



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
LENT 2 — 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 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 God, you see that we have no power to defend ourselves. Guard and keep us both outwardly and inwardly from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through 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: Jesus humbled himself and became
obedient to death, even death on a cross.
(Philippians 2:8b 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:

Second Sunday in Lent: Lent has to last a while and come around every year if for no other reason than this, that it is so hard for us to get the points made so strikingly in Lent. This Sunday we see God's seriousness in Lent in this: Salvation and suffering go hand in hand, for Jesus and for us too!

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 8:31-38

There it is, the stark reality: the love of God is inseparably connected to the cross, both his and ours! The price of our salvation is steep indeed! The suffering was as real as the resurrection which followed it. The cross of the Christian is likewise as real as the glory which follows it. In both cases, no cross, no crown! In Christ's case the cross is redemptive. In our case the cross is the *necessary consequence* of his redemptive work, not its cause—but nevertheless an indispensable consequence. Be careful in defining it; the cross is not all suffering. It is all suffering that comes as a result of following Jesus, e.g., persecution, the excruciating pain to self of denying self, even the struggle against both self-righteousness and despair. Our cross drives us to his cross both for forgiveness and for strength (Note the Prayer of the Day). Beware of proving Marx and Lenin right when they said that religion is the opium of the masses; the religion of the cross certainly is not that!

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: GENESIS 28:10-17

Notice that Jacob's suffering is largely his own fault. Were there ever more beautiful promises given to one more obviously a sinner? God lets Jacob suffer some of the consequences of his sins. To the extent that those well-deserved consequences tempt him to the even greater sin of despairing of God's mercy, to that extent his suffering is a cross. But God does not want to drive him to despair. God prevents that from happening by showing himself as gracious; he comes with grace to sinners who deserve nothing but suffering in consequence of their sins. In consequence of his sins he has nothing and humanly speaking should expect to have nothing for the indefinite future. But look at how quickly his perspective changes when God is gracious. With the ground for a bed and a rock for a pillow he has heaven! For God is there in grace. And so, what do the details of the future matter? Suffering is certain because of sin; the merciful presence of God is also certain and that because of grace and grace alone. Not all suffering is, of course, a direct consequence of our own sin. But much is, and the suffering proves it. *Sinner* is my name; it is for me that Jesus came in Lent. My suffering reminds me of sin, the real reason for it; it reminds as well of his suffering and the real fruit of it in the redemption of this sinner.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: ROMANS 5:1-11

To the world the real meaning of Lent makes no sense at all. Only the Christian gets it, and that as a result of the miracle of faith worked by the proclamation of the gospel. And this is that miracle: Christ the holy one, Christ the innocent, suffered for man the sinner, for man the guilty. The suffering was real. So too was its result: Christ suffering for sinners and in their place makes them innocent in God's sight. Because we would never get the point or hang on to it, we suffer, too. Our suffering, whether from the purifying and purging hand of God or from his permission granted to the devil to scourge us as he scourged Job and Paul, helps us to despair of ourselves and our own strength and to live by faith in his suffering for us sinners. Reconciled we now cling to him confidently in suffering as we await the final manifestation of the glory of his resurrection. Therefore we embrace the suffering Savior and do not run away from our own suffering; both are gifts of grace for sinners who have become saints by virtue of Christ's suffering and through faith in his merit. Only a Christian can grasp that.

My takeaways:

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