



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
ASH WEDNESDAY — YEAR A**

INVOCATION

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

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 51a

**A: Be merciful, O Lord,
for we have sinned.**

L: Have mercy on me, O God,

G: according to your unfailing love.

L: Wash away all my iniquity,

G: and cleanse me from my sin.

L: For I know my transgressions,

G: and my sin is always before me.

L: Against you, you only, have I sinned

G: and done what is evil in your sight.

L: Surely I was sinful at birth,

**G: sinful from the time my mother conceived
me.**

L: Hide your face from my sins,

G: and blot out all my iniquity.

L: Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

**G: and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain
me.**

**A: Be merciful, O Lord,
for we have sinned.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Almighty and merciful God, you never despise what you have made and always forgive those who turn to you. Create in us such new and contrite hearts that we may truly repent of our sins and obtain your full and gracious pardon; through your Son, Jesus Christ 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: Return to the Lord, your God, for he is
gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and
abounding in steadfast love. (Joel 2:13)**

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:

Ash Wednesday: Return to the Lord! Ash Wednesday calls us to a forty-day journey of repentance and renewal. The ashes upon our heads testify: Man, you are mortal; prepare to meet your God! Recognition of our sin leads us to cry for mercy and trust in God's promised forgiveness. Note the sweet Gospel phrases that dominate the thought of every part of the Propers. Return to the Lord, for he is gracious. Having obtained his pardon, we seek a renewal of our faith and life that we might live as baptized children of God.

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 18:9-14

The Lenten call to repentance and renewal begins by addressing the sin in man. Sin drives a man to two extremes: pride and despair. The tax collector had to wear his sin in society like a scarlet letter. The Pharisee hid his guilt beneath a veneer of righteousness. Which man has more to teach us? We have such a high opinion of our own righteousness! We may fool our friends; we may even fool our family. But the ashes on our head remind us that we will meet God, and he is not fooled by our shined-up exterior. He can see the depravity and decay within. The man who understands this beats his breast and cries, *Kyrie eleison!* That man returns to the Lord and finds justification in Christ, pardon from his forgiving God, and real righteousness.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 59:12-20

Returning to the Lord means understanding the depth of our sinfulness and the multitude of our offenses. It means despairing of our own worth or ability and recognizing that we have all together become corrupt. Our offenses are ever with us, so God himself worked the salvation we could not; he provided the righteousness we failed to give. The call to repentance reminds us that the Lord is coming again, clothed in righteousness and salvation, but also in vengeance and zeal. He comes to repay his

enemies according to what they have done (v 18), but for the repentant, he repays them according to what *he* has done (v 16). Return to the Lord, and your Redeemer will come!

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B—6:2

In order to reconcile us to himself, God acted. *I* heard you. *I* helped you. God made the Sinless sinful that sinners might be made righteous. At the beginning of our Lenten walk, Paul reminds us the solution for sin is found in the Savior. Return to God because now is the time of God's favor. He worked the Great Exchange that we might be reconciled *to* God *by* God. Return to the Lord, the God of grace and mercy and love!

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON:

NUMBERS 21:4-9

Only sin can turn a gift as gracious as manna into something detestable. Only sin could lead a people to speak against the God who had worked such mighty miracles for them. So God worked another miracle—one meant to cause the people to return to him. The venomous bites of the snakes brought God's people to their knees in repentance, and God quickly offered pardon and safety with a type of Christ. Notice that the people asked that God remove the snakes, but the snakes stayed. The Lord chastises those he loves. Notice, too, that this is the last complaint of God's people until they entered the Promised Land!

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:

2 CORINTHIANS 7:8-13A

God wants us to have godly sorrow over sin that leads to salvation. Godly sorrow brings repentance, not regret. Worldly sorrow leads only to regret that binds and imprisons us in our past sins. Godly sorrow leads to repentance that opens the prison doors and sets us free from the past, free to return to God, free to sin no more.

My takeaways:

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