

Community of Grace

Daily Walk for the week of October 11, 2021

Give us a Clean Heart: For Seeking God

Written by Vicar Jared Fischer

Monday, October 11th

“Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:14-16. No man can give you complete forgiveness for your sin; only someone without sin would have that power. Jesus is the Christ, our messiah, the high priest without sin who may grant us mercy on God’s behalf as we approach His throne. Without Christ as our advocate, we suffer forever, with Christ we live forever. Prayer: “God, we give you thanks for the forgiveness of our sins. The promise made in holy baptism and fulfilled by Jesus Christ on the cross. Amen.”

Tuesday, October 12th

“Jesus said, ‘Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.’” Mark 10:29-31. The story of salvation ends on the most promis-

ing and undeserved note for the people of Earth. Despite being conflicting with sin, incapable to earn salvation and eternal life, the people of God are saved by God’s own Son sacrificing Himself on the cross. This gift for following God is incalculable. It is more than we could possibly amass in a lifetime. As we sacrifice for the good of God’s work in this world, we do so knowing that so much more awaits us in the life to come. Prayer: “God, you have given us a gift that we have no right to receive. The love that you have shown us is impossible for us to truly understand. We pray for a clean heart in seeking you, not for anything now, but for the life everlasting to come. Amen.”

Willing Servants: Journeying with Others Written by Mary Anderson

Wednesday, Oct. 13th Suffering Servant

“Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:4-6. Scholars believe that Isaiah is writing about Israel, the people who for hundreds of years did suffer at the hands of enemies but mostly because of their own sins. Moses as God’s servant called them a “stiff-necked people” in God’s eyes. We who know Jesus see him also as a suffering servant of God. He came to earth, God’s

Son, to save us from our sins. We know our sins are forgiven because he died on the cross for us. We know God loves us but we don't always act that way; we complain when we have to suffer pain, loss or other disruptions in our lives, instead of finding joy in all we have been given and in all our sins that are forgiven over and over. Prayer: Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us your gift of faith, that forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to what lies ahead, we may follow the way of your commandments and receive the crown of everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

Thursday, Oct. 14th Bearing Our Sins

"Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors." Isaiah 53:12. Not all of the people of Israel in Moses' time were sinners and those who followed God without question were an example to other nations around them. God brought all people's failings, sins and diseases on his servant (the faithful) and brought them all to himself. As we see in the New Testament, Jesus is that faithful servant who healed others of their diseases and forgave all their sins by his sacrifice on the cross. We too need to serve as an example to others of God's faithfulness and love for us in the midst of our diseases and failings, knowing his love for us, as ours should be for others, is unfailing. Prayer: Praise to you, God of mercy. As with Israel, you have accepted us with

all of our failings. Sweep us up in your arms where we can rest in your safety. Amen

Friday, Oct. 15th God Our Refuge

"Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone." Psalm 91:9-12. These verses of Psalm 91 are familiar; they were probably sung as liturgy and were the basis of the song we sing today, "On Eagles' Wings". God is our refuge and strength. He protects us from bad happenings and does send angels to guard us. Many of us have felt God's protection when we most needed it and I call those protecting us, "God's angels". We know this doesn't mean we are immune to all evil but are assured that God is with us during those times and after—we are never alone if we just reach out and call out to God for his help, strength and peace. You may be familiar with one poem (and illustration), "Footprints". We see 2 sets of prints when God is walking beside us and the times there are only one set of footprints are when God had to carry us. May we see God with us always, carrying us when needed and helping us to give that same help to others when needed. Prayer: "Welcome home!" Our hearts quiet at the sound of these words, welcoming God. Hold us secure when we're walking through the fire, when the scourge comes our way, and when we're falling. We are at home in

you. Amen

Saturday, Oct. 16th God Protects

“Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.” Psalm 91:14-16. God promises us all his protection. These verses, too, were probably sung by priests as a liturgy. When we study God’s word, we come to know his love for us and we love him too. Many other verses besides these ask us to pray to God, “call to him”, and he will hear us. He will be with us in trouble, especially good trouble, knowing our needs more than we do. When we are lonely or going through bad times, God is with us, understanding our needs and feelings and providing what’s best for us, in His time. Let us share these promises of God’s protection with others. Prayer: Sanctuary God, you will not be silent forever. Rise up as the creatures and creation you love suffer. Open your doors to those searching for refuge, beyond the reach of harm, safe in your loving hands. Amen

Sunday, Oct. 17th We Are All Important

“James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, ‘Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.’ And he said to them, ‘What is it you want me to do for you?’ And they said to him, ‘Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory’...Then Jesus said to them, ‘The cup that I drink, you will drink; and with the baptism which I am baptized, you will be

baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” Mark 10:35-36, 39b-40. My first thought when I read these verses in Mark, is “what upstarts!” Who do James and John think they are to be seated with Jesus above all the other disciples? Jesus nicely tells them that though they are doing some things that he has done, shared in baptism and the cup (communion as we know it today?) it is not his place to elevate them above the others; that is for God to decide. According to the Lutheran Study Bible, baptism and drinking from the cup are images of suffering-Jesus and later these two disciples would die for their faith. God loves us all but does not see us, his followers, as being better than others. We need to remember Jesus died so all our sins could be forgiven and we need to believe that is for all people, sharing that knowledge and God’s love with all. Prayer: Welcoming God, you invite us to your table, with our names written on the place cards in your own hand! No more wrangling about who is most important. You set a place for each of us. You are there serving us. Thanks be to God. Amen