



**DAILY BREAD  
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS  
PENTECOST 3 —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 119c**

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

L: Oh, how I love your law!

**G: I meditate on it all day long.**

L: I have more insight than all my teachers,

**G: for I meditate on your statutes.**

L: I have more understanding than the elders,

**G: for I obey your precepts.**

L: I have kept my feet from every evil path

**G: so that I might obey your Word.**

L: I have not departed from your laws,

**G: for you yourself have taught me.**

L: How sweet are your words to my taste,

**G: sweeter than honey to my mouth!**

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

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

L: O God, the strength of all who trust in you,  
mercifully hear our prayers. Be gracious to us in our  
weakness and give us strength to keep your  
commandments in all we say and do; 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: God was in Christ reconciling the world to  
himself, and entrusting to us the message of  
reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19)**

**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:

**Third Sunday after Pentecost:** The Holy Ministry is filled with people who God called out of his boundless mercy. Nothing else could explain the choices for ministers that God made! He calls such sinful and weak men to fill this office. Only mercy can explain the men he chose in this Sunday's lessons: a despised tax collector, an exiled killer, a persecutor of Christians. How poignant these lessons are, when we remember that each lesson was penned by the unworthy minister called into service by God's boundless mercy!

**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 9:9-13

The call of Matthew manifests the mercy of God. The Pharisees knew the Scriptures and walked the walk. They left no sacrifice undone. Their outward righteousness and place of respect among the people were the mirror opposite of the man sitting in the tax collector's booth. Despised as a quisling and swindler, the publican's only companions were the other "sinners" who lived beyond the pale of Jewish Law. Yet the call of Christ to faith and apostleship did not come to these outwardly righteous Pharisees, but to the tax collector. So powerful was the call that Matthew left his station and his old life behind and followed. Jesus bypassed the Pharisees because they knew sacrifice but were blind to mercy. When they questioned Christ's acts of mercy, Jesus tells the teachers of Israel to go and learn Scripture, to see the difference between mercy and sacrifice...to see that their claims of righteousness were nothing but more whitewash on tombs. Can they really be healthy when they are blind to mercy for their brothers, blind to the prophets, and blind to the

Messiah? Christ wanted different ministers than these. He wanted ministers who knew the mercy of God and would share the mercy of God. So he turned to the sinner, Matthew, and called him from his life of sin to a life of ministry with those merciful words, "Follow me."

*My takeaways:*

## FIRST LESSON: HOSEA 5:15-6:6

Jesus' words of condemnation for the Pharisees came from the mouth of Hosea, a prophet long familiar with unfaithful Israel. Like wanton Gomer, Israel had whored herself to false gods. In his mercy, God called to the people, the priests, and the nobility—and their response seemed so good! At first glance, the words that Israel spoke (6:1-3) seem a beautiful model of repentance. But this is unrepentant Israel's idea of "repentance" that had as little to do with godly repentance as the Pharisees' "righteousness" had to do with godly service. There is no confession of guilt; no fruits follow; God does not receive it. Their  $\pi\alpha\tau\eta\rho$  burned off with the morning sun. Merely going through the motions of repentance did not cut it. Merely performing the outward functions of the Law did not suffice. God wanted an admission of guilt, an earnest seeking, but he did not find it. Only the  $\pi\alpha\tau\eta\rho$  of God could solve their problem. "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them." (Hosea 14:4)

*My takeaways:*

## SECOND LESSON: ROMANS 4:18-25

This is the second of sixteen lessons from book of Romans (Pentecost 2-17). How could God choose the ministers he did? How could God choose the people he did? How can God continue to love us after all the times we turn our back on him? Because of an alien righteousness, long promised and now credited to us and to all who believe in him who raised Jesus from the dead.

*My takeaways:*

**SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON:  
EXODUS 3:1-15**

We see the pre-incarnate Christ calling Moses into service by his mercy. What else could explain the choice? Moses had already proven himself a failure at delivering God's people from bondage. He was an exiled killer, living in the wilds of Midian after fleeing the court of Pharaoh. No wonder Moses asked, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh?" Everyone called into God's service asks this question of themselves again and again. It comes from knowing that only mercy can explain God choosing us to serve him. But when the minister stops marveling at God's mercy and instead starts questioning God's choice, then God's answer rings out loud and true: I. Not you. I. Thirteen times in the NIV God uses the first person pronoun. Can the point be clearer? Your call is by my mercy, and the ability to perform the service I give you comes only from me, the great I AM. What comfort for both preacher and parishioner!

*My takeaways:*

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:  
1 TIMOTHY 1:12-17**

Paul tells the end result of a bright light on the Damascus road—Christ had come to call Saul to service by his mercy. But what an astounding choice! Such a man, to such an office! Only mercy could explain why Christ picked Paul, the worst of sinners. Could there have been a more unlikely man to call as Apostle to the Gentiles? The reason had nothing to do with Paul. It had to do with Christ and his μακροθυμία. It had to do with us: Jesus wanted us to know that the call to ministry is not based on merit, but on mercy. Here is the example *par excellence* of ministry based on Christ's mercy and not human merit: Saul, the persecutor, is called into ministry as Paul, the Apostle. When he reflects on God calling him to ministry, Paul cannot help but sing the praises of the King of mercy.

*My takeaways:*

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