

THEME OF THE WEEK: He is Risen to Bring Us Forgiveness and Faith

The Resurrection of Jesus is our justification. Jesus identified earlier in John 3:15 that the crucifixion will be the foundation of all faith and trust..When we look upon the Son of Man, Who was lifted on a cross, we believe and are saved. Just as God’s people were saved by looking at the bronze serpent in Numbers 21. The Resurrection justifies our faith in Jesus. He is the Son of Man. He is the Son of God. Those who look to Him and trust Him will live, just as Job prophesied, “I know my Redeemer lives...at last He will stand upon the earth.” Amen and Amen.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: John 20:19-31: Jesus and the Holy Spirit drive out Unbelief

Jesus is escalating His interaction with His disciples. This culminates with Thomas, the unbeliever. Thomas’ lack of faith should condemn him. He “will never” believe that Jesus is raised unless he can stick his digits in His body. Jesus appears and grants his ridiculous request, but then Thomas is filled with the Holy Spirit when he hears the Word, which drives out his unbelief, and Thomas confesses Christ to be Lord and God. Jesus ends this silly, juvenile and reckless unbelief. This can only happen for us, like Thomas, when we have repeated and escalating interactions with Jesus Christ in His Word and Body and Blood. *Lord Jesus, by Your Word and Holy Spirit, increase in me the maturity of faith and drive out unbelief. Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 111: The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

It is only in the fear, love and trust of the Lord that we can see the grandeur of the Lord’s work and provision. This faith is ongoing, as David says. It is not casual. It is a daily and repetitious thing. We are confronted, daily, by our fallen nature, and the fallen nature of the world. We must not trust our flesh or princes and powers. Faith is the beginning place for our love and adoration of all God has done; His work, His promises. Faith then also helps us see that God’s work orders all things clearly and rightly. In Christ, we practice this faith well and our thanks and praise for God find their right location. *God our Father, complete our joy and grant us thankful hearts for all You have done for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: 1 John 5:4-10: Faith in Jesus Christ is Satisfying

We desire to be right. We try to be right in morality, therapy, power, war, policy, and law. These things cannot and do not satisfy our desire for righteousness. Only Christ, and faith in Him will satisfy. Even then, the old sinner will try to lead us away into captivity by cagey manipulation. God does not use cagey manipulation. He uses the public proclamation of Jesus Christ driven by the Holy Spirit. Christ publicly died. Christ publicly rose. It is faith in Jesus Christ that makes us right and true humans. All other attempts for righteousness end in lies. They will never satisfy. They crumble. The Gospel is our only hope for everlasting satisfaction. *O Lord, help me be content with Jesus. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: Job 19:25-27: Resolution in Resurrection

Job is experiencing God’s wrath. Job’s friends try to “help” but they are terrible preachers. They do not know how to distinguish the Law and the Gospel. Despite the malpractice, Job clings to the promise of God. Job makes it clear that, even if his friend’s terrible sermons kill him and pulverize his flesh, he will see God with his own eyes. The promise of the Resurrection drives Job’s hope and vision even in the midst of suffering and death. In this way Job is a preview of Christ, who trusted His Father and was faithful unto death knowing full well that he would live. *O Lord, in the midst of the many changes, chances and sufferings of this mortal world, help us to hold onto You as You are given to us in Promise made concrete in Word and Sacrament. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: John 21:15-19: Peter’s Reconciliation to Jesus

Christian Reconciliation is a clear priority for Jesus and His Church. Here, Jesus meets Peter face-to-face after Peter’s denial and withdrawal from His Lord. In firm compassion Jesus leads Peter from division to reconciliation and toward his new vocational horizon. Peter will not deny Christ’s sheep and withdraw from them. Peter is to feed and tend the flock that Christ fought valiantly to rescue from sin, death and the devil. In our day, we can only hope that those who have been called into the Office of Ministry would, like Peter, be quick and humble to reconcile and unwavering in their tender care for the Flock of Christ Jesus our Lord. *Lord of the Church, raise up men of conviction, humility, and care to shepherd Your Flock. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 1:17-2:3: Resident Aliens

We Christians are resident aliens, pilgrims in a foreign land. Yet, this is not often how we conduct ourselves in our daily lives. We are ever adjusting, and being adjusted, to the status-quo of this secular, fallen, profane world. Saint Michael cast Satan from heaven, BUT CHRIST HIMSELF OVERCAME SATAN FROM YOU BY HIS PREACHED WORD. Christ has won your heart and soul! How can we, who have citizenship in Heaven with Christ, muddle ourselves in this perishable, malicious, deceitful, hypocritic, slanderous world. Let us be aliens, pilgrims, wanderers, and nomads in this barren world. Our Residency is with Christ in Heaven’s Throne room. *Oh Christ Our Lord, guide me to the doors of Heaven and let me reside with thee, always, there. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 4: Commending our whole life to our Lord.

St. David commends his whole life to the Lord. He will lie down and rest in peace because the Lord supplies his safety. David knew and experienced the perils of mortal life. But he will not be tossed around by anxieties. God has proved to be trustworthy. God has showed His care for David, so he will continue to cry to the Lord for his good. Not only this, David will work to bring all Israel, and even all people, with him. “How long will you people chase after lies?!” God has shown good to the King, His people, and all creation. It is the same today. God continues to pour His good gifts upon His creation, but especially upon His people in the Church, in Jesus Christ our Lord. *Oh Lord, be my constant guide and companion on the way. Amen.*

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