are their homes forever,

their dwelling places to all generations,

though they called lands by their own names.

12 Man in his pomp will not remain;

he is like the beasts that perish.

13 This is the path of those who have foolish confidence;

yet after them people approve of their boasts. Selah

14 Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;

death shall be their shepherd,

and the upright shall rule over them in the morning.

Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell.

15 But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol,

for he will receive me. Selah

16 Be not afraid when a man becomes rich,

when the glory of his house increases.

17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away;

his glory will not go down after him.

18 For though, while he lives, he counts himself blessed—

and though you get praise when you do well for yourself—

19 his soul will go to the generation of his fathers,

who will never again see light.

20 Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish.

Deuteronomy 11:1-25

Love and Serve the Lord

11 “You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always. 2 And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, 3 his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land, 4 and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord has destroyed them to this day, 5 and what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place, 6 and what he did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben, how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel. 7 For your eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord that he did.

8 “You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess, 9 and that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10 For the land that you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it, like a garden of vegetables. 11 But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, 12 a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

13 “And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. 15 And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. 16 Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; 17 then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you.

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18 “You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 20 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21 that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. 22 For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the Lord your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him, 23 then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. 24 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon, and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. 25 No one shall be able to stand against you. The Lord your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you.

Matthew 12:1-21

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.” 3 He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? 6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. 7 And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”

A Man with a Withered Hand

9 He went on from there and entered their synagogue. 10 And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse him. 11 He said to them, “Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” 13 Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

God's Chosen Servant

15 Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all 16 and ordered them not to make him known. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

18 “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.

I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

19 He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;

20 a bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
until he brings justice to victory;

21 and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

The Sacrament of Baptism - First

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God’s command and combined with God’s word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:19)

Tuesday

Psalm 50

God Himself Is Judge

A Psalm of Asaph.

50 The Mighty One, God the Lord,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.
2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.
3 Our God comes; he does not keep silence;
before him is a devouring fire,
around him a mighty tempest.
4 He calls to the heavens above
and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
5 “Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”
6 The heavens declare his righteousness,
for God himself is judge! Selah
7 “Hear, O my people, and I will speak;
O Israel, I will testify against you.
I am God, your God.
8 Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you;
your burnt offerings are continually before me.
9 I will not accept a bull from your house
or goats from your folds.
10 For every beast of the forest is mine,
the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know all the birds of the hills,
and all that moves in the field is mine.

12 “If I were hungry, I would not tell you,
for the world and its fullness are mine.
13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls
or drink the blood of goats?
14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and perform your vows to the Most High,
15 and call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”
16 But to the wicked God says:
“What right have you to recite my statutes
or take my covenant on your lips?
17 For you hate discipline,
and you cast my words behind you.
18 If you see a thief, you are pleased with him,
and you keep company with adulterers.
19 “You give your mouth free rein for evil,
and your tongue frames deceit.
20 You sit and speak against your brother;
you slander your own mother’s son.
21 These things you have done, and I have been silent;
you thought that I was one like yourself.
But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.
22 “Mark this, then, you who forget God,
lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver!
23 The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me;
to one who orders his way rightly
I will show the salvation of God!”

Deuteronomy 11:26-12:12

26 “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, 28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known. 29 And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. 30 Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oak of Moreh? 31 For you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you. And when you possess it and live in it, 32 you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the rules that I am setting before you today.

The Lord's Chosen Place of Worship

12 “These are the statutes and rules that you shall be careful to do in the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. 2 You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3 You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place. 4 You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way. 5 But you shall seek the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, 6 and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. 7 And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the Lord your God has blessed you.

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8 “You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes, 9 for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that the Lord your God is giving you. 10 But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety, 11 then to the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to the Lord. 12 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male servants and your female servants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.

Matthew 12:22-37

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” 25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. 30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. 31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

A Tree Is Known by Its Fruit

33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

The Sacrament of Baptism - Second

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16)

Wednesday

Psalm 51

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God
To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.
51 Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
 blot out my transgressions.
2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
 and cleanse me from my sin!
3 For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is ever before me.
4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
 and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
 and blameless in your judgment.
5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
 and in sin did my mother conceive me.
6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
 and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
 wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
 let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins,
 and blot out all my iniquities.
10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
 and renew a right spirit within me.
11 Cast me not away from your presence,
 and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
 and uphold me with a willing spirit.
13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
 and sinners will return to you.
14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
 O God of my salvation,
 and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
15 O Lord, open my lips,
 and my mouth will declare your praise.
16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
 you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
 a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
 build up the walls of Jerusalem;
19 then will you delight in right sacrifices,
 in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
 then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Deuteronomy 12:13-32

13 Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see, 14 but at the place that the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.
15 "However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your towns, as much as you desire, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you. The unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the deer. 16 Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it out on the earth like water. 17 You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your wine or of your oil, or the firstborn of your herd or of your flock, or any of your vow offerings that you vow, or your freewill offerings or the contribution that you present, 18 but you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place that the Lord your God will choose, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is within your towns. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all that you undertake. 19 Take care that you do not neglect the Levite as long as you live in your land.
20 "When the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat meat,' because you crave meat, you may eat meat whenever you desire. 21 If the place that the Lord your God will choose to put his name there is too far from you, then you may kill any of your herd or your flock, which the Lord has given you, as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your towns whenever you desire. 22 Just as the gazelle or the deer is eaten, so you may eat of it. The unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. 23 Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh. 24 You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the earth like water. 25 You shall not eat it, that all may go well with you and with your children after you, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord. 26 But the holy things that are due from you,

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and your vow offerings, you shall take, and you shall go to the place that the Lord will choose, 27 and offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of the Lord your God. The blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the Lord your God, but the flesh you may eat. 28 Be careful to obey all these words that I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.

Warning Against Idolatry

29 “When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, 30 take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? —that I also may do the same.’ 31 You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

32 “Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.

Matthew 12:38-50

The Sign of Jonah

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” 39 But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Return of an Unclean Spirit

43 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. 44 Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

46 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. 48 But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” 49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

The Sacrament of Baptism - Third

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.” (Titus 3:5–8)

Thursday

Psalm 52

The Steadfast Love of God Endures

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of David, when Doeg, the Edomite, came and told Saul, "David has come to the house of Ahimelech."

52 Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man?

The steadfast love of God endures all the day.

2 Your tongue plots destruction,

like a sharp razor, you worker of deceit.

3 You love evil more than good,

and lying more than speaking what is right. Selah

4 You love all words that devour,

O deceitful tongue.

5 But God will break you down forever;

he will snatch and tear you from your tent;

he will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah

6 The righteous shall see and fear,

and shall laugh at him, saying,

7 "See the man who would not make

God his refuge,

but trusted in the abundance of his riches

and sought refuge in his own destruction!"

8 But I am like a green olive tree

in the house of God.

I trust in the steadfast love of God

forever and ever.

9 I will thank you forever,

because you have done it.

I will wait for your name, for it is good,

in the presence of the godly.

Deuteronomy 13:1-18

13 "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

6 "If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which neither you nor your fathers have known, 7 some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, 8 you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. 9 But you shall kill him. Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. 10 You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 11 And all Israel shall hear and fear and never again do any such wickedness as this among you.

12 "If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to dwell there, 13 that certain worthless fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, 14 then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently. And behold, if it be true and certain that such an abomination has been done among you, 15 you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, devoting it to destruction, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. 16 You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its open square and burn the city and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God. It shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again. 17 None of the devoted things shall stick to your hand, that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger and show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you, as he swore to your fathers, 18 if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all his commandments that I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God.

October 15

Matthew 13:1-23

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, 6 but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears, let him hear."

The Purpose of the Parables

10 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

"'"You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive."

15 For this people's heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.'

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. 17 For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

18 "Hear then the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. 23 As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

The Sacrament of Baptism - Fourth

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Rom. 6:4)

Friday

Psalm 53

There Is None Who Does Good

To the choirmaster: according to Mahalath. A Maskil of David.

53 The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity;
there is none who does good.

2 God looks down from heaven

on the children of man

to see if there are any who understand,
who seek after God.

3 They have all fallen away;

together they have become corrupt;

there is none who does good,
not even one.

4 Have those who work evil no knowledge,
who eat up my people as they eat bread,
and do not call upon God?

5 There they are, in great terror,
where there is no terror!

For God scatters the bones of him who encamps against you;
you put them to shame, for God has rejected them.

6 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When God restores the fortunes of his people,
let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

Deuteronomy 14:1-15:15

Clean and Unclean Food

14 “You are the sons of the Lord your God. You shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead. 2 For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

3 “You shall not eat any abomination. 4 These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, 5 the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. 6 Every animal that parts the hoof and has the hoof cloven in two and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. 7 Yet of those that chew the cud or have the hoof cloven you shall not eat these: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger, because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof, are unclean for you. 8 And the pig, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch.

9 “Of all that are in the waters you may eat these: whatever has fins and scales you may eat. 10 And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you.

11 “You may eat all clean birds. 12 But these are the ones that you shall not eat: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture, 13 the kite, the falcon of any kind; 14 every raven of any kind; 15 the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind; 16 the little owl and the short-eared owl, the barn owl 17 and the tawny owl, the carrion vulture and the cormorant, 18 the stork, the heron of any kind; the hoopoe and the bat. 19 And all winged insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten. 20 All clean winged things you may eat.

21 “You shall not eat anything that has died naturally. You may give it to the sojourner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

“You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Tithes

22 “You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. 23 And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. 24 And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses, to set his name there, 25 then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses 26 and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household. 27 And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

28 “At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. 29 And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

The Sabbatical Year

15 “At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release. 2 And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release what he has lent to his neighbor. He shall not exact it of his neighbor, his brother, because the Lord's release has been proclaimed. 3 Of a foreigner you may exact it, but whatever of yours is with your brother your hand shall release. 4 But there will be

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no poor among you; for the Lord will bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess— 5 if only you will strictly obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all this commandment that I command you today. 6 For the Lord your God will bless you, as he promised you, and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow, and you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you.

7 “If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, 8 but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. 9 Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and you be guilty of sin. 10 You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. 11 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’

12 “If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. 13 And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed. 14 You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As the Lord your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. 15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.

Matthew 13:24-43

The Parable of the Weeds

24 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ 28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29 But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

31 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

33 He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

Prophecy and Parables

34 All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. 35 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.”

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” 37 He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Confession

What is Confession?

Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

Saturday

Psalm 54

The Lord Upholds My Life

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David, when the Ziphites went and told Saul, “Is not David hiding among us?”

54 O God, save me by your name,
and vindicate me by your might.

2 O God, hear my prayer;
give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers have risen against me;
ruthless men seek my life;
they do not set God before themselves. Selah

4 Behold, God is my helper;

the Lord is the upholder of my life.

5 He will return the evil to my enemies;
in your faithfulness put an end to them.

6 With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you;
I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good.

7 For he has delivered me from every trouble,
and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

Deuteronomy 15:19-16:22

19 “All the firstborn males that are born of your herd and flock you shall dedicate to the Lord your God. You shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. 20 You shall eat it, you and your household, before the Lord your God year by year at the place that the Lord will choose. 21 But if it has any blemish, if it is lame or blind or has any serious blemish whatever, you shall not sacrifice it to the Lord your God. 22 You shall eat it within your towns. The unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as though it were a gazelle or a deer. 23 Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.

Passover

16 “Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2 And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the Lord your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the Lord will choose, to make his name dwell there. 3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. 4 No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. 5 You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, 6 but at the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt. 7 And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the Lord your God will choose. And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. 8 For six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God. You shall do no work on it.

The Feast of Weeks

9 “You shall count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. 10 Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you. 11 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell there. 12 You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

The Feast of Booths

13 “You shall keep the Feast of Booths seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your winepress. 14 You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns. 15 For seven days you shall keep the feast to the Lord your God at the place that the Lord will choose, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

16 “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.

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Justice

18 "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. 20 Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Forbidden Forms of Worship

21 "You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the Lord your God that you shall make. 22 And you shall not set up a pillar, which the Lord your God hates.

Matthew 13:44-58

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. 48 When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

New and Old Treasures

51 "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." 52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

53 And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, 54 and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" 57 And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." 58 And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Confession

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Sunday

Psalms 96:1-13

Worship in the Splendor of Holiness

- 96 Oh sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth!
2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
3 Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!
4 For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods.
5 For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
6 Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
7 Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!

- 8 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!
9 Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth!
10 Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!
Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity."
11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
12 let the field exult, and everything in it!
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
13 before the Lord, for he comes,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Isaiah 45:1-7

Cyrus, God's Instrument

- 45 Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped,
to subdue nations before him
and to loose the belts of kings,
to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed:
2 "I will go before you
and level the exalted places,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron,
3 I will give you the treasures of darkness
and the hoards in secret places,
that you may know that it is I, the Lord,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
4 For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I name you, though you do not know me.
5 I am the Lord, and there is no other,
besides me there is no God;
I equip you, though you do not know me,
6 that people may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is none besides me;
I am the Lord, and there is no other.
7 I form light and create darkness;
I make well-being and create calamity;
I am the Lord, who does all these things.

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Matt. 22:15-22

Paying Taxes to Caesar

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. 16 And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

Christian Questions with Their Answers

Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament

Christians may ask themselves these questions:

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?

Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

2. How do you know this?

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

3. Are you sorry for your sins?

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See Rom. 6:21, 23.

5. Do you hope to be saved?

Yes, that is my hope.

6. In whom then do you trust?

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Who is Christ?

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. How many Gods are there?

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Did the Father also die for you?

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.

11. How do you know this?

From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

12. What are the words of institution?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Christian Questions with Their Answers continued

13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?

Yes, I believe it.

14. What convinces you to believe this?

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.

18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5.

Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

Note: These questions and answers are no child's play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter; for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."



Family Home Devotions are also
available online at faithlcms.com