

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!



Illustration: Joseph made Known to His Brothers

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

SUNDAY.

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. – Psalm 91:10.

Thus does God put you at ease, child of God. And Dr. Luther, in his *Small Catechism*, in accordance with this promise, teaches you to believe that God defends you against all danger, and guards and protects you against all evil. – But how is this? Does not, in reality, manifold evil and does not a plague befall us? Does not dire experience teach this a thousand times? Does not also Scripture teach the very same thing?

Think of the story of Joseph! But, listen, what does this very story of Joseph show? It shows that God makes all things that seem to be evil, and that actually taste bitter enough, to work together for good to them that love Him. Even Joseph finally said to his brothers who had steeped his soul in bitter grief: "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Genesis 50:20.)

Just so does God deal with you if you are His child. Everything that befalls you, though it seem ever so evil, must contribute to your welfare, your soul's eternal welfare. And hence it cannot actually be an evil. Nor must you consider it a plague. My dear Christian, this life is as nothing compared with the blessed life hereafter. There all will be glorious beyond comprehension.

Your heavenly Father, who dearly loves you, sometimes, it is true, permits something to befall you which seems very hard to bear. Put in each and every instance it is merely a well-planned and foreordained station on the way to eternal life to which He is taking you under His guidance. And thus He, in loving kindness, cases and tempers everything, and being full of compassion and love against you, He comforts you. Put your trust in the promise He gives you in the above Scripture text. And "commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and He shall bring it to pass." (Psalm 37:5.)

PRAYER. – My dear Heavenly Father, give me. I implore You, a childlike mind to trust in You implicitly, and firmly to believe that You do safely guide me and do deal well with me. And when I must cry and weep, help me to lift up my eyes to You, and to seek consolation and help with You, for You are my dearly beloved Father in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Hymn 109, 4.

Through deserts of the cross Thou ledest,
I follow leaning on Thy hand;
From out the clouds Thy child Thou feedest,
And giv'st him water from the sand.
I know Thy wondrous ways will end
In love and blessing, Thou true Friend;
Enough, if Thou art ever near.
I know whom Thou wilt glorify,
And raise o'er sun and stars on high,
Thou lead'st through depths and darkness here.

MONDAY.

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto Thy servant. – Genesis 32:10.

Thus spake Jacob, the patriarch. And so every Christian should say. We are not worthy of the blessings which the Lord showers upon us. He confers nothing but fatherly, divine goodness and mercy upon us, though He finds no merit or worthiness in us. O let us search and examine our lives and our ways! Have we deserved it that God provides for us and watches over us, that He governs and protects us, yes, that He punishes and chastises us as a faithful father does his children, and that He makes all things work together for our good in such a manner that in the end we reach the goal which His grace in Christ sets before us? Have we deserved this? Certainly not.

We have deserved something altogether different. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

(Psalm 103:13.)

That we fear Him, that we live in childlike fear of God, this, too, is His mercy. But that this fear of God is such a struggling and miserable little plant in the garden of our heart, that is our fault. But God continues to show us His mercy. What do we owe Him for all this? "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12.) Ah, indeed, I cannot render Him anything as a recompense. But it is my duty to thank Him, to praise Him, to serve and to obey Him. Is it not so? Surely we owe this to God. Our thanks and our praise, our service and obedience, will be poor and paltry enough in comparison with the benefits of God. But our Heavenly Father will notwithstanding accept the feeble beating of our hearts toward Him, our feeble stammering of praise and thanks, our feeble and childish efforts. He makes the fullness of Christ replace our deficiency. His Spirit makes intercession for us. God be praised!

PRAYER. – O Lord God, Heavenly Father, from whom we receive all good gifts unceasingly and in abundant measure, and who daily, out of pure grace, guards us against all evil: grant me – I implore You – Your Holy Spirit, that, acknowledging in true faith all this, Your goodness, I may now and evermore thank and praise Your loving-kindness and tender mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 62, 15.

O Father, deign Thou, I beseech Thee,
To listen to my earthly lays;
A nobler strain in heav'n shall reach Thee,
When I with angels hymn Thy praise,
And learn amid their choirs to sing
Loud hallelujahs to my King.

TUESDAY.

Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

– Acts 4:12.

This name is JESUS CHRIST. There is salvation in none other. Except through Jesus Christ no man can be saved. O the lie, the lie, the soul-destroying lie, that is now preached from so many pulpits and proclaimed by so many "ministers of the Gospel " who deny that Christ is the only Savior, claiming that He is merely one among many, and that the Christian religion is not the only true religion, but possibly, only more perfect than others.

Let us here loudly and firmly testify with Scripture that there is salvation in none other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved than the name of JESUS CHRIST alone. "Jesus" means Savior. And this name was given to Him of whom we speak because He is the only Savior of all mankind. (Matthew 1:21.) And "Christ," or " Messiah, – means The Anointed. Anointment was customary in the Old Testament when kings and high priest – and perhaps also the prophets of Israel, were installed in their office. This name was given to Him of whom we speak because He was ordained by God to be our only Savior, our true Prophet, High Priest, and King. (Psalm 2:6.) And He is anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure. (Psalm 45:7 & Acts 10:38.)

Always seek Jesus Christ, always and ever better learn to know Jesus Christ, always believe in Jesus Christ, always follow Jesus Christ, always bear witness of Jesus Christ before all men. There is salvation in none other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, You are the only Savior of all mankind, and beside You there is no salvation. Help, O help me to believe in You, and to cling to You, and not to be torn from You by the great and powerful lie which Your adversary and mine disseminates on earth. You – only Savior – save me through faith in You. Amen.

Hymn 83, 2.

Soul, wilt thou this one thing find thee?
Seek not 'midst created things;
What is earthly, leave behind thee,
Over nature stretch thy wings.
For where God and Man both in One are united,
With God's perfect fulness the heart is delighted,
There, there is the worthiest lot and the best,
My One and my All, and my Joy and my Rest.

WEDNESDAY.

This is the true God. – 1 John 5:20.

Who is this Jesus Christ of whom we speak?

Scripture says: "This is the true God." It says that He is "over all, God blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 9:5.) It says that He is "The Lord, our Righteousness." (Jeremiah 23:6.) Therefore Thomas said to the Risen One: " My Lord and my God." (John 20:28.) Scripture says that He is the only-begotten Son of the Father, the second person of the Holy Trinity. The Father says to Him: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." (Psalm 2:7.) He Himself testifieth and says: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." (John 3:16.) The Holy Ghost says: "God spared not His own Son." (Romans 8:32.) Jesus Christ is the " Word " which was in the beginning and was with God and was God, and through whom all things were made. (John 1:1-3.) He is the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent. (Matthew 28:18; John 21:17; Matthew 28:20.) "He upholds all things by the word of His power." (Hebrews 1:3.) He forgives sins, He will execute judgment. (Matthew 9:6; John 5:27.) "Let all the angels of God worship Him." (Hebrews 1:6.) All men should honor the Son even as they

honor the Father." (John 5:23.) – Here is the parting of the ways. Whosoever does not believe the clear doctrine of Scripture that Jesus Christ is the true God begotten of the Father from eternity, cannot believe in Him.

This is wonderful and miraculous beyond everything: God has become man, Jesus Christ. Flesh and blood will not accept this. How do we get such faith? How may we retain such faith? We must see the glory of Jesus Christ, see it ever again, the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth – in *Holy Scripture*. Through it the Holy Ghost works faith.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, true God and man, Son of the Father and Mary's Son, grant me Your Holy Spirit to the end that I may behold Your glory in Your Word, even as Your disciples beheld it with enlightened eyes, and that I may believe in You, as Your disciples believed in You, in order that I may belong to the blessed company of those who obtain eternal life through faith in You. Amen.

Hymn 155.

To us a child of hope is born,
To us a son is given
And on His shoulder ever rests
All power in earth and heaven.

His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
The everlasting Lord,
The Wonderful, the Counsellor,
The God by all adored.

His righteous government and power
Shall over all extend;
On judgment and on justice based,
His reign shall have no end.

Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,
And make us Thine alone,
Who with the Father ever art
And Holy Spirit, one.

THURSDAY.

And the Word was made flesh. – John 1:14.

The Word, the eternal Word, has become flesh. The only-begotten Son of the Father became Mary's son. God became man. This is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary. He is true man. It was not a phantom body that people saw, nor did He assume a human body only temporarily as when He invested Himself with a body whenever He appeared to the saints of Old Testament times.

No, He became a true man. Very frequently He called Himself "the Son of Man." (John 3:14.) The Holy Spirit, in Scripture, calls Him the "Man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5.) He has a true human body. After His resurrection He said to His disciples: "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39.) He has a true human soul. In Gethsemane He said: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matthew 26:38.) He walked about and stood, He slept and waked, He hungered and thirsted, He grieved and He rejoiced, yea, He died and became alive again. On the last day He, the Son of Man, will come in His glory. (Matthew 25:31.)

He was, He is, and He will remain a true man. He, the Man Christ Jesus, who, however, also is God and the Lord of heaven, is the last Adam, the second man, who restores all things that we lost in the first Adam, the first man: righteousness, life, and eternal salvation. Both according to His person and to His office He is the Mediator, the only Mediator between God and man. (1 Timothy 2:5.) And you must firmly believe Him to be such.

PRAYER. – O great God, eternal Son of the eternal Father, I praise Your incomprehensible compassion, which You have shown in becoming true man and our Mediator, in order that, as the second Adam of the human race, You might reconcile us unto God and give us righteousness and salvation. Grant me grace to believe that You became true man to redeem the human race, and thus be assured that God is gracious to me and will give me eternal life. Amen.

Hymn 141, 4. 5.

From the Father forth He came,
And returned unto the same,
Down to hell He went alone,
And again to God's high throne.

Thou, the Father's equal, win
Victory in the flesh o'er sin,
By Thy strength divine, O Lord,
Help to our frail flesh afford.

FRIDAY.

And they, being afraid, wondered, saying to one another: What manner of man is this! – Luke 8:25.

We must be filled with holy fear and wonder when we behold Jesus as Scripture pictures Him to us. We must say as the disciples did: "What manner of man is this!"

We observe in the Lord Jesus two natures very distinct from one another: the uncreated eternal, divine nature, and the created temporal, human nature. The eternal Son of God in the fullness of time received the human nature into His person: *the true God WAS MADE true man*. The human nature now is the own nature of the Son of God. Jesus Christ is God and is man in one person. And so each of

the two natures, though always distinct as to the essence of each, partakes of the properties of the other.

Thus, because of this union of the two natures in one person, *the eternal Son of God* was born nineteen centuries ago (Galatians 4:4-5): He, the true God, the Lord of Glory, the Prince of Life, shed His blood for us, was crucified, put to death. (1 John 1:7; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Acts 3:15.) And He, the Son of Man, possesses all divine majesty: omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, power to give life, power to forgive sins and to execute Judgment, the honor of worship. (Matthew 28:20; John 5:26-27; Hebrews 1:6; John 5:23.) And it was necessary that Jesus Christ should be true God and man in *one* person, because He was to be our Redeemer. It was necessary that He should be *man*, that He might be capable of fulfilling the Law, of suffering and dying, as all men's Substitute; it was necessary that He should be *God*, that He might be able to appease the wrath of God and to overcome sin, death, and the devil.

– Meditate on this, Christian, and worship Him whose name is "Wonderful."

PRAYER. – Indeed, Lord Jesus Christ, You are wonderful – You are "The Wonderful" foretold by the Prophet. No man's reason can comprehend You. But do shine in my heart by means of Your Word. By means of Your Gospel cast Your image into my soul, glorify Yourself within my heart and soul through Your Holy Spirit, that I may believe in You, true God and man, and my only and dearly beloved Savior, blessed forever! Amen.

Hymn 151, 1. 4.

Rejoice, ye sons of men alway!
God comes to you from heaven today;
The Lord is born a little child
Of Mary, virgin undefiled.

Through His low birth and holy blood
We all are saved by Christ, true God;
The angel's glory we shall share,
And in His kingdom live fore'er.

SATURDAY.

The Lord, thy God, will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken. – Deuteronomy 18:15.

The office of our Lord Jesus is to redeem and save us. For this purpose He was sent into the world by the Father. Into this office He was installed by the Father; for this reason He is the Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ. As such He is, first of all, our *Prophet*, our Preacher. He is the great Prophet whose coming Moses foretold to the people of Israel in the words of Scripture quoted above. He is the only Prophet who reveals, proclaims, preaches to us the counsel and will of God respecting our redemption and salvation. There is no other prophet that could do this. For "no man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1:18.) Of Him the Father says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

(Matthew 17:5.)

And how does He fulfill the duties of His prophetic office? When He sojourned on earth, He testified Himself both by word and deed, that is to say, by great signs and wonders, that He is the Son of God and the Savior and Redeemer of the world. Then He ordered His disciples and Apostles to preach His Word and by inspiration of the Holy Ghost to put it down in writing. And what has thus been written, His Word, is to be proclaimed on earth to the end of days. And to His servants who proclaim this His Word He says: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me." (Luke 10:16.) So at all times He, He alone, is the Prophet, the Preacher. Even in the Old Testament He was the Prophet, He, the Son of God, who was to

become man. For the prophets who prophesied of the grace that should come did this by the "Spirit of Christ that was in them."
(1 Peter 1:11.)

My dear Christian, Jesus Christ is your only Prophet or Preacher. Listen to no other one! Accept no one besides Him! Hear His Word only, His Word, I say, and nothing else!

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, help me, a poor sinner, to listen to no one, no matter who he is or whence he comes, in everything pertaining to my salvation, but to You only. You are the one Prophet come from heaven. Your Word is the infallible Truth. To this Word let me cling, O Jesus, let me trust in it, let me depend on it in life and death. Amen.

Hymn 110, 5. 8.

O God! How sin's dread works abound!
Throughout the earth no rest is found.
And wide has falsehood's spirit spread,
And error boldly rears its head.

A trusty weapon is Thy Word,
thy Church's buckler, shield, and sword;
Lord, let us in this Word abide,
That we may seek no other guide.

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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