



DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
EPIPHANY 5 — YEAR B

INVOCATION

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

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 103

**A: I will hear what the Lord proclaims:
peace to his people.**

L: Praise the LORD, O my soul;

G: all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

L: He forgives all your sins

G: and heals all your diseases;

L: he redeems your life from the grave

G: and crowns you with love and compassion.

L: The LORD is compassionate and gracious,

G: slow to anger, abounding in love.

L: He does not treat us as our sins deserve

G: or repay us according to our iniquities.

L: For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

G: so great is his love for those who fear him;

L: as far as the east is from the west,

**G: so far has he removed our transgressions
from us.**

L: As a father has compassion on his children,

**G: so the LORD has compassion on those who
fear him;**

L: for he knows how we are formed,

G: he remembers that we are dust.

L: Our days are like grass, like a flower of the field;

G: the wind blows over it and it is gone.

L: But the LORD'S love is with those who fear him

G: from everlasting to everlasting.

**A: I will hear what the Lord proclaims:
peace to his people.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Almighty God, you sent your one and only Son as the Word of life for our eyes to see and our ears to hear. Help us to believe what the Scriptures proclaim about him and do the things that are pleasing in your sight; 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: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life."
(John 8:12 cf. NIV)**

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:

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany: Though the call to faith is general and always miraculous in its capacity to create a willing following, it is also always individual. It comes to each in his own special or unique set of circumstances. Jesus both arranges and takes those circumstances into account when he calls us to follow him. He so rules over history that he allows and then overcomes the obstacles in each of us to heeding his call. Again he shows himself glorious, but hides the glory in apparent weakness.

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: MARK 1:29-39

Look at all the problems and all the obstacles to following the call of Jesus. Everybody in town seemed to have trouble or sickness or demon possession. Even the mother-in-law of Peter was down sick with a fever that prevented her from hearing the Word and from serving her divine Guest. But each and every one of the problems and hindrances was a blessing in disguise. For each one of them gave people a reason to despair of their own abilities and to seek in Jesus the compassionate and merciful Savior. Notice that Peter's mother-in-law gets the point of Jesus' help immediately: she has been saved to serve. It is very useful for us to put our own problems and hindrances to following Jesus in that kind of a perspective: trials spur us to seek his help; his help should spur us to service. Notice, too, that Jesus' eyes were always and at the same time in two directions: down to rescue and to save us in our need, and up to do it all as an act of worship and obedience to his Father. He prayed. Then he went on to proclaim the gospel and continue his work of casting out the devil.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: JOB 7:1-7

Job's experience of suffering is extreme but by no means unique. In pain his only recourse is prayer that trusts in the mercy of God and in the power of God to relieve and to rescue. The glory and the power of the gospel are evident in the basic fact that Job prays at all; he continues to trust in God's mercy and his promises to hear and help in the face of such terrible suffering. Even with the expectation that the only rescue will be in death, Job does not abandon his trust. The devil causes and uses misery to drive us away from God; God uses it to drive us to our knees and then with the gospel to raise us up again in hope and trust that triumphs even if the suffering stays.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16-23

When Jesus preached the gospel, he did so with the circumstances of those to whom he preached clearly in mind. So too the Apostle. He does not just have one pat sermon repeated endlessly and without any reference to the circumstances of his hearers. Just as God met him on the road to Damascus and then in Damascus used his special circumstances as the springboard of the saving message for Paul, so too Paul uses the special circumstances of his hearers as the springboard for God's universal message of grace and mercy. He put himself in the shoes of Jews, of Gentiles, of those who were strong and of those who were weak; then, not changing the essence of the message in the least, he imparts the blessing that is universal for all and specific for each.

My takeaways:

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:
ROMANS 8:28-30**

Who are the ones who love him? Those he has called (again, *cum affectu et effectu*). All of their personal history he governs and uses to accomplish his own ultimate purpose of their sharing in his glory.

Notice: Paul does not say that God pre-determines all things, but that God makes use of all things in the lives of those he has predestined. God remains God in ultimate control, without man becoming a robot in those things that are subject to man's own control (limited though that control may be). Thus even the evil that we have and are God uses for our good: he humbles us with its consequence, and then he brings us to see the greatness of his grace in his pardon.

Then alone do we begin to understand that the things we count as good are gifts of grace and not of merit. So we glorify God as he leads us from faith here to sight and glory hereafter.

My takeaways:

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