

DEVOTION FOR THE SECOND WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 119:97-104

Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.

I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.

I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.

I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore 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 31:1-31 *Midian Judged for leading Israel astray*

New Testament Reading: Acts 9:1-43 *Saul proclaims Jesus as Christ*

“THE CONVERSION OF PAUL”

It is said the Lord works in a mysterious way and this is most certainly true in the case of the apostle Paul. We first meet Paul in the book of Acts, where under his Hebrew name Saul, he checks the coats of those who participate in the murder of Stephen, the first Christian to die as a witness to the Saviour Jesus Christ. Although Paul approved of their actions, he did not join in casting stones. But he took what he had seen to heart and outdid his fellows in persecuting the Church of Jesus. Paul conducted a house to house search for Christians in Jerusalem. He visited the temple and synagogues looking for Christians, for at that time Christians still worshipped with their fellow Jews. And when he had done all the damage he could in Jerusalem, he went on a mission to Damascus, armed with letters of introduction from the Chief Priest, authorizing him to search the synagogues of Damascus for anyone who believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

Paul planned to destroy the Church, because he did not believe Jesus was the Christ; and because he believed Christians were perverting Judaism by teaching the grace of God, rather than obedience to the law, delivered through Moses and expounded by the prophets. But Jesus had other plans for Paul. Right when he thought he had everything figured out and that he was doing the will of God, Jesus whacked him on the head and essentially said, “Saul! You know nothing!!” Some might have expected the wrath of God to fall upon Paul. And why not? He certainly deserved wrath, hellfire and damnation. After all he was persecuting the Church of God. But what fell on Paul was not wrath, but the grace of God for the sake of Christ Jesus; the same grace Paul had sought to eradicate from the face of the earth. God planned to use Paul to take the message of His love in Christ Jesus to the ends of the earth. Jesus told Ananias whom He sent to baptize him, “*This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.*”

We have many reasons to remember the conversion of St. Paul, one of the most important is so we remember our own conversion and the effect of God’s grace in our lives. By His grace, God has opened our hearts to believe and to receive Jesus our Saviour. By His grace, God has given us a share in the reconciliation that is in Christ Jesus. He blesses us with His presence through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given to dwell within us. By His grace, He supports us in daily living and will lead us through the valley of the shadow of death and into His house to live forever. We remember the conversion of St. Paul, because of God’s grace in Christ Jesus. It is the gift of God’s mercy, forgiveness and love offered for all and given as a free gift to all who through the mysterious working of the Holy Spirit, come to faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

“JUST AS I AM, WITHOUT ONE PLEA” (Public Domain)
Just as I am, without one plea, But that thy blood was shed for me.
And that thou bidd’st me come to thee.
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am and waiting not, To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am though tossed about, With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am poor, wretched, blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown, Has broken ev’ry barrier down;
Now to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, as you opened the eyes of St. Paul through the gospel that he might see you as Saviour and serve you as Lord, we give thanks that you have opened our hearts to receive and our minds to believe. May your grace continue to work in our lives that we may live each day more fully in accordance with your righteousness! Bless us with your Holy Spirit that we may proclaim your name and your salvation in our lives that more may come to know you as Saviour and follow you as Lord. In your Name Lord Jesus. 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

2 John 1:3

*“Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father
and from Jesus Christ the Father’s Son in truth and love.”*