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

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 133-134
A: Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.
L: How good and pleasant it is
G: when brothers live together in unity!
L: For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
G: even life forevermore.

PRAYER OF THE DAY
L: Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift of grace that we come into your presence and offer true and faithful service. Grant that our worship on earth may always be pleasing to you, and in the life to come give us the fulfillment of what you have promised; 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: The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

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:

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost: The Church is meant for all people. The Prayer of the Day reminds us that it is only by God’s gift of grace that we come into his presence to offer true and faithful service. Today’s lessons teach that the gift of grace given to Israel, God also intended to give through Israel to the world. The Church is meant for all people: a display of God’s mercy and a result of the living and active Word 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: MATTHEW 15:21-28

Note the context of chapter 15. The children of Israel—and especially their religious leaders—found nothing but fault in Jesus of Nazareth. The chosen people of God to whom belonged the patriarchs, the promises, the covenant and the temple, could see nothing in Christ but a breaker of man-made traditions. Jesus’ words to them could not be harsher. They were the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophesy: their outward rites and rituals belied an inward spiritual emptiness. The very people who should have been closest to Christ were most distant. So Jesus distances himself from them and goes to the Gentile land of ancient paganism, Tyre and Sidon. There he finds a most inexplicable thing: the Greek text notes it as both surprising and extraordinary: ἴδοι γυνὴ Χαναναία. After leaving the land of God’s chosen people, Jesus finds a woman—a Canaanite woman—who received the Word of God and trusted in God’s promises in a way that shamed every one of the religious teachers.

FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 56:1, 6-8

The male leaders of God’s people failed to recognize him, but behold! Look carefully! A woman, a Canaanite woman, cries out, “Kyrie eleison!” And to whom does she cry? She called him “Lord, Son of David,” with all of its messianic implications. How amazing is the grace of God that chooses the weak and lowly things of the world to shame the wise and proud. Only twice are we told that Jesus called someone’s faith great. Both were Gentiles, and both exhibited a God-given trust in the Word and promises of God made man.

My takeaways:
SECOND LESSON: ROMANS 11:13-15, 28-32

This is the twelfth in a series of sixteen lessons that run through Pentecost 17. On this day celebrating faith for the Gentiles, St. Paul warns his Gentile readers against any pride on their part or prejudice against the Jews. Note the point of this Apostle to the Gentiles: he reaches out to the Gentile with the hopes of also winning the Jew. Verse 15 makes the point of our Gospel lesson. Rejection by the people of Israel meant Christ would be preached to the Gentiles. How personal this statement is for Paul! How many synagogues had he preached in, only to be cast out and make his way to the Gentiles? But yet Israel retains its dual status: enemies that are beloved. When the nation of Israel turned from its Savior God and his Messiah, God set his face against them as enemies of the Gospel. But yet God’s call and his Word of promise remain. Such is grace, that God does not love the lovable, but makes the unlovable his dear possession. Just look at what he did with the disobedient Gentiles! Both Jew and Gentile apart from Christ languish in the fearful prison called “Disobedience.” God shut them up together that locked thus, all hope and all self-help were gone. Disobedience was all they had and all they could bring forth. Only one door permits one to leave this prison, and it is inscribed: “God’s Mercy.”

(R.C.H. Lenski)

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: JOSHUA 2:8-21

It is reasonable that spies would hide themselves in a house of prostitution. It is reasonable, too, that this prostitute Rahab tried to cut a deal to preserve her life in the face of the Israelite onslaught that the whole city knew was coming. But what reason is there that she did it out of faith in the LORD? What reason did she find to have faith in the God of free and faithful love? There is no reason for that but the unreasonable gift of God worked in her heart by the living and active Word of God. Clearly, God meant his Church to be for all people. But he didn’t stop there! What reason could there be that this foreign woman, this prostitute from a godless country, that hers would be the womb through which line of the Blessed Seed would descend? There is no reason for that at all. That can only be grace. Grace meant for all people.

My takeaways:

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