INVOCATION

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

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 30

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

L: Sing to the LORD, you saints of his;
G: praise his holy name.

L: For his anger lasts only a moment,
G: but his favor lasts a lifetime;

L: weeping may remain for a night,
G: but rejoicing comes in the morning.

L: To you, O LORD, I called;
G: to the Lord I cried for mercy.

L: You turned my wailing into dancing,
G: that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.

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: Last Sunday we saw that faith does not eliminate suffering from our lives. This Sunday we see that the suffering includes even death. The unbeliever who has only tears and despair in the face of death vainly hopes in his fear that death ends all. The Christian clings to the one who has overcome death for us even when faced with death.

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?


How tragic beyond words! A little girl, the apple of her father’s eye, is dying. There is nothing left to do but to turn to Jesus. When everyone tells him that there is no further point in bothering Jesus because the child has died, Jesus encourages Jairus’ faith with the words, Only believe! But believe what? Jesus had not promised to raise the child. Yet his going was the unspoken promise of help. In the face of death Jairus trusted the promise even when he could not know exactly what form the fulfillment of the promise would take. That’s our trust, too, when disaster, even death, approaches. We take refuge in the promise of Jesus to go with us, even if it means a journey to the cemetery. Do you wonder if he is too busy to be bothered? Look at how the gospel lesson ends! Jesus is the one who attends even to the smallest detail in the story; he orders something for the little girl to eat. Is he any less concerned with you, especially when you need the comfort of him who triumphed over death for us and also for our believing loved ones? How very different our experience of suffering at the threat of death from the suffering of those who have no such victorious and infinitely loving comforter!

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: LAMENTATIONS 3:22-33

Much of human suffering is the direct result of sin, often the sins of others. So Jeremiah endures the loss of everything because of the rebellion and stubborn unbelief of his countrymen. They have nothing now but death and the living nothing but shame, misery, despair. But Jeremiah recognized that regardless of the sin that caused the misery or whose sin it was, suffering even to the point of death has a salutary benefit of clearing out the rubbish in the brain and focusing the Christian’s attention on what really matters. And what matters is grace and the sustaining promise of God’s abiding presence and his unfailing love expressed in the gospel.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-9, 13, 14

But maybe this is not the moment when you must suffer like Jairus or Jeremiah. Maybe that day has not come for you; maybe for the moment it is past. Then what does the Office for this Sunday have to say to you? You are blessed now with peace and plenty so that you can show the riches of God’s grace to those who are tormented and in need. That’s what Jesus did. Having everything he gave it all up so that you would have everything. And now he blesses you with confidence in the gospel promises on this good day so that you can share those promises with those in a bad day. The same holds for your time and wealth; it is yours to share in humble imitation of what Jesus has shared — no, what Jesus has generously and freely given to you. That’s how we pass the test of sincerity; that’s how invisible faith created by the Word turns into visible works of love for our neighbor when he is having trouble seeing the grace and love of God because of the evidence of his pained circumstances.

My takeaways:
SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: 2 SAMUEL 12:11-25

Sometimes the suffering that we experience is the direct result of our own sins. How pointed that lesson is in this reading. David despised the goodness and the generosity of the Lord and thus lost it for a season. The losses were painful indeed, losses that were played out throughout the rest of David’s life. But confronted with the killing law and with the prospect of life long suffering in consequence of his sin, the Lord taught him that the one thing needful would not be taken away. And that one thing needful, full and utterly gracious forgiveness, would be the one constant, the one source of strength to endure, the one compensation greater than all and every loss.

My takeaways:

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

SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON: 2 TIMOTHY 1:8-14

This is one of Paul’s so called “funeral epistles,” penned by the apostle when he knew that he would shortly seal his apostolate with martyrdom. But death, even a martyr’s death, is not a disappointment to Paul, not an evidence that Christ has abandoned him. Quite the contrary, it is in death that the gospel shines for him most beautifully. For death is the ultimate triumph of those whose God and Savior conquered death for them. And so the apostle at death’s approach can only cheerfully and thankfully urge his dear son, Timothy, to share the victory offered and given in the gospel. Do it faithfully. Do it without alteration. Do it even if death —never mind things less than that —is the consequence of faithfulness.

My takeaways: