



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
PENTECOST 6 —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 89

**A: At the works of your hands, O Lord,
I lift up my voice in song;
I sing for joy.**

L: I will sing of the LORD'S great love forever;

**G: I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.**

L: I will declare that your love stands firm forever,

**G: that you established your faithfulness in
heaven itself.**

L: The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,

**G: your faithfulness too, in the assembly of
the holy ones.**

L: O LORD God Almighty, who is like you?

**G: You are mighty, O LORD, and your
faithfulness surrounds you.**

L: Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim
you,

**G: who walk in the light of your presence,
O LORD.**

L: They rejoice in your name all day long;

G: they exult in your righteousness.

**A: At the works of your hands, O Lord,
I lift up my voice in song;
I sing for joy.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: O God, you have prepared joys beyond
understanding for those who love you. Pour into our
hearts such love for you that, loving you above all
things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed
all that we can desire; 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: If anyone would come after me, he must
deny himself and take up his cross and follow
me. (Mark 8:34b)**

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:

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost: The Christian loves God above all things. The beautiful Prayer of the Day sets the tone for the Sunday. The Church prays for the love of God that we might always love him above all things. The Verse of the Day describes this total commitment to Christ as denying ourselves and carrying our crosses. The lessons warn of the earthly ramifications of such love, but also point to the promised heavenly rewards.

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 10:34-42

Persecution reprioritizes life and sharpens faith. However, the further Christians get from the lions' roar or the martyr's stake, the easier it is for us to make our faith in Christ merely moderately important in our lives. Family, friends, work, health—these all vie for our time and attention, and our faith gets pushed further and further down the list. When life is not so bad, who needs the promises of a better life to come? How true Luther's words of warning: *nulla persecutio est tota persecutio!* How false our thoughts that faith can be only moderately important! C.S. Lewis said, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." In the Gospel, Christ asserts the all-important nature of faith, and the all-consuming nature of discipleship. Jesus calls us to love him above all—more than family or friends, more than personal safety or even life itself. Such total commitment to Christ will not bring peace to your life, but constant conflict with the sinful world around you. Since he did not come to bring peace, but a sword, he points the Christian to rewards in heaven, kept safe by the One who sent him.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: JEREMIAH 28:5-9

The false prophet Hananiah proclaimed a message that pleased everyone: within two years the captives and sacred articles would return from Babylon. Even Jeremiah liked the sound of Hananiah's words. He was quick to add his "Amen" to the concept. However, Jeremiah knew that Hananiah was dead wrong. False preachers have long promised health and wealth to God's followers. Christianity, however, is not built on a prosperity Gospel, but on the cross for both Christ and Christians. How difficult it must have been for Jeremiah to contradict this false prophet who was saying everything the people wanted to hear! Yet God has called the Christian to love him above all things. Loving God above all means loving God's Word, even when it's not what people want to hear. Jeremiah spoke the truth, and God had his back. Jeremiah prophesied that God would stop Hananiah from speaking lies in his name, and within two months the man was dead. Loving God above all brings conflict, but God promises to be with us through it all.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: ROMANS 6:1B-11

This is the fifth in a series of sixteen lessons that run through Pentecost 17. In this Sunday's context, this lesson provides an excellent opportunity to preach on the Fourth Part of Baptism from the Small Catechism: The meaning of baptism for our daily life. The Christian is able to love God above all things because he was buried with Christ through baptism into death. The resurrection to faith created a new man freed from sin and free to live wholly and completely for Christ. Our baptism enables us to love God above all, and it empowers us to do so daily.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: EXODUS 32:15-29

Aaron had seen God standing on the sapphire pavement. The seventy elders had partaken of a divine banquet on the mountain (Exodus 24). And only forty days later, they lost it all. Unwilling to face conflict for God, they gave in to the people who wanted to love pleasure, flesh, and idols rather than the God who brought them up out of Egypt. Aaron's feeble excuses remind us of our own shallow

rationalizations for failing to love God above all things. The Levites, however, rallied to Moses' call and showed that they loved the LORD even more than they loved their brothers. Total commitment to God did not bring peace, but a sword. Yet their devotion was rewarded by God who gave them the high privilege of being his special servants.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:

1 JOHN 2:15-17

Do not love the world or anything in the world. How easy that is to say; how difficult to do! St. John repeats Christ's call for total commitment. Love for the world and the love of the Father are mutually exclusive. Loving God above all things means recognizing that our cravings, our lust, and our pride come from this world which will not last. So why do we put our love in things that are so transitory? Empires fall, desire wanes, relationships fail, accomplishments crumble. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* God calls the Christian to love him above all these things and receive a life that will last forever.

My takeaways:

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