INVOCATION
L: In the name of the Father and of the Son +
and of the Holy Spirit.
G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 72
A: Let the people praise you, O God.
   Let all the people praise you.
L: Endow the King with your justice, O GOD,
G: the royal Son with your righteousness.
L: He will defend the afflicted among the people
G: and save the children of the needy.
L: He will endure as long as the sun,
G: as long as the moon, through all generations.
L: He will be like rain falling on a mown field,
G: like showers watering the earth.
L: All kings will bow down to him,
G: and all nations will serve him.
L: All nations will be blessed through him,
G: and they will call him blessed.
L: Praise be to the LORD God, who alone does marvelous deeds.
G: May the whole earth be filled with his glory.
A: Let the people praise you, O God.
   Let all the people praise you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY
L: Almighty and everlasting God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and love; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READING & MEDITATION see next page

PRAYER
LORD’S PRAYER
A: 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.

VERSE OF THE DAY
A: Jesus Christ has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (1 Timothy 1:10b cf. NIV)

BENEDICTION
L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
   and the love of God
   and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.
A: Amen

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READING AND MEDITATION:

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost: The way to heaven is narrow. Mere outward attachment to the family of God is not sufficient—only through faith in Christ can we enter heaven. The door is narrow and Christ commands us to make every effort to enter it, so the Church prays, “that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command.” Although the door is narrow, it is open to all, and the saints will come from all nations to behold the glory of the Lord.

As you study this week, seek to find the connecting theme in all the lessons by using Luther’s Four Big Barber Questions to ponder and discuss each individual reading:

1. What is God saying to me in this lesson?
2. For what does this lesson lead me to give thanks?
3. What sins does this lesson lead me to confess?
4. For what does this lesson lead me to pray?

THE GOSPEL: LUKE 13:22-30
The narrow door to eternity is open only to the spiritual children of Abraham. The Chosen Nation of Israel thought that they had every right to enter through the door. After all, they were part of the Old Covenant. But their lack of faith in Christ and reliance on themselves left them locked out from paradise. In the new Covenant, entrance into the Kingdom of God is open only to those with faith in the Christ.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: HEBREWS 12:18-24
The giving of the Old Covenant left the Israelites quaking in fear at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Divine justice would not leave the guilty unpunished. But the New Covenant invites all the nations to come to Mt. Zion in joyful assembly with the confidence that they have been judged innocent and made perfect through Jesus, the Messiah. Sprinkled with blood, we enter the narrow door to paradise.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: JUDGES 7:1-8
Why is it so hard to remember that the good we do is not from our strength or ability, but from grace of God? If we enter the narrow door of heaven, it will not be our efforts that got us there. Yet boasting in ourselves is a common problem. The work-righteous attitude of our sinful nature seeks only to glorify self. When Gideon carried out the will of the Lord against Midian, the Lord chose only a handful to serve his purpose, so Israel couldn’t boast in its own strength but only in the strength of the Lord. There are certainly those today who boast in their own spirituality and hold others to their own piety. They are confident in their own understanding and ignore their need for the Savior. Many will question the way the Lord brings about his eternal salvation. But at the end of time it will be those whom he has chosen that will accompany the Lamb to his eternal victory celebration.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON: ROMANS 9:1-9
There is no human birthright that gives access through the narrow door. Not even being a descendant of the patriarchs would do it—only faith in Christ Jesus and the birthright given by our second birth into the true Israel of God. The Word of the Lord had gone out to the nations while Israel remained disobedient and obstinate. Even amongst such apostasy the Lord, by grace, kept a remnant of the faithful to preserve the ancestry of salvation. All believers, from all nations, will join this remnant, by grace, for eternity.

My takeaways:

What major theme(s) connect(s) all the lessons?