



**DAILY BREAD  
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS  
PENTECOST 7 — 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 143**

**A: Lord, let your mercy be on us,  
as we place our trust in you.**

L: O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for  
mercy;

**G: in your faithfulness and righteousness  
come to my relief.**

L: Do not bring your servant into judgment,

**G: for no one living is righteous before you.**

L: My spirit grows faint within me;

**G: my heart within me is dismayed.**

L: Answer me quickly, O LORD;

**G: do not hide your face from me.**

L: Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing  
love,

**G: for I have put my trust in you.**

L: Teach me to do your will, for you are my God;

**G: may your good Spirit lead me on level  
ground.**

**A: Lord, let your mercy be on us,  
as we place our trust in you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

L: God of all power and might, you are the giver of  
all that is good. Help us love you with all our heart,  
strengthen us in true faith, provide us with all we  
need, and keep us safe in your care; 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: Happy are they who hear the Word, hold it  
fast in an honest and good heart, and bring  
forth fruit with patience. (Luke 8:15 cf. RSV)**

**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:

**Seventh Sunday after Pentecost:** Jesus preserves our faith even in the face of persecution. We have seen that the Christian suffers in the face of natural calamities and that he too must face death, both his own and that of those he loves. In circumstances such as these Jesus abides faithful to his Word. Now comes the suffering that is the result of our faithfulness to that Word, of translating faith into faithfulness. It is a suffering that is promised and that is most painful when it comes from those who have heard that Word with us. Even in the face of such offense he preserves faith in the Word by the Word.

**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 6:1-6

It is quite bad enough when Jesus is rejected by those who do not know him. But how painful to him, so much so that in his state of humiliation he is amazed by it, when those who should have been first to recognize him instead reject him. The world, even our own so richly blessed country, exchanges the Child in Bethlehem for Santa Claus and the Risen Christ for the Easter bunny. No surprise there. But what of those in our own churches and families who think they know him so well that they no longer know him at all? He could do nothing there in Nazareth because in their unbelief; no one asked him to do anything. And in our midst? Were he still in his state of humiliation, would he be surprised at us who have had his Word for so long and still think so little of it? On the other hand, those who follow him in faithfulness have a stumbling block in their path: the unfaithfulness of those who should know better and then their ultimate hostility to the pure teaching and living of his Word. Only that Word and reliance on it gets us past that stumbling block; Jesus promised such rejection, and his Word even in that regard has proven true.

*My takeaways:*

## FIRST LESSON: EZEKIEL 2:1-5

Ezekiel's experience is not the exception but the paradigm. The rejection that Jesus experienced from his own ultimately turned into hatred and bitter hostility. That was the experience of all the apostles and prophets. In fact when there is never any hostility from a rebellious and gainsaying people, either Jesus has changed his mind about persecution or we have joined the rebels! People should know that a prophet has been among them from the faithfulness of the prophet to the Word and to the Savior, whether they like the message or not. For whether they like it or not, it remains the only message that saves. It saves even in the face of persecution from those who should know better.

*My takeaways:*

**SECOND LESSON: 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10**

In the face of opposition the preacher may be tempted to wonder what's wrong with him. Such an examination may indeed reveal that there is a lot wrong with him, that he, too, has thorns in the flesh or such things as get in the way of the message. Those thorns that God wants to remove God will remove in answer to our earnest prayer and the faithful application of his Word. But some thorns will always remain so that the messenger, whether the messenger is the pastor or the congregation itself, will always have reason to ponder the truth that the success of the gospel is always due to the gospel alone. We are not thinking here of moral flaws that make the messenger a contradiction of the message or of such ineptitude that the messenger is ill suited to be a messenger. Among the thorns, at least in the context of the readings for this Sunday, could be persecution of the truth from members who say they are loyal to the truth; it could be resistance to one or more specific applications of the law that obscures the faithfulness we say we have to all of God's Word; it could be lack of time to do everything that we know needs to be done, even a lack of time that keeps us even from knowing what needs to be done; it could be persecution from a community that knows how we apply God's Word in the doctrines concerning fellowship or marriage or lodges and scouts, or creation, or "family values," or any one of a number of other things. Each pastor and congregation will have its own list of messengers of Satan who hinder the course of the gospel's proclamation.

*My takeaways:*

**SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON:  
EZEKIEL 2:1—3:4**

The additional verses here are very useful. In the face of hostility and persecution there is one thing that sustains and strengthens us and gives us peace and joy: The same message of the gospel that provokes so much opposition is the source of all our own life and joy. Eat the scroll; savor its sweetness; devour it so that it becomes altogether a part of you!

*My takeaways:*

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:  
2 TIMOTHY 3:10—4:5**

Opposition and persecution are guaranteed wherever the Word is proclaimed in its truth and purity—a point that Luther and the Confessions never tired of making. Yet God promises his abiding and saving presence, even if the outward evidence seems to contradict that beautiful promise. Yes, even if the rescue is delayed to the point of death! Again notice that Paul mentions not just opposition from outside of the Church but especially notes the opposition that came from those who once heard and knew the truth. It is the latter that is the most damaging and to us personally the most painful. But in it all may we prove faithful to the Word, to all of it, that we may also know the faithfulness of God to that Word; he promises persecution, and he promises that his Word will nevertheless remain effective. He has promised that we ultimately we will be rescued to see his faithfulness in his own good time. What more could we want as pastors and as people of God?

*My takeaways:*

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