



Daily Prayer
+ Saturday, May 23, 2020 +

Invocation

L: Christ is risen!

C: He is risen, indeed! Alleluia.

Psalmody

Psalm 110:1-5

L: The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

**C: The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.
Rule in the midst of your enemies!**

L: Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments;

C: from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.

L: The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

C: The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

**C: Glory be to Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.
Amen.**

Hymn

#489, v. 1-3

Hail thee, festival day!
Blest day to be hallowed forever;
Day when our Lord was raised,
Breaking the kingdom of death.

Hail thee, festival day!
Blest day to be hallowed forever;
Day when our Lord was raised,
Breaking the kingdom of death.

[1] All the fair beauty of earth
From the death of the winter arising!
Ev'ry good gift of the year
Now with its master returns:
Hail thee, festival day!
Blest day to be hallowed forever;
Day when our Lord was raised,
Breaking the kingdom of death.

[2] Rise from the grave now, O Lord,
The author of life and creation.
Treading the pathway of death,
New life You give to us all:
Hail thee, festival day!
Blest day to be hallowed forever;
Day when our Lord was raised,
Breaking the kingdom of death.

[3] God the Almighty, the Lord,
The ruler of earth and the heavens
Guard us from harm without;
Cleans us from evil within:
Hail thee, festival day!
Blest day to be hallowed forever;
Day when our Lord was raised,
Breaking the kingdom of death.

Reading

Acts 7:54-8:3

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said,

“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Devotional Message from Pastor Thompson

Our reading today from Acts 7 records the history of the first serious persecution of the early church which arose following the stoning of Stephen. Stephen was a man *"full of faith and of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 6:5) who testified to the death and resurrection of Jesus and his ascension to the right hand of the Father. Stephen preached Jesus as the Christ, the only Son of God, and he was rewarded for his efforts with martyrdom by the

council in Jerusalem. The opponents of the apostles were enraged by Stephen's sermon, so much so that they killed him. And as they were doing so, Stephen was given a revelation of heaven with Jesus himself standing up to witness and honor his death.

The other witness to the death of Stephen was Paul. At this time, Paul had yet to be converted to the faith and was, in fact, a ring-leader of the opposition to Jesus and the apostles.

The martyrdom of Stephen is a turning point in the history of the church. What followed was a "*great persecution against the church in Jerusalem*" which caused the church to be scattered. (Acts 8:1) This scattering, however, was to the advantage of the mission of the church. God would use this persecution to send the disciples out from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

God does this all the time. He uses negative circumstances in life, times of struggle and hardship, even the sins of wicked people, to bring to fulfillment his will on earth. God is almighty and he is good and he is able to work out all things for the good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

The death of Stephen was a tragedy and a wrong and a sin. Yet, God would use his death to scatter the church out into all the world, that many would come to hear the Gospel. God can work out all things for our good in the

end, even difficult and challenging situations. This calls for patience and endurance in times of trial. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

C: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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.

Collect

L: Father in heaven, send down upon all ministers of the Gospel, and upon the congregations committed to their care, a healthful spirit of your grace that we might please you in all things; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

L: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L: The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: Amen.

Hymn

#489, v. 4-6

[4] Jesus, the health of the world,
Creator of all and redeemer,
Son of the Father supreme,
Only-begotten of God:
Hail thee, festival day!
Blest day to be hallowed forever;
Day when our Lord was raised,
Breaking the kingdom of death.

[5] Spirit of life and of pow'r,
Now flow in us, fount of our being,
Light that enlightens us all,
Life that in all may abide:
Hail thee, festival day!
Blest day to be hallowed forever;
Day when our Lord was raised,
Breaking the kingdom of death.

[6] Praise to the giver of good!
O Lover and Author of concord,
Pour out Your balm on our days;
Order our ways in Your peace:
Hail thee, festival day!

Blest day to be hallowed forever;
Day when our Lord was raised,
Breaking the kingdom of death.