

Devotion for Pentecost 4

Psalm 124

**If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—let Israel now say—
if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when people rose up against us,
Then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us.
Then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us;
then over us would have gone the raging waters.**

Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth!

We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped!

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

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

2 Corinthians 6:1-7:16

Living As God's temples

How can we work together with God?

How do we unequally yoke ourselves to unbelievers?

What is the difference between 'godly and worldly grief'?

Mark 4:35-5:20

Jesus expresses His divine power over nature and evil spirits

Why were the disciples so afraid after Jesus' delivered them from the storm?

What is most important about Jesus' calming the sea?

Jesus told the man He freed from demons to tell what the Lord had done for him.

What has the Lord done for us?

His name was Legion

Matthew, Luke and Mark record a strange encounter between Jesus and a man (or men as Matthew speaks of two men) possessed by so many evil spirits that they are called 'legion.' Legion was a military term for a group of soldiers of between three thousand and six thousand. Apart from its strength of numbers, a Roman legion was composed of skilled, trained and seasoned warriors. It was a formidable fighting force. The evil spirits that possessed were a formidable force. They gave this man incredible strength, which struck fear in the hearts of the people who lived in the village and surrounding area. The man was truly dehumanized, first by the malevolent spirits that possessed him and also by the human society that feared him as a monster.

But this man was not a monster, he was a human being. This man was not even another man, he is everyman. This man in his misery is the embodiment of the human spiritual condition, in which we are all by nature in bondage to sin and under the control of the devil. This is our natural spiritual condition, described by Paul in Ephesians, saying, "*you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.*" When the man sees Jesus, he fears more torment and wants Him to go away. He cries out, "*I beg you, do not torment me.*" No matter how we see ourselves, good, bad or somewhere in the middle, when people find themselves in the presence of God, our first response is fear and our first reaction is to hide from the Lord or have Him go away.

But Jesus doesn't leave him to his demons. Instead, He sets him free from the spirits that enthralled him. He restores him to his right mind. He sends him back to be a member of the community that he might declare how much God has done for him and what He want to do for them too! Jesus came to set the prisoners free and to proclaim release to the captives.

The greatest imprisonment is the captivity is of the human spirit to sin, the devil and death. We are all imprisoned to sin and under the condemnation of death. We all have things that bind, torment and make us fearful. Through His life, death and resurrection, Jesus sets us free from bondage to sin, the control of the devil and the condemnation of eternal death. He brings peace to our troubled spirits. He brings peace to our relationships with others. He rehumanizes us by bringing us into a peaceful relationship with His Father in heaven.

Oh, for a Thousand Tongues (Public Domain)
Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing, My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King, The triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God, Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad, The honours of your name.

The name of Jesus calms our fears and bids our sorrows cease,
Sings music in the sinners ears, Brings life and health and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin; He sets the prisoners free.
His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood avails for me.

Look to the Lord who did atone, For sin O fallen race.
Look and be saved through faith alone, Be justified by grace.

See all our sins on Jesus laid; The Lamb has made us whole.
His soul was once an offering made, For every human soul.

To God all glory, praise and love, Be now and ever giv'n.
By saints below and saints above, The Church in earth and heaven.

Prayer

Lord and Saviour Jesus, we offer you our highest praise and greatest thanksgiving for setting us free from bondage to sin and the control of the devil and for lifting the condemnation of eternal death from our heads. Continue to cast all that is evil from our spirits. send your Holy Spirit to make our hearts His home. Keep us free from sinful entanglements. Lead us according to the truth of your word and bring us through this life to the fullness of life in your resurrection. In your Name. 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

Isaiah 61:1

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."

Bible Knowledge Quiz

What was the name of the man who married Ruth, from whom King David descended?

What book celebrates King Solomon's marriage?

What is the celebration of the return of Christ called in Revelation?

Answers to last week's quiz

He transformed water into wine (John 2:1-12).

His body (John 2:18-22).

Tentmaker (Acts 18:1-3).

