



Daily Prayer
+ Wednesday, May 27, 2020 +

Invocation

L: Christ is risen!

C: He is risen, indeed! Alleluia.

Psalmody

Psalm 112:1-6

L: Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments!

C: His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.

L: Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.

C: Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

L: It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs with justice.

C: For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever.

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

#492, v. 1-2

[1] On Christ's ascension I now build
The hope of my ascension;
This hope alone has always stilled
All doubt and apprehension;
For where the Head is, there as well
I know His members are to dwell
When Christ will come and call them.

[2] Since Christ returned to claim His throne,
Great gifts for me obtaining,
My heart will rest in Him alone,
No other rest remaining;
For where my treasure went before,
There all my thoughts will ever soar
To still their deepest yearning.

Reading

Acts 9:1-9

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Devotional Message from Pastor Thompson

Our reading today from Acts 9 records the events surrounding Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. This event is of so much importance in the life of the church that it should not be overlooked, but taken note of and remembered.

The Apostle Paul is a pivotal figure in the history of the early church: an apostle, an evangelist, a church planter, a seminary professor, a writer of Scripture, and a martyr. Paul served as the apostle to the Gentiles and his work and ministry laid the foundation of the church in the West.

And his conversion to the faith was dramatic. Paul began his relationship with Jesus and the church as an opponent. As Luke writes, *"But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."* (Acts 9:1-2)

By his own confession, Paul was chief of sinners and least of all the apostles. *"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."* (1 Timothy 1:15) *"For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."* (1 Corinthians 15:9)

Paul had persecuted the church and by persecuting the church was found to be living in opposition to Jesus himself. As Jesus said to him, "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*" (Acts 9:4)

Yet, God would convert Paul to the faith and use him to bring the Gospel to the West and to the entire world. Through Paul, the Gospel of the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ would be made known throughout Europe and the entire world. Jesus would use Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

To do so, however, Jesus chose to come to Paul in a unique, and personal way, through a personal revelation. The men who were traveling with Paul were speechless when this revelation occurred; they heard the voice, but saw no one. This personal experience of Jesus by Paul would be the foundation of his conviction that Jesus was the Christ of God, that he had died for our sins and had risen from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus was witnessed by all of the apostles, including Paul. And his witness to the risen Jesus is founded on this experience of his on the road to Damascus.

May the witness of Paul to the risen Jesus bring us hope and conviction and courage in the face of all obstacles. And may we remember Paul for the gift of apostleship which was given to him for our sakes. 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: Lord God Almighty, preserve those who travel, satisfy the wants of your creatures, and help those who call upon you in any need that they may have patience in the midst of suffering and, according to your will, be released from their afflictions; 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

#492, v. 3

[3] O grant, dear Lord, this grace to me,
Recalling Your ascension,
That I may serve you faithfully,
In thanks for my redemption;
And then, when all my days will cease,
Let me depart in joy and peace
In answer to my pleading.