



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
PENTECOST 12 — 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 73

**A: Surely, it is God who saves me;
I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my strong-hold
and my sure defense,
and he will be my Savior.**

L: I am always with you, O LORD;

G: you hold me by my right hand.

L: You guide me with your counsel,

G: and afterward you will take me into glory.

L: Whom have I in heaven but you?

**G: And earth has nothing I desire besides
you.**

L: My flesh and my heart may fail,

**G: but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.**

**A: Surely, it is God who saves me;
I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my strong-hold
and my sure defense,
and he will be my Savior.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve. Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of 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: Now faith is being sure of what we hope
for and certain of what we do not see.
(Hebrews 11:1)**

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:

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost: The Christian answers doubt with faith. Doubt is the unfortunate companion of faith. Wherever faith clings to the promises of God, doubt is always right there lingering in the back of our mind, constantly asking the serpent's Garden question, "Did God really say?" How striking to think that we must have faith in God before we can doubt him! Today's lessons show us believers who had faith in God and his abilities to save them, but yet doubted when his plans or purpose failed to match theirs. In each case, it is adversity that fights against faith and allows its unfortunate companion to rear its ugly head. And in each case, the true answer to doubt is not found in the great miracle that removes adversity, but in the still small voice of our Savior God whispering in his Word. Today we hear our Savior God ask us, "Why did you doubt?", and we see that the Christian answers doubt with faith.

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 14:22-33

Doubt and faith rose and fell like the waves of the sea that dark night. The evangelist paints a picture of frantic effort against a storm with little progress. Then Jesus came—and note the way he came! He did not simply appear among them, as he could have. He did not fly or float. He walked on the water. The very thing they had been fighting, the water that threatened to take their life, Jesus walked on it like it was dry ground. What a Savior we have that walks on the waters of all our greatest fears! See the faith in the disciples grow! See Peter show it in his own miraculous walk. But, all too often, doubt is the unfortunate companion of faith. Though Jesus was standing on the water, Peter feared it. What pulls our eyes of faith away from Jesus? What are the waves and wind in our lives that make us doubt him? To Peter, Jesus asked, "Why did you doubt?" He gave no answer. What could he say? With Jesus there is never any need to doubt. How sad that we so often do! Rather, let us focus on the Savior and watch our faith swell as the disciples' did when their

doubts vanished, and they gave the greatest evidence of faith: they worshipped that man from Nazareth for what he truly was, the Son of God.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: 1 KINGS 19:9-18

Elijah's great victory of faith was followed closely by great adversity. From the heights of Mt. Carmel, Elijah fell into the depths of frustration. Even after such a great display of God's glory, this evil queen issued her death threats. Even after such a powerful display of God's might, a general spiritual renewal did not occur. Elijah had faith in God's power, but he doubted when God's plans and purpose did not match his own. Hadn't the people broken the covenant? Why didn't God come and make things right with earthquake, wind, and the fire of judgment? Elijah went to the site where the covenant had been made, to the mountain of God where God had come once before in fire and wind and earthquake. There Elijah brought his case against the people of Israel. God answered his prophet not with great acts of power, but rather with quiet words of promise. God displayed all of his power, so that his display of grace might be all the more astounding. He would not come in judgment, but in grace for his elect. The still small voice of his message would accomplish all that he desired. It would tear down kingdoms and establish dynasties. It would bring judgment on his enemies and reserve a people for himself. Elijah heard the Word of God and had to wonder, "Why did I doubt?"

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: ROMANS 9:1-5

This is the eleventh in a series of sixteen lessons that run through Pentecost 17. Paul explains the roots of the Christian Church. He speaks of his brothers, the children of Israel, and asks them, "Why did you doubt? Why did you doubt that salvation is by grace, not by works? Why did you doubt the Messiah long promised was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth?" The unbroken line of God's acts of grace left Israel no reason to doubt. Yet they did. And God's answer to that doubt? He chose a remnant by grace and spoke to them in the gentle whisper of God made man.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: EXODUS 14:10-31

The children of Israel during their great exodus aptly displayed that doubt is the unfortunate companion of faith. As they made their way from Egypt to Canaan, they scurried back and forth between the poles of faith and doubt with alarming regularity. Faith had led them to follow Moses and the Pillar into the desert. Now, however, with the sea in front of them and a great army behind them, faith fled and doubt reigned. Adversity made them forget the God of the Passover. Moses came with words so fitting for doubting hearts in the face of adversity, “You need only be still.” As the psalmist said, “Be still and know that I am God.” God’s plan will prevail. The very water they thought was preventing their escape would in fact be the cause of their deliverance. The very army they thought would destroy them would in fact be destroyed. The troubles that seem to afflict us or hem us in, are, in fact, part of the plan for the glory of God and the salvation of man. It is only after the parted sea finds its former home that we recognize the grace of God’s hand in our lives. And we hear the gentle whisper of our Savior God, “Why did you doubt?”

My takeaways:

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

SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON: JAMES 1:2-8, 12

The trials we face in this sinful world can make us terrified like the disciples, or frustrated like Elijah, or despondent like the children of Israel before the sea. James calls us out as living like double-minded men when we doubt our God. He preaches a law to hearts that need to hear it: “Do not doubt!” But God promises that in the midst of the storms of life, we can listen and also hear his gentle whisper. “It is I. Don’t be afraid!” When we hear his voice, the waves of doubt recede and faith finds its place again, making us once more sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

My takeaways: