

DEVOTION FOR THE SECOND SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 119:121-128

I have done what is just and right; do not leave me to my oppressors.

Give your servant a pledge of good; let not the insolent oppress me.

My eyes long for your salvation and for the fulfillment of your righteous promise.

Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love, and teach me your statutes.

I am your servant; give me understanding, that I may know your testimonies.

It is time for the Lord to act, for your law has been broken.

Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold.

Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Old Testament Reading: Numbers 34:1-29 *Divisions of the Promised Land*

New Testament Reading: Acts 12:1-25 *James killed, Peter rescued*

“GOD’S PURPOSE AND PLAN”

Following the martyrdom of Stephen and the scattering of the pilgrim believers, the gospel continued to spread and bear fruit within Jerusalem and surrounding area. But another threat arose, when King Herod saw an opportunity to get into the good books of his devout Jewish subjects, by persecuting the church. He first arrested and executed James the brother of John. When he saw how this pleased the Jewish leaders, he arrested Peter. Significantly this occurred at Passover, the season in which Jesus had been arrested, condemned and executed.

As Peter waited in prison for the completion of Passover, he probably thought the same fate awaited him as James, Stephen and Jesus before them. He was correct, but not now. Peter would follow in the steps of Jesus, even suffering death by crucifixion, but not now. Instead, the Lord sent an angel to release Peter, bring him out of prison and lead him to a safe place. Stephen and James the brother of John, had completed the service set out for them by the Lord, but Peter still had work to do in the Lord’s kingdom. The church saw God’s power to save and believed more firmly in God’s purpose and plan for their lives. The word of God increased and multiplied.

God has a plan and purpose for each of us. We acknowledge this each time we pray “*May Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*” In the letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul said we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which He prepared in advance for us to walk in. As long as we live on this earth, God has a purpose for us in Christ Jesus. Whether we see it clearly, or whether we can’t see it at all, God has a purpose for us in Christ Jesus. One day our purpose in this life will be fulfilled even as it was for Stephen, James and Peter. But God’s plan for us will never end. His plan is our salvation and His ultimate purpose in our lives is eternal life in His presence, for the sake of Jesus. In the meantime, the word of God continues to increase and multiply.

“O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST” (Public Domain)

O God, Our Help in Ages Past, our hope for years to come,

Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of Thy throne, Thy saints have dwelt secure;

Sufficient is Thine arm alone, And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood, Or earth received her frame,

From everlasting Thou art God, To endless years the same.

**A thousand ages in Thy sight Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night, Before the rising sun.**

Time, like an ever rolling stream, Soon bears us all away;

We fly forgotten as a dream, Dies at the opening day.

**O God, Our Help in Ages Past, Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last And our Eternal home!**

PRAYER

Lord Jesus send your holy angels to watch over us. Lead and guide us by your Holy Spirit, according to your will revealed in your holy word. Bless us to walk in the service you have prepared for us. Bless us always to know there is meaning in our living and eternal purpose in our dying. Bring us to the light of the eternal day with all believers in our share of your resurrection to life everlasting. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

THE CREED

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

BENEDICTION

Romans 8:28

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”