

## **The week of the Second Sunday after Pentecost – June 8-12, 2026**

### **Monday of Pentecost 2 – Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and most merciful God, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to seek and to save the lost. Graciously open our ears and our hearts to hear His call and to follow Him by faith that we may feast with Him forever in His kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

I had spent the whole day with Lutheran theologians at a conference held on a university campus. We had spoken about good things. I had reconnected with old friends and colleagues. It was good to be there, but honestly, after a whole day of it, I needed some space away from Lutherans and their problems. But there was this dinner planned, and we were expected to be there. It was a warm evening and the venue where we gathered had a large patio area. I found a comfortable chair outside and watched the setting sun. It was a moment of solitude, and I was glad of it. Until in a moment it wasn't a moment of solitude.

A large young man sat next me. I had never seen him before. He wasn't part of our group. He was another person who had come to eat at the same restaurant. He wanted to talk and after exchanging a few pleasantries it came out that I was a pastor. It was as if a floodgate opened at that point. In a few moments were deep into a conversation about him, his life, and God. Afterwards, he thanked me and said he had no plan to do something like this when he had come to meet some friends here. He did not know why he came early that evening or what had prompted him to sit by me and just start talking. But he was very glad that he did.

I felt then and now that it was one of those strange God moments. A time when Jesus rather takes over and gets a little more directive in a person's life. I think Jesus saw this man's pain and put me there because Jesus seeks and saves the lost people. Of course, the alternative view is that I was the lost person who needed someone to rescue me from my self-indulgent funk. Perhaps it was a little bit of both. I entered that time of fellowship with my colleagues much more glad to be there than I ever imagined possible.

Open our ears and our hearts, O Lord, to hear Your call and follow You to heaven's feast.

### **Tuesday of Pentecost 2 – Hosea 5:15-6:6**

<sup>15</sup> I will return again to my place,  
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face,  
and in their distress earnestly seek me.

<sup>1</sup> "Come, let us return to the LORD;  
for he has torn us, that he may heal us;  
he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.

<sup>2</sup> After two days he will revive us;  
on the third day he will raise us up,

that we may live before him.

<sup>3</sup> Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD;  
his going out is sure as the dawn;  
he will come to us as the showers,  
as the spring rains that water the earth.”

<sup>4</sup> What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?  
What shall I do with you, O Judah?  
Your love is like a morning cloud,  
like the dew that goes early away.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;  
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,  
and my judgment goes forth as the light.

<sup>6</sup> For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,  
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

I have known many couples in my ministry. Some who have been married for decades and whose marriages were a testament to the durability of love and God’s gracious work. But, like you, I have known others whose marriages have fallen apart. I grieve for them. Every divorce is a scene of tremendous heartache. No one comes to a wedding, whether at Church or a civil ceremony with the idea that this won’t last. But sometimes sin gets in the way and destroys even the best things in life. As marriages fail there are often difficult words spoken and hard realities to be faced.

Hosea, the only prophet we have who was both a prophet in the northern tribes and from the northern tribes of Israel uses an extended marriage metaphor in his brief book of prophecy. He says that God is in a marriage that is falling apart. One of the two has been unfaithful. Of course, God is married to the people of Israel. These words are part of that bitter story. God returns to His place, cutting off the people, a last ditch effort to get them to see what they have done. It is a little like a philanderer coming to his house and finding his aggrieved wife has put all his things out on the front lawn and changed the locks so he cannot get in.

The people of Israel seem to repent. They would return to the Lord. He has torn us but perhaps he will relent. There is hope. Like spring showers revive the parched land so His love might revive them. But God’s response is wary, like a spouse who has heard all this before and has been disappointed. What shall He do with His faithless people? He wants their love not the baubles they imagine will win His favor.

Hosea embeds the answer to God’s question in this text. On the third day He will raise us up. No Christian can hear those words without thinking of that third day when Jesus rose and in so doing, He raised us up too, having slain us by the words of His mouth. Jesus has loved and known God and given His life to us that we now may love and know the Lord as the Lord has always desired for us.

**Wednesday of Pentecost 2 – Psalm 119:65–72**

## **Teth**

- <sup>65</sup> You have dealt well with your servant,  
O LORD, according to your word.
- <sup>66</sup> Teach me good judgment and knowledge,  
for I believe in your commandments.
- <sup>67</sup> Before I was afflicted I went astray,  
but now I keep your word.
- <sup>68</sup> You are good and do good;  
teach me your statutes.
- <sup>69</sup> The insolent smear me with lies,  
but with my whole heart I keep your precepts;
- <sup>70</sup> their heart is unfeeling like fat,  
but I delight in your law.
- <sup>71</sup> It is good for me that I was afflicted,  
that I might learn your statutes.
- <sup>72</sup> The law of your mouth is better to me  
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Glenn winced as he got out of the car to see me. He had been in a rather severe auto accident months earlier and it was still bothering him. He was getting along in years, and his body was not recuperating as quickly as it used to. He smiled and we sat down to talk. Our conversation turned toward his accident and long recovery.

I was amazed to hear Glenn say that this accident was one of the best things that ever happened to him. His life and attitude had wandered away from a true purpose. He had become self-centered, and every day had seen some new slights arise to make him angrier and angrier. All that had changed when he got his life rearranged by a speeding and reckless driver. They had maintained contact after the accident. Glenn had told the man not to feel badly about it, in fact, Glenn even thanked the man for hitting him. He felt that strongly about how God had used this event to rearrange his life.

In verse 71 of psalm 119 the Psalmist writes: “It is good for me that I was afflicted that I might learn your statutes.”

If you are in the midst of suffering, I cannot expect you to see this now. All I can do is offer you some hope. Affliction and pain are not God’s goals in your life. He is taking you somewhere. You have never left His loving care. Trust Him. If, on the other hand, you are reflecting on your suffering in the past, you too may be able to see what Glenn sees today. If so, you too might pray this prayer of verse 71 along with Glenn. Glenn passed away a few years ago. No more limp, no more suffering, only glory.

## **Thursday of Pentecost 2 – Rom. 4:13–25**

- <sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the

adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.<sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

<sup>16</sup> That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,<sup>17</sup> as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.<sup>18</sup> In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.”<sup>19</sup> He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.<sup>20</sup> No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,<sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.<sup>22</sup> That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”<sup>23</sup> But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone,<sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,<sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

“Wait,” the city code specialist said, “what’s that box there on the edge of your drawing?” I told him it was the fireplace in my basement. “Is the fireplace original to the house? Is it built into the wall?” It is and I told him so. “That changes everything,” he said. “That means that this room was designed to be occupied when it was built in 1931, and it is grandfathered into the codes of the city.” The engineer whom I had hired to help me get this project done in my house turned to me and smiled. “Everyone should get a break once in a while,” he said. The code specialist took out his big stamping device and started stamping “Approved” on all my plans. It was a very good day.

In this section of Romans, Paul is essentially observing a technicality, much like that code enforcement guy was doing who was looking at the plans for my house project. He is noticing that Abraham believed and God counted him as righteous long before Abraham did any of the things that God would ask of His people in the Torah. It happens in Genesis 15:6, right after God tells him that he will have as many children as there are stars in the sky. Abraham believed and God counted it as righteousness. Abraham hadn’t done anything yet, at least not as an act of obedience to some command.

For Paul that is the slam dunk of his argument that we are justified through faith and not through works. Everyone who believes God’s promise is a child of Abraham now. God has said you are innocent in Christ. You are an heir to heaven. You will rise from the grave to new life in Christ. In trusting God to fulfill those promises, you share the faith of Abraham who was promised that there would be people just like you, his children from all the families of the earth.

**Friday of Pentecost 2 – Matt. 9:9–13**

<sup>9</sup> As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

<sup>10</sup> And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. <sup>11</sup> And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

<sup>12</sup> But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup> Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

“She was the prettiest girl at the dance, and she could really dance.” Ken’s eyes sparkled when he told me how he and Berry had met those many years ago. They were still in love and wholly committed to each other. She responded with, “I couldn’t believe that this handsome young officer wanted to dance with me.”

I wonder what Matthew felt like when Jesus singled him out. The picture I have reproduced here is a photo of a painting made by the Renaissance artist Carravaggio. It is entitled the “The Call of Matthew.” It hangs in San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome. I love the picture because of the surprise on Matthew’s face. You see Jesus’



hand extending out of the shadows where our Lord stands. Matthew seems to think there must be some mistake. Surely, He is calling someone else.

Matthew, the author of this Gospel account, puts this story immediately after the great climax of forgiveness in which Jesus heals the paralyzed man lowered through the roof. To prove that he had the power to forgive, he said to that man, “Get up and walk.” And he did.

Matthew knew what he was, a tax collector. Everyone reminded him of what a terrible person he was every day. Tax collectors had few friends. But one day, to everyone’s surprise, Jesus saw him and called him. That same Jesus has called you. It probably surprises some folks and should surprise you too. But Jesus does things like that. He loves us, despite us.