INVOCATION

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

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 119a

A: Your Word is a lamp to my feet
   and a light for my path.

L: Blessed are they whose ways are blameless,

G: who walk according to the law of the LORD.

L: Blessed are they who keep his statutes

G: and seek him with all their heart.

L: You have laid down precepts

G: that are to be fully obeyed.

L: Oh, that my ways were steadfast

G: in obeying your decrees!

L: Then I would not be put to shame

G: when I consider all your commands.

L: I will praise you with an upright heart

G: as I learn your righteous laws.

A: Your Word is a lamp to my feet
   and a light for my path.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: O Lord Jesus Christ, preserve the congregation of believers with your never-failing mercy. Help us avoid whatever is wicked and harmful, and guide us in the way that leads to our salvation; for you live and reign with the Father 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: Your words became a joy to me, and the delight of my heart. (Jeremiah 15:16 cf. RSV)

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
READING AND MEDITATION:
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost: The life of faith is one of true humility. But it is humility rendered by faith in the promise of God that those who exalt themselves on earth will be humiliated for eternity, but those who humble themselves now will be exalted.

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 14:1, 7-14
It is difficult, perhaps, for most of us to imagine ourselves in this specific situation. We are so far removed from royalty and subjects, masters and slaves. First, Jesus speaks to the immediate situation of the banquet he was attending and the actions he saw there. But then he also drives home his point on humility with a parable. As Jesus warns against sinful pride, he warns those who would promote themselves and seek places of honor in the presence of the Host of the Heavenly banquet. Only those who humbly wait on the King’s merciful acknowledgment will find eternal reward at his table.

For now, the King calls on us to humbly serve those in need. This is not for personal gain. Rather, humble service to the citizens of his kingdom is a display of humble service to the King.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: PROVERBS 25:6,7
Sinful pride can be one’s undoing. Better is humility in the presence of the king than humiliation in his court. These words of Solomon are nearly identical to the words of Jesus in the Gospel today. It would be easy to dismiss these words as simply dining etiquette for the royal court. But these words touch nearly every aspect of life for the believer. Humble service before the King of heaven and humble service in his kingdom mark those who will dine at the King’s table for eternity.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: HEBREWS 13:1-8
Sad to say, humble service to those in need is not only rare in our society, it often results in surprise, even suspicion, at the unexpected kindness poured out by the heart of faith. For us who have known the mercy of the King, we cannot help but reflect humble service of the King’s Son in our daily lives. Yes, our kindness will often be ridiculed or even rejected. But we can boldly act in cheerful confidence knowing that the King acknowledges and aids us in our humble service.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON: JAMES 2:1-13
These words from James reiterate the lesson from Jesus in the closing verses of the Gospel. Self-exalting pride can also be found in the display of favoritism towards those who can elevate our societal position or somehow benefit us. James warns that those who show such favoritism are self-exalting lawbreakers headed for judgment. Rather, as humble servants who have known the mercy of the King, show mercy to all those in need. For it is by the King’s mercy that we will spend eternity beyond the reach of his exacting judgment.

My takeaways:

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