

Devotions for the 22nd Week after Pentecost – November 10-14, 2025

Monday of Pentecost 22 - Prayer of the Week

Living God, Your almighty power is made known chiefly in showing mercy and pity. Grant us the fullness of Your grace to lay hold of Your promises and live forever in your presence; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

He had hurt her deeply. His words had been cruel and his indifference to her own pain and suffering had been a hallmark of his relationship to her. Eventually, after too long, she realized that this was not going to change, and she left. We were all glad for her. He had not been good to her and we loved her. We did not want to see her suffer.

Now, after some years, their paths crossed. She was not wealthy, but she was healthy. Her life had come back together in a way. Now he was there, broken, broke, and perhaps dying. She had walked away from him once, but she did not close the door. She had mercy on him, helped him, eased his life as he was indeed dying.

There are many today in the world who say that showing mercy or feeling pity for someone is a sign of weakness, even a character flaw. They see a world which is always and only a contest. Winners get the spoils, dictate their will, and exact justice upon those who oppose them. But the Christian sees this in a different way. God, who is almighty, shows that almighty power in not getting even, in declining to settle scores, in showing mercy and having pity on the very people who have opposed him. Just for clarity's sake, that is us.

By the outpouring of the Spirit and the gift of Jesus, we too are given to be God's children in this way. We can see past the score-settling ways of the world to the merciful goodness of God. Lay hold of his promise. You have heaven itself, by rights, for Jesus has given it to you. There is no one to whom you cannot be good and merciful. That cannot be taken away from you. You are powerful. You are wealthy. Demonstrate it today, show mercy.

Tuesday of Pentecost 22 - Exodus 3:1-15

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have

come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

⁹ And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” ¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” ¹² He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

¹³ Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I am has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

This is one of the most famous passages of Scripture and worthy of a dozen devotions. I am always struck by how Moses is trying his best to get out of this job. He cannot imagine that God has right person to rescue His people. But Moses is not alone in that. God regularly uses unlikely folks to save His oppressed people. God found Gideon hiding in a wine press. David was a shepherd boy when he slew Goliath. Esther was young woman who saved her people by throwing dinner parties. I always have thought her to be the Martha Stewart of saviors. Peter was a fisherman. Even someone like the Apostle Paul was a most unlikely preacher of forgiveness in Christ’s name.

God saw then the suffering and oppression of his people and raised up Moses, unlikely Moses. 80 years old and a felon on the run from the very justice system of the Pharaoh whom he was supposed to convince to let the people go. God has seen the suffering and oppression of people today. Moses did not wake up that morning and think that he would be a great rescuer of God’s people. But you did not wake up this morning thinking that either. Yet, God who once saw oppression and suffering sees it today as well. He is still calling and that call may come to you.

Just as the people God used in subsequent generations were not like Moses, they also did not get a burning bush event. Some of them, Saul of Tarsus for instance, did see something dramatic. But others, Esther for example, was challenged to stand up and rescue her people because her uncle urged her to do this thing. God is also calling you. I don’t know how that will look or sound, but I do know that He still sees his suffering people. It might just be one person or a whole nation’s worth, but He sees. He calls. He may be calling you today. Listen for Him.

Wednesday of Pentecost 22 - Psalm 148

¹ Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;

- praise him in the heights!
- ² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his hosts!
- ³ Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars!
- ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
- ⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord!
For he commanded and they were created.
- ⁶ And he established them forever and ever;
he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.
- ⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all deeps,
- ⁸ fire and hail, snow and mist,
stormy wind fulfilling his word!
- ⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
- ¹⁰ Beasts and all livestock,
creeping things and flying birds!
- ¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
- ¹² Young men and maidens together,
old men and children!
- ¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.
- ¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his saints,
for the people of Israel who are near to him.
Praise the Lord!

So God and an atheist scientist are having a discussion. “I don’t think making man out of clay was such a big deal,” says the scientist. “I could do that too.” God strokes his chin and says, “Go ahead. I would like to see this.” The scientist reaches down to gather some earth, and God says, “Hey, get your own dirt.”

The joke is silly but it makes a very important point. When we confess in the creed that God made the heavens and the earth, we are saying that everything comes from him. I don’t know how or even when God did all this. I confess that He did it. We are all dependent upon God for our very being, not only all us humans as descendants of that man whom God shaped from the earth, but also all of creation, the earth itself.

The psalmist goes through what he thought were various orders of creation here, exhorting them all to praise and thank God for their very being. The angels and heavenly hosts, the sun, moon and stars, the forces of nature like wind and hail, and then the creatures, including people, but also the mountains and hills. They praise him because he gave a command and they came into being. We join with all creation in praising God in our hymnody and songs. The mountains and forests are there too in the mighty beams, stone and concrete which make up the building. The material which covers the elements is made of flax and the silver vessels themselves were mined from the hills.

He is Lord of them all, their creator and their judge.

Thursday of Pentecost 22 - II Thessalonians 2:1-8, 13-17

¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

¹³ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. ¹⁴ To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

The other day I got a phone call while I was in my woodshop. I don't regularly work with very exact plans, more of an idea about how I want to do something and some scribbled notes and measurements. The phone call meant I had to drop everything and attend to something else. Things got busy. I couldn't return to my project for some days. When I returned to my shop I was confronted by multiple pieces, scribbled notes, a few measurements, and only a vague idea of what I had done and left undone.

I think Paul was feeling this with the folks in Thessalonica. We read in Acts 17 that Paul visited Thessalonica immediately after his time in Philippi. He preached in the synagogue for three weeks when opponents arose in that city and drove him out. He eventually sent his protégé

Timothy back to Thessalonica to check up on that little congregation. Timothy brought back good news that the church in Thessalonica was still alive, but they had some questions. These two letters of Paul are in response to their questions. Clearly, we can surmise from this passage that they had some confusion about the end of the world and the second coming of Christ.

Paul writes here of tribulation and difficult days. The man of lawlessness makes an appearance here and no one is quite sure what to make of that. If you are confused, you are in good company. In fact, Paul seems to suggest in the first and last parts of this reading, that anyone who thinks they have this figured out needs to be viewed with skepticism. It is also important to remember that like me in my woodshop, Paul had already told them many things, probably important things, in person. We don't have access to those.

Hear Paul's words at the beginning and end of this passage. Don't be shaken or alarmed by talk about the end. It will be a strange and difficult time, but don't be upset. Right now, give thanks to God that you have heard the good news of Jesus. Stand firm in that promise of eternal life and hold onto what you do know.

Friday of Pentecost 22 - Luke 20:27-40

²⁷ There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, ²⁸ and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. ³⁰ And the second ³¹ and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. ³² Afterward the woman also died. ³³ In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife."

³⁴ And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, ³⁵ but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, ³⁶ for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. ³⁷ But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. ³⁸ Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him." ³⁹ Then some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well." ⁴⁰ For they no longer dared to ask him any question.

On a bitterly cold February day, we assembled in a windswept cemetery in South Dakota to lay my recently departed Uncle Ray to rest. He had lived a full and adventurous life, but most importantly, he had lived a faithful life. The many grandchildren and great-grandchildren who assembled that day were a testament to that. They all knew how to sing the hymns at his funeral.

That day the grizzled and crusty old preacher who had known my uncle for many years wept as he spoke of what Ray had meant to him. But through his tears he also spoke of a promise. This tombstone and death itself would not have the last word. Jesus would have the last word about Ray, and that was a word of eternal life.

In this reading before us today, Jesus confronts the Sadducees, a group who don't believe in the resurrection. They thought that once you died, that was it. They were wealthy and powerful people. No afterlife meant that they did not have to worry about consequences at a final judgment. It was convenient for them. Jesus, however, is not hearing it. God spoke to Moses from the bush and declared that "He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Those men had been, at least to our eyes, dead and gone for hundreds of years by the time Moses lived. But God speaks of them in the present tense. He is their God, not "was" their God. They are still alive in Him.

I will always be grateful for those words of promise spoken at the funerals of the people I love. Sometimes I have been the one to speak them. Other times, I hear them and believe them through my own tears. Praise God today for the promise of resurrection. Trust that He has your eternity in His gracious and forgiving hands.