

## Sermon Text

**Luke 7:36-50** Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so He went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, 38 and as she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a Prophet, He would know who is touching Him and what kind of woman she is - that she is a sinner." 40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. 41 "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. 44 Then He turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give Me any water for My feet, but she wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give Me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing My feet. 46 You did not put oil on My head, but she has poured perfume on My feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven - for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." 48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this Who even forgives sins?" 50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

### THIS SEASON IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

**LENT** is a season of intense preparation for Easter. It is also a time for deep meditation and reflection on the Word of God. We reflect on Holy Baptism and its basis in the death and Resurrection of Christ. We remember that although Baptism happened in time, still our Baptism plays a powerful and meaningful role in our everyday lives. As we daily contemplate our sins in the mirror of God's Law, we remember the covenant God made to us in Baptism: A covenant that He would be faithful in forgiving our sins unto everlasting Life.

As we daily return to Baptism in repentance and faith, we continue the cycle of the Christian life which will ultimately find its culmination in the final resurrection from the dead. *"...do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through Baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6)

The liturgical color for the Lent season is **purple** which symbolizes penitence and self-discipline.

During the penitential season of Lent we omit the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* and the *Alleluias* from the Divine Service. They will return "to use" again on Easter Morning.

✠ p.7 ✠



Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL USA  
Ash Wednesday † (LENT Begins) Prepare A Fast  
February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015  7 pm



From "Illustrations of Gospel Stories" Jerome Nadal – Matthew 6  
Concerning fasting.

Image courtesy of the Biblical and Religious Art Collection, <http://catholic-resources.org/Nadal/039.jpg>

✠ **OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH** ✠

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BIBLE CLASS 8:30 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM FELLOWSHIP 10:45 AM

✠ A.R. Burmeister 430-5859 ✠ Organ: Janice Thomas (813) 650-9198

**February 18, 2015 ✠ Ash Wednesday = Prepare a Fast**

**WELCOME to Our Savior!** We are so happy to have you worship with us today. If you are visiting us for the first time (or in a long time), we ask that that you please fill out a visitor card found in the pew cardholder and place it in the offering plate. Come and worship with us again! **God bless you.**

**OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP** Printed here and in **black** (ELH) Hymnary p.120

Service		
Opening Hymn	287 (6v)	Jesus, I Will Ponder Now
Hymn of the Day	286 (4v)	Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
Evening Hymn	561 (8v)	<i>Sing 1-2,7-8</i> Abide With Me, Fast Falls

**Suggested Bible readings for the weekdays after Quinquagesima Sunday**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Exodus14:1-31	Exo. 15:1-21	Exo.15:22-16:36	Exo. 17:1-16	Exo. 19:1-25	Exo.20:1-23
Mark 10:1-31	Mark 10:32-52	Mark 11:1-33	Mark12:13-44	Luke 4:14-44	Luke 5:12-39

**PROPERs for ASH WEDNESDAY**  (START OF LENT) **FEB 18**

**INTROIT** I will cry to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me. Yes, in the shadow of Your wings I make my refuge, until these calamities are past. Be merciful to Me, O God, be merciful to me, for my soul trusts in You. ...from Psalm 57

**COLLECT** Almighty and everlasting God, You hate nothing that You have made and You forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, who worthily lament our sins and acknowledge our wretchedness, may obtain from You, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives, and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever, **C: J A - -men.**

**GRADUAL C: Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for my soul trusts in You. He will send from heaven and save me from the accusation of him who would swallow me up.** ...from Psalm 103

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS** *(printed on inside back page 6 of the bulletin)*

OT **Joel 2:12-19** The Lord calls His people to *true* repentance.  
 Ep. **II Corinthians 5:20-6:10** Do not receive God's Grace in vain.  
 Go. **Matthew 6:16-21** Do the Father's Will for the *right* reasons.

**2015-LENT MIDWEEK SERMONS THEME: BLOOD OF THE PASSION**  
**TONIGHT (ASH WEDNESDAY, SERMON): SIN AND GRACE REVEALED**

**Historic Lessons for Ash ✠ Wednesday (40 days pre-Easter)**

**Old Testament**

**Joel 2:12-19 NIV** 'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' 13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity. 14 Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing – grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God. 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. 16 Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. 17 Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, 'Spare Your people, O LORD. Do not make Your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' 18 Then the LORD will be jealous for His land and take pity on His people. 19 The LORD will reply to them: 'I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.

**Epistle**

**II Corinthians 5:20-6:10** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made Him Who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. 6:1 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. 2 For He says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the Day of Salvation. 3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

**Gospel**

**Matthew 6:16-21** "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, Who is unseen; and your Father, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The **VERSICLE** P: ♪ *Let my prayers rise before you as incense:*

C: ♪ **And the lifting up of my hands-- As the ev'ning sacrifice.**

The **NUNC DIMITTIS** ("Lord, let us Depart in Peace"...music on page 124)

- C: ♪ 1. Lord, now You let Your servant ... .. de-part in peace:  
Accord-... ..-ing to You Word.  
2. For mine eyes have seen... .. Your Sal-va-tion;  
Which You have prepared before the face... of all peo-ple.  
3. A-- Light to light- ... ..-en the Gen-tiles:  
And the glory of Your... .. peo-ple Isra-el.  
4. Glory be to the Father ... and to the Son / And to... the Holy Ghost;  
5. As it was in the beginning, is now, and... ever shall be / Forev-... er-more, A-men.

**KYRIE ELEISON** (Lord Have Mercy) C: ♪ Lord, have mercy upon us. -  
Christ, have mercy upon us. - Lord, have mercy upon us.

The **LORD'S PRAYER** (Congregation and Pastor pray together)

C: Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hal-low-ed be- Thy Name--;  
Thy Kingdom come-, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heav-en;  
Give us this day our dai-ly 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.  
C: ♪ A- - - - -men.

The (Evening) **COLLECT** (Pastor prays, Congregation: ♪ Amen)

P: (Let us pray:) O God, from Whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works proceed, Give Your servants that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your Commandments, And also that we, being defended by You from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God now and forever.

C: ♪ A- - -men.

The **BENEDICAMUS** P: ♪ *Let us bless the Lord.* C: ♪ **Thanks be to God.**

The **BENEDICTION** P: ♪ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God, And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* C: ♪ **A- - -men.**

**CLOSING HYMN** *Abide With Me* ELH #561 vv1-2,7-8 H.F. Lyte *EVENTIDE*

1. Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide; - The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee, - Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!
2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day; Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see. O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!  
7. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless; Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still if Thou abide with me.
8. Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes, / Shine through the gloom, and point me  
to the skies. / Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
**IN LIFE, IN DEATH, O LORD, ABIDE WITH ME! AMEN.**

Silent Prayer (Candles out.) You may be seated. ~ p.5 ~ *FELLOWSHIP.*



## I. The Service of Vespers ELH p.120



**OPENING HYMN:** "Jesus, I Will Ponder Now" ELH #287 (6 verses) JESU,

1. Jesus, I will ponder now - On Thy holy Passion;  
With Thy Spirit me endow - For such meditation.  
Grant that I in love and faith - May the image cherish  
Of Thy suffering, pain, and death, - That I may not perish.
2. Make me see Thy great distress, - Anguish, and affliction,  
Bonds and stripes and wretchedness - And Thy crucifixion;  
Make me see how scourge and rod, - Spear and nails, did wound Thee,  
How for man Thou diedst, O God, - Who with thorns had crowned Thee.
3. Yet, O Lord, not thus alone - Make me see Thy Passion,  
But its cause to me make known - And its termination.  
Ah! I also and my sin - Wrought Thy deep affliction;  
This indeed the cause hath been - Of Thy crucifixion.
4. Grant that I Thy Passion view - With repentant grieving  
Nor Thee crucify anew - By unholy living.  
How could I refuse to shun - Every sinful pleasure  
Since for me God's only Son - Suffered without measure?
5. If my sins give me alarm - And my conscience grieve me,  
Let Thy cross my fear disarm, - Peace of conscience give me.  
Grant that I may trust in Thee - And Thy holy Passion.  
If His Son so loveth me, - God must have compassion.
6. Grant that I may willingly - Bear with Thee my crosses,  
Learning humbleness of Thee, - Peace mid pain and losses.  
May I give Thee love for love! - Hear me, O my Savior,  
That I may in heaven above - Sing Thy praise forever. Amen.



The **INVOCATION** (Congregation please rise if you are able.)

P: *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy Spirit.* C: Amen.

P: *Makes haste O God, to deliver me.* C: **Make haste to help me, O Lord.**

P: *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.*

C: **A broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.**  
Glory be to the Father and to the Son And to the Holy Ghost; As it was  
in the beginning, is now, And every shall be; forevermore. Amen.

### The CONFESSION OF SINS & ABSOLUTION

**CORPORATE CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION** (Use ELH p.130-132 Form II)

P: *I now ask you, in the presence of God, Who searches the heart:  
Do you sincerely confess that you have sinned against God and deserve  
His wrath and punishment?*

C: **I do so confess.** ✠ p.2 ✠ (continue, next page 3 ↗)

P: Truly you should confess, for Holy Scripture declares: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Do you heartily **repent** of all your sins committed in thought, word and deed?

**C: I do repent.**

P: Truly you should repent, as did the penitent sinners: King David, who prayed for a contrite hear; Peter, who wept bitterly; the sinful woman; the prodigal son; and others.

Do you sincerely **believe** that God, by grace, for Jesus' sake, will forgive you all your sins?

**C: I do so believe.**

P: Truly you should believe, for Holy Scripture declares: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should **not** perish, but have everlasting life

Do you **promise** that by the power of the Holy Spirit you will amend your sinful life?

**C: I do so promise.**

P: Truly you should promise, for Christ our Lord says: "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Finally, Do you believe that through me, a called servant of God, you will receive the forgiveness of all your sins?

**C: I do so believe.**

P: Truly you should believe, for Christ our Lord says: "Whoever hears you, hears Me" and "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them."

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**The ABSOLUTION (Form II. ELH p.132)**

P: Upon this your confession, By the authority of God and my holy office I declare to you the gracious forgiveness of all your sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

May He Who has begun the good work in you perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Peace be with you. Amen.

**The INTROIT** (Spoken by the Pastor – see page 1 for words.)

**The VERSICLES** ELH, p.120

P: ♪ O Lord, open my lips. C: ♪ And my mouth will show forth Your praise.

P: ♪ Make haste, O God, to deliver me. C: ♪ Make haste to help me, O Lord.

**The GLORIA PATRI** C: ♪ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and- to- the Holy Ghost. - As it was in the beginning; is now, and ever shall be, for-ev-er-more. - A-men. (No Alleluia - Lent)

**The COLLECT** (Prayer for Ash Wednesday, words on page 1 – Pastor prays.)

C: Amen. (after the Collect...) The congregation may be seated.

📖 **II. The Service of The Word – 5. The Lection** p.121 📖

**OLD TESTAMENT: Joel 2:12-19** Lord calls His people to true repentance.

♪ Here are the words to our **Psalm 91** - Please sing along! ♪

**Ref. C:** ♪ Be with me Lord, when I am in trouble; Be with me Lord, I pray.

(Choir) 1. You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord Most High, ...

**Ref. C:** ♪ Be with me Lord, when I am in trouble; Be with me Lord, I pray.

(Choir) 2. No evil shall be fall you, no pain come near, For his angels ...

**Ref. C:** ♪ Be with me Lord, when I am in trouble; Be with me Lord, I pray.

(Choir) 3. Those who cling to the Lord live secure in His love, Lifted high ...

**Ref. C:** ♪ Be with me Lord, when I am in trouble; Be with me Lord, I pray.

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**EPISTLE: II Corinthians 5:20-6:10** Do not receive God's Grace in vain.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 6:16-21** Do the Father's Will for the right reasons.

**RESPONSORY** (After the readings)

P: ♪ O Lord, have mercy upon us. C: ♪ Thanks be to You, O Lord!

**APOSTLES' CREED** (Confession of Faith, on ELH p.46) All say together:

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;**

**Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary;**

**Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;**

**He descended into Hell; the Third Day he Rose again from the dead;**

**He ascended into heaven and is seated at the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty**

**From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints,**

**the Forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, and the Life ✠**

**everlasting. Amen. Δ (Congregation may be seated for the next hymn.)**

**SERMON HYMN: "Rock of Ages" ELH #286 (4 verses) A.M. TOPLADY**

**1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me, - Let me hide myself in Thee;**

**Let the water and the Blood - From Thy riven Side which flowed**

**Be of sin the double cure, - Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.**

**2. Not the labors of my hands - Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;**

**Could my zeal no respite know, - Could my tears forever flow,**

**All for sin could not atone; - Thou must save, and Thou alone.**

**3. Nothing in my hand I bring, - Simply to Thy Cross I cling;**

**Naked, come to Thee for dress; - Helpless, look to Thee for grace;**

**Foul, I to the fountain fly,-- Wash me, Savior, or I die!**

**4. While I draw this fleeting breath, - When mine eyelids close in death,**

**When I soar to worlds unknown, - See Thee on Thy Judgment-throne,**

**Rock of Ages, cleft for me, - Let me hide myself in Thee! - Amen.**

**SERMON Text: Luke 7:36-50 (p.7) THEME: SIN AND GRACE REVEALED**



## MIDWEEK ASH.WED Hebrews 13:9-16 "Blood that Sanctifies" 02.18.15

TEXT Hebrews 13:9-16 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. 10 We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. 15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise -- the fruit of lips that confess his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

### INTRODUCTION

Apart from **Jews** and **Seventh Day Adventists**, there are very few who have religious scruples today regarding food. Regarding those who thought that they were made clean or unclean by what they ate, Jesus said, "There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man" (Mk 7:15). So the writer to the Hebrews warns his readers not to be carried away by strange doctrines regarding foods. Here he echoes the Apostle Paul's words in Colossians 2: "Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations - do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using-according to the commandments and doctrines of men?" (**Colossians 2:20-22**).

Hebrews draws us away from the foods set apart by the commandments and doctrines of men, to the grace of God that we are given from Christ's altar. "We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat," says our text. This is the altar established by the Lord Jesus when He sacrificed His body and blood on Calvary for the forgiveness of the sins of the world. By the body and blood of our Lord which we are given to eat and to drink in the Sacrament, we are given Christ's own righteousness and made partakers of His holiness. Those who continue to live under the old covenant have no right to eat from this altar for they do not recognize that Christ has come and that He is the Lamb of God whose blood sets us free from sin.

In **verse 11** of our text, the holy writer makes a reference to the practice associated with the Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament. The carcasses of the animals slaughtered for sacrifice on this annual day of atonement would be drained of their blood. The high priest would carry the blood into the Holy of Holies, but the bodies of those sacrificed animals would be burned outside the camp. Hebrews draws an analogy with the death of Jesus. Jesus "suffered outside the gate." That is, He was crucified outside of Jerusalem as we heard in the reading from the Passion History a few minutes ago. He suffered outside the holy city, shedding His blood to sanctify us.

The rites of **Yom Kippur** were repeated year in and year out and they pointed ahead to the **real "Day of Atonement," = Good Friday**, where Jesus Himself would be both the High Priest and Victim. He would suffer outside the camp and yet with His own blood enter the heavenly Holy of Holies to make an everlasting atonement for the sins of the world. The sacrifice which He renders is done once and for all. When our Lord cries out from the cross, "It is finished," He

indicates that redeeming work is complete. No more will there be a need for the slaughter of lambs and goats. The Lamb of God sanctifies us by His own blood. By His blood He cleanses us from the infection of our sin. His blood makes us holy people. People who belong to God and can stand before Him. The Book of Revelation describes who we are in its opening doxology to the Lamb of our salvation: "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever."

God has consecrated us to His people by the Blood of His Son. He has purchased and won us from sin, death, and hell by that blood. **We belong to Him.** Belonging to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, how then do we live? Our text makes **two points**. -> **First**, Hebrews says, "Therefore *let us go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For we have no continuing city here, but we seek the one to come.*" We go where Jesus is. He is "outside the camp" of Jerusalem. We need not and we cannot go back to Jerusalem of the Old Testament. To go back to the Old Testament as though Jesus Christ had not come, suffered, died, and rose again would be to forsake the faith, to reject the Gospel. We cling to Christ crucified and him alone. We trust Him as He distributes to us the fruits of His sacrifice in the Sacrament of His body and blood as we await the heavenly city which is to come.

**Second**, Hebrews says, "*Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*" The Bible makes a distinction between two kinds of sacrifice. There is the sacrifice of atonement which takes away sin. And there is the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. The sacrifice of atonement was made by our Lord on the cross. This sacrifice can never be repeated. It was done once and for all. Then there is the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. These are the sacrifices spoken of in this evening's psalm, Psalm 50, where we are told to "sacrifice thank offerings to our God." Receiving the Lord's gifts in faith, we confess Him as the Giver in our hymns and psalms of praise and thanksgiving.

The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving embraces not only our lips but our lives. Paul says in **Romans 12**, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*" God consecrates our lips to praise His holy name and He hallows our lives to live for Him in service to the neighbor. You see, God doesn't need our good works, but the neighbor does. In Psalm 50, the Lord says, "If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine and all that is in it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?" God doesn't need our food, the work of our hands, or our money. But our neighbor needs these things. Living by faith in Jesus Christ we will live by love in the neighbor. Works of love directed toward those in need are part and parcel of our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Jesus says, "inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren you did it to Me" (Mt. 25:40).

Jesus' blood cleanses us from all sin and consecrates us to be His holy people, His royal priesthood living in faith toward Him and in love toward one another. Amen. (Now,) The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. **Amen. SDG.**