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

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 119b
A: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.
L: Teach me, O LORD, to follow your decrees;
G: then I will keep them to the end.
L: Give me understanding, and I will keep your law
G: and obey it with all my heart.
L: Direct me in the path of your commands,
G: for there I find delight.
L: Turn my eyes away from worthless things;
G: preserve my life according to your Word.
L: Fulfill your promise to your servant,
G: so that you may be feared.
L: How I long for your precepts!
G: Preserve my life in your righteousness.
A: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

PRAYER OF THE DAY
L: Almighty and eternal God, you govern all things in heaven and on earth. In your mercy hear our prayers and grant us your peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READING & MEDITATION
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: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end. (Lamentations 3:22, 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:

Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany: The Savior’s Sermon: Don’t worry! Your heavenly Father’s steadfast love is constant (Verse of the Day), and he wants to give you peace based not on an abundance of possessions but on the contentment that comes from living out of his hand. The Church prays for God’s peace (Prayer of the Day) that teaches Christians that we don’t need to worry about anything, but can learn to trust and be content with our Father’s care.

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: MATTHEW 6:24-34

Slaves can only have one master. You are either a slave to stuff or a slave to God. Material blessings are not evil—God knows that we need them. But a frantic pursuit of earthly blessings or a constant worry about our bodily lives suggests an obedience to the wrong master. When we acknowledge God as the source of our security, we can work hard, pray hard, and then accept what comes from the hand of our Father. Worrying is worthless: it is ineffective and unnecessary. In his sermon today, Jesus says, “Don’t worry!” It is not a harsh command, but the gentle reminder of a parent to a child concerned about things he needn’t be. Jesus tells us to look at his Father’s love, and then draw the logical and inevitable conclusion: Therefore...therefore, do not worry.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-13

This is the last lesson in the seven-week series of readings from 1 Corinthians. Paul did not let his hardships drag him into worry or despair. Though slandered and cursed, the apostles sought God’s kingdom. Though treated badly, they kept their hope in Christ. A Christian who puts his hope and peace in the hands of God will find trust and contentment in any situation.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON:

GENESIS 32:6-12

Jacob had good reason to worry. He had robbed his brother of his birthright and then robbed him of his blessing. He had fled from Esau’s rage years earlier, but now had to bring his family back into the territory of a brother who certainly must hate him. Jacob sent a peace offering, but heard the news that his brother’s men of war were marching toward his camp. In great fear and distress Jacob made plans for the worst and then did the best thing a Christian faced with worry can do: he prayed. He remembered God’s promises and all his gracious acts, and then sought his peace in the hand of his God. Here is a model prayer for Christian peace: “I am afraid…but you have said...”

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-13 (14-20)

God’s peace teaches us contentment whatever our lot in life. Yes, contentment must be learned. Paul learned to find his peace not in health or wealth, but in Christ. Whether well fed or hungry, in plenty or in want, we can live without worry because the peace of God guards our hearts and lives. Godly contentment frees us to use our material blessings like the Philippians did, as fragrant offerings to God.

My takeaways:

Visit www.BreadForBeggars.com for more resources.