

## *Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!*

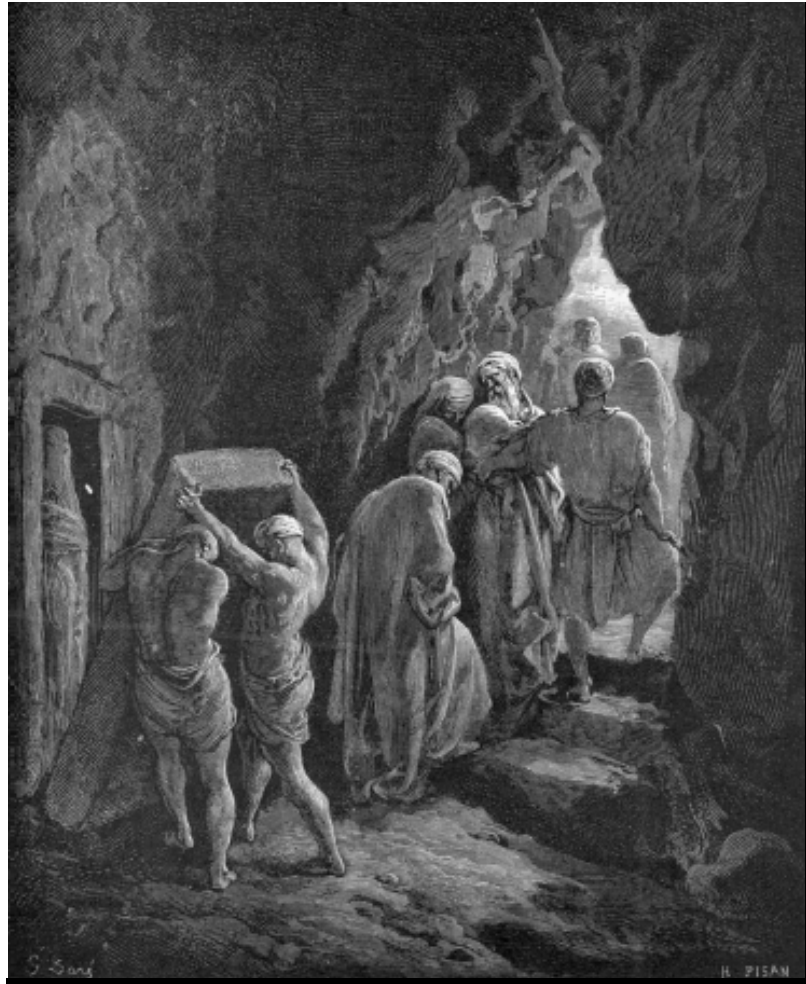


Illustration: Burial of Sarah

A Devotional for the  
Week of the Fifth Sunday after Easter.

## SUNDAY.

*Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.*

*– Philippians 3:20-21.*

The whole life, all the imaginations, all the thoughts and aspirations, the wishes and desires, and the entire conversation of those pitiable people who neither know nor want to know Jesus and His Word, is determined by this perishable earth and -- by sin. It is quite different, however, with such of us as are true Christians, who by faith know Christ and His Word. Our whole life, our imaginations, our thoughts and aspirations, wishes and desires, and our conversation, are in heaven; all is ruled and determined by that which is in heaven, where we have obtained citizenship through our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is not saying that our conversation is perfect. Ah, no; the old sin still clings to us and makes us sluggish and earthly-minded. And yet, this ever and again asserts itself: our conversation is in heaven. How could it be otherwise? For from thence, from heaven, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will come and change our vile body, which has been degraded and humiliated through sin, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Surely our Lord will do this for us, as you have abundantly seen on the previous pages of this book; He will do this according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself; He will do this by His unlimited divine power. This, then, is our hope, our aim, the blessed end of our earthly conversation: the resurrection from the dead, the transfiguration of our body, eternal and blissful life in heaven. Shall not our conversation be in heaven, directed toward heaven, and determined by our hope of heaven? Most certainly.

*PRAYER.* – O my God, what mercies do You shower upon me through Jesus Christ, my dear Savior! You have made me, a poor sinner, a citizen of heaven. And You, dear Lord Jesus, will come and raise me up from the grave, and will change my poor body that it may be fashioned like unto Your glorious body, and will give me the eternal bliss of heaven. God Holy Ghost, gracious Lord, who works all good things within me, give me a heavenly mind, and direct my course toward heaven. Amen.

Hymn 195, 2. 3. 14.

Far off I see my fatherland,  
Where through Thy blood I hope to stand,  
But ere I reach that Paradise,  
A weary way before me lie.

My heart sinks at the journey's length,  
My wasted flesh has little strength,  
Only my soul still cries in me:  
"Lord, take me home, take me to Thee!"

Renew this wasted flesh of mine,  
That like the sun it there may shine  
Among the angels pure and bright,  
Yea, like Thyself in glorious light.

#### MONDAY.

*Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.*

– 1 John 3:3.

O Christian, do behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us through our Lord Jesus Christ: we poor sinners are called the sons of God! Children of God, can there be anything more exalted? Therefore God has also given us His Holy Spirit, that we should be like unto Him in mind and disposition, in action and performance.

True, this divine newness within us is still much hidden by sin, suffering, and death, here below. Therefore the unbelieving world

does not recognize us for what we are in fact; and what it does perceive of our new godlike being it heaps with scorn and hatred, for it does not know God. But all this must not trouble us. We are the children of God, though it does not now clearly and resplendently appear what we are. But it will appear; it will most certainly appear. It will appear, when Christ shall appear on His great day to wake us from death and to change our bodies. Then it will be apparent before the eyes of all the world what we are. And we know that then we shall be like Him. Like whom? Like Christ. Then we shall be holy, pure, and righteous altogether, without sin; then we shall be altogether perfect and glorious within and without, rid of the misery of death; then our divine disposition, which even now we have, will pervade and shine through our body and soul, and we shall shine in grandeur as the children of God, which even now we are. For then we shall see God as He is, from face to face. Such perfection excludes all the former misery of body and soul.

Thus to behold Him changes us into the likeness of God. What a hope we have in Him! In whom? In Christ, who will bring His work of salvation to full perfection in us. And every man that has this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. This our hope which we have in Him does not suffer us to longer serve sin, and, through sin, the devil. In such hope we purify ourselves: we mortify the old Adam in us with all sins and evil lusts through daily contrition and repentance; and the new man daily comes forth and arises, who lives before God in righteousness and purity, and shall live forever. Mark this well, my dear Christian! Purify yourself, knowing that you have such a blessed hope!

*PRAYER.* – Purify me, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whose body, by Your grace, I am a living member. Purify me, my heavenly Father, who has adopted me as Your child through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Purify me, most kind God, who will soon give me eternal and heavenly purity and glory. Purify me, who has given me Your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of purity and of blessed hope, for I delight not in sin, nor do I want to serve it. I am Yours, my God – in time and eternity. Amen.

Hymn 380, 1. 2. 5. 6.

Soldiers of Christ, arise,  
And put your armor on;  
Strong in the strength which God supplies,  
Through His eternal Son.

Strong in the Lord of hosts,  
And in His mighty power;  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror.

From strength to strength go on,  
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;  
Tread all the powers of darkness down,  
And win the well-fought day.

Still let the Spirit cry,  
In all His soldiers, "Come,"  
Till Christ the Lord descends from high,  
And takes the conquerors home.

## TUESDAY.

*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*  
– Romans 8:18.

The children of God in this world do not suffer less, but more than unbelievers. For the devil and the wicked world are against them; they are also harassed by their own flesh and blood, which it is their duty and which it is also their desire to crucify; and God chastises them in fatherly mercy, it is true; but it smarts for all that. The narrow way which leads to heaven is beset with afflictions. Where does it lead? To heaven. Ah! so it is. That comforts and quickens. The narrow way leads to heaven and to eternal life. The broad way, so agreeable to flesh and blood, leads not to life, but to damnation. Therefore we all surely want to walk the narrow way.

And the heavenly glory which has been promised us, which awaits us at the end of the narrow way, which follows upon the sufferings of this present time, this glory is so exceedingly great – and everlasting! – that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with them, are not to be taken into account against them, are as naught against them.

In consideration of this glory we must gladly bear the sufferings which the trusty hand of God appoints for us on our pilgrimage thither. Why, shall we be put to shame by men of the world who, to acquire some earthly treasure, some temporal good, often undergo grievous hardships and misery without minding these at all? And how often are they disappointed in their expectations! Scarce acquired, their fortune vanishes again. But we shall not be deceived. We shall most surely obtain the glory which shall be revealed in us; for God is true, who promiseth it. And it shall not vanish from us. All other treasures vanish, but we shall remain in possession of our inheritance in all eternity.

Therefore willingly suffer, O Christian, whatever falls to your lot. God will give you strength. And He will moderate your suffering and graciously apportion to you a fixed measure. And He will, furthermore, give you courage and a cheerful spirit. Do but lift up your head and fix your eyes upon the inviting goal before you!

*PRAYER.* – Lord, my God, right well do I know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is to be revealed in me, yes, in me. But You know how weak and faint-hearted I am, and how easily depressed. Have mercy upon me, faithful, gracious God, and cure me of my diffidence by the almighty power of Your Holy Spirit, and let Your word of promise concerning the eternal and exceedingly great glory which is in store for me evermore sparkle within my heart and greatly comfort me, that I may by no means draw back, but cheerfully overcome all suffering. This I pray for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Hymn 526, 14.

My heart for joy is springing, | And can no more be sad,  
'Tis full of mirth and singing, | Sees naught but naught but sunshine glad:  
The Sun that cheers my spirit | Is Jesus Christ my King,  
That which I shall inherit | Hereafter, makes me sing.

### WEDNESDAY.

*And He led them out as far as Bethany. – Luke 24:50.*

This brief text takes us back to the Biblical stories relating to our Savior. On the fortieth day after His resurrection He appeared to His Apostles, who were assembled in Jerusalem. And after He had conversed with them, He led them out of the city up to the Mount of Olives as far as Bethany. And there He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, "which," He said, "ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Then the Apostles asked Him: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" They meant the Kingdom of Glory, concerning which their conceptions were still quite worldly. And He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

These were Jesus' very last words on earth to His disciples. While the earth remains, until the last day will come, and with it the Kingdom of Glory and the consummation of all things, we Christians, we disciples of Jesus, endued with the power of the Holy Ghost, are to be witnesses of Jesus by word and deed, each in his own sphere. The Lord demands this of us. It is for this purpose that He still leaves us in this world. This is our true calling. Christian, dear Christian, do not forget that! Think not that you need only work out thy own salvation, and otherwise need merely perform the works

of your calling without concerning yourself about others. No, no! Though you be no apostle, nor an ordained preacher, you must, nevertheless, be a witness for Christ.

*PRAYER.* – O my Lord and Savior, grant me grace to testify to the world of You, the Crucified and Risen, and tell them what You have procured for all mankind and have given to me. Endue me for this purpose with the power of Your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of faith and of love and of obedience. And make my testimony concerning You effective through Your Holy Spirit. O Lord, help me to do what You do bid me do. Amen.

Hymn 426, 2.

Hence Christ, His foll'wers gave command:  
Go forth and preach in every land;  
Pardon to every soul extend  
That mourns, believes, and will amend.

### ASCENSION DAY.

*And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. – Luke 24:51.*

When our Lord had told His Apostles what we heard yesterday, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and taken up into heaven. He was taken up visibly, while they were looking on. And a cloud received Him out of their sight. This cloud, again, was the Shekinah, the cloud in which, during the Old Covenant, the Lord had revealed His presence. It was full of the multitude of heavenly hosts. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." (Psalm 47:5.) And while the disciples looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel. And they said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

– This is Christ's ascension. So did the Son of God, our Savior, end His visible sojourn on earth. In blessing them, He parted from His disciples. He blesses all His disciples, all His Christians. This is the blessing which He purchased on the cross and brought with Him from the grave. Whenever you think of your Savior, remember that He blesses you. And when He will come again in the Shekinah, He will bless you. He will then say to you and to all that are His own: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34.) Do but make sure that you are and remain His disciple!

*PRAYER.* – Omnipotent God, grant to us who believe that Your own Son, our Savior, this day ascended into heaven, that we also may live unto Him in newness of spirit and continue in the spirit, comforting ourselves with His blessing, and, when in the end He shall come again, inheriting the eternal blessing: through the same, Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 233, 1. 7.

Lo, God to heaven ascendeth! | Throughout its regions vast  
With shouts triumphant blendeth | The trumpet's thrilling blast:  
Sing praise to Christ the Lord! | Sing praise with exultation,  
King of each heathen nation, | The God of hosts adored!

When, on our vision dawning, | Will break the wished-for hour  
Of that all-glorious morning, | When Christ shall come with power?  
O come, thou welcome day! | When we, our Savior meeting,  
His second advent greeting, | Shall hail the heaven-sent ray.

FRIDAY.

*And sat on the right hand of God. – Mark 16:19.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Savior, has ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father. This is the highest exaltation possible. Our Lord Jesus Christ now without reserve partakes of all divine majesty. God has "set Him at

His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church." (Ephesians 1:20-22.)

Christ Jesus, who is the Head over all things, unto whom is given all power in heaven and in earth, He is in particular the Head of His beloved Church. Upon this His beloved Church He bestows His grace. And this His grace is wedded with His divine power. And so He gathers, keeps, governs, and protects us, His beloved Christians. He makes all things work together for our good. He governs all things so that they must work together for our good. Sin, world, devil, joy, sorrow, death, all things work together for our good. For He sits at the right hand of God and is the Head over all things, and in particular the Head of His beloved Christian Church. Indeed, what shall we lack if we are His own?

With strong compassionate hands, and with divinely gracious providence He leads us through this world into the world to come, over which He is set as well as over this world. Us and our life, and all things that may in any way concern our life, He holds as with thousand reins in His mighty divine hands, and guides all things unto our salvation. Christian, Christian, in true faith commit yourself altogether into the hands of this your Savior.

*PRAYER.* – I commit myself into Your hands, exalted, omnipotent Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You are the Head, I am a member of Your body. Keep, govern, protect, guide, lead, direct me through all things unto eternal life, according to the command and the office which Your heavenly Father, at whose right hand You sit, has given You even now. I commit myself into Your hands, my Lord and Savior! Amen.

Hymn 239, 5. 7.

He rules and reigns at God's right hand,  
And has all power at His command,  
All things are subject to His rod -  
The Son of man and Son of God. Hallelujah!

The man who trusts in Him is blest,  
And finds in Him eternal rest;  
This world's allurements we despise  
And fix on Christ alone our eyes. Hallelujah!

## SATURDAY.

*He ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. – Ephesians 4:10.*

Do you think that God is encompassed by any heaven? Certainly not. On the contrary, God encompasses all heavens and all things, and God fills all things with His presence. So it is also with Jesus, our brother, our flesh and blood, our Savior. Jesus is not encompassed by any heaven, but He encompasses all heavens and all things, and fills all things with His presence. He ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. He sits at the right hand of God. So just by reason of His ascension He is right near to us. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "He is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being."

This is true of Jesus also. With grace and love and tender mercy He is with us. We Christians are encompassed by Him and His compassion. He is our Rock, and our Fortress, and our Deliverer, our God, Our Strength, in whom we will trust; our buckler, and the horn of our salvation, and our high tower. Being so encompassed, who can harm us? Wherever we may be, in this place or that, in life or in death: He is with us, and we are in Him. He is now much nearer to us, much more intimately so, than He was with His own at the time of His visible sojourn on earth.

Therefore, when Mary Magdalene had found Him, the Risen One, and wanted to hold Him. He consoled her, saying: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." As if to say: Then, then will my communion with you be most intimate,

then will you truly possess and hold me. Christian, let your eyes be anointed by the Word and Spirit of God, and see how near your Savior is to you.

*PRAYER.* – Lord Jesus, I thank You for the assurance You give me that You are with me and with all that are Yours, and do encompass us like a firm fortress which no one can storm. Let me be Your own and remain in You; then will I be secure forever. Let me always rest assured that You are with me, and that I am in You, that in You I may be confident, cheerful, bold, and of a strong heart, in life and death. Amen.

Hymn 239, 2. 3.

Now all His Christians can rejoice,  
And sing His praise with cheerful voice:  
Glory to God in heaven's high throne,  
Our Brother is God's only Son. Hallelujah!

Ascended to His throne on high,  
He yet to us is always nigh;  
Thus God and man He ever reigns,  
And infinite in power remains. Hallelujah!

These devotions are adapted from *Crumbs* by C. M. Zorn (1914).  
The hymn stanzas are from *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1918).  
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