

Lutheran Women's Missionary League
God CARES For You!

If the Lord had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence. When I thought, "My foot slips," your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul (Psalm 94:17-19).

Written by: past LCMS Rocky Mountain District President, Rev. Allen D. Anderson

C-A-R-E-S

C: Confession/Communication/Cleansing

A: Attention

R: Regard

E: Enigmatic

S: Salvation

Opening Hymn "Blessed Jesus, At Your Word" *LSB 904*

(P: Pastor **R: Response**)

Invocation

P: Welcome! We gather together in His time, His space, His name!

R: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! Amen.

P: Why are we here?

R: We gather together because Christ comes to us through His Word and Sacraments. We worship because we have a relationship with Him as He calls us to be His own. We acknowledge that we are a fallen people sinful from our conception, ungrateful in our lives, hurtful toward others, and selfish for our wants. We deserve no good thing, rather deserving death, punishment, and yes, damnation. What can we do but turn to you, Lord? We ask for Your mercy, plead for Your grace because we deserve nothing! Yet through Your Word we know that You have saved us from a lost life and have made us Yours. You did so by being fully human to take our place and being fully God to pay the

price by Your bitter suffering and death on the cross. You claim the victory over sin, Satan, and that final villain of death by Your glorious resurrection. Only in You do we have forgiveness, life, and salvation.

The Result of Confession

P: Yes, it is only by His mercy and grace that we are able to come to the Lord to ask for forgiveness and be forgiven. It is only in His Name that as a called and ordained servant of Jesus I announce to each of you His grace and the certainty of His forgiving you of all your sins. I do so in His name, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

What brings us to this point?

We gather at this time to focus on what God desires us to do. Discuss the following passages. Why do we confess? What makes our communication with God possible? What is our relationship with the Lord? How does this relationship with Him cleanse us?

C

C = Confession

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me (Psalm 51:3-5).

C = Communication

With my voice I cry out to the Lord; with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord. I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him. When my spirit faints within me, you know my way! In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul. I cry to you, O Lord; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me (Psalm 142:1-6)!

Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved (Psalm 55:22).

C = Cleansing

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:11-12).

Introit / (prayer) read by all

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. There is a river whose streams

make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress (Psalm 46:1-11).

Reading of the Old Testament

Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house. All that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the Lord and in his own house he successfully accomplished. Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules, then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to rule Israel.' "But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will pluck you up from my land that I have given you, and this house that I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And at this house, which was exalted, everyone passing by will be astonished and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?' Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore he has brought all this disaster on them.'" (2 Chronicles 7:11-22).

Discussion Questions

A

A = Attention

Notice how God pays attention! The Lord answers Solomon's prayer with words to heed and to pay attention, as they are also words for us. As you ponder the Old Testament reading, what attention(s) are shown and given? What do these words mean for us? What do these words mean for you? How does the Lord pay attention to you? What is your response to Him?

Prayer (all)

Dear Lord, as we gather together in worship and in prayer, we do so with humble hearts and minds. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to You. Open

my heart to Your love and my mind to Your mercy for You alone are the way, the truth, and the life. Thank You for this time and place as we worship and pray in Your name. Amen.

Hymn Response “Come, My Soul, with Every Care” *LSB 779*

Epistle Lesson

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:4-7).

Discussion questions

R

R = Regard

As Saint Paul writes to the Philippians he lets us know the regard the Lord has for us. By definition, a synonym of regard is to “look after.” What does verse six tell you about how the Lord regards you? What does this mean for you? What opportunities does this give to you for others? How are these verses a wonderful witness tool for you? How have you made use of these verses?

Prayer (all)

Dear Lord, You know my heart and mind. You know my challenges and my failures. You know my joys and happiness. You understand my fears and troubles for they seem at times to take me over. I call upon You asking that in all things I rejoice knowing that Your grace is sufficient. You are with me and never will forsake me. I call on You with my heart exposed asking for strength, comfort, peace, and healing. For You alone know all my cares and woes so I place them upon You asking Your will be done. Amen.

Hymn Response “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” *LSB 770*

Gospel Lesson

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am

praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:1-26).

Discussion Questions

E

E = Enigmatic

Some of the definitions for this word as an adjective are difficult to understand; mysterious, puzzling, baffling, perplexing, unfathomable.

Chapter seventeen of John's Gospel is Jesus' high priestly prayer which he prayed to His Father just hours before His going to the cross to die. The definition now can take a new meaning for us, for others and what a wonderful mission opportunity as well!

Discuss and share for whom is Jesus praying? What does this mean for you? How can you use this as a witness for others? How is this comforting and beneficial? How does this "enigmatic" prayer reveal the mission of our Lord?

Prayer (all)

Jesus, in the mystery of the Your cross I come to You. You died, You rose from the grave, and You intercede for me. The world seems in chaos, yet You are in control. My life has its challenges, yet You give me strength. I question so many things, yet You know the answer to them all. You take care of me even when I fail to see. Lord, I ask for strength to endure, peace to maintain balance, and comfort to offer others as You have given to me. Thank You, Lord for loving me so much to die for me. Suffering the pains of death so that by You alone we have life,

life now and eternally. Let my heart be open to pray for others as You have prayed for me. Amen.

Hymn Response “Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray” *LSB 663*

Thanksgiving — Way of Salvation

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God'" (Luke 3:4-6).

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation (Psalm 18:1-2, 46).

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:13-14).

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9-10)!

Discussion Questions

S

S = Salvation

How is salvation obtained? What do these verses tell us about salvation? What comfort does this give to you? How do these passages move us to share the Good News?

Prayer (all)

Almighty, everlasting God, Your Son has assured forgiveness of sins and deliverance from eternal death. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit that our faith in Christ may increase daily and

that we may hold fast to the hope that on the Last Day we shall be raised in glory to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Hymn Response “Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me” *LSB 722*

Last Discussion Questions

Is prayer important? Why? How are we moved to pray? So, what does this all mean for us gathered here? Now what?

Closing (C-A-R-E-S)

*If the Lord had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence. When I thought, "My foot slips," your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up. **When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul** (Psalm 94:17-19).*

*Casting all your anxieties on him, because **he cares for you** (1 Peter 5:7).*

Prayer (all)

Almighty God, You have promised to hear the prayers of those who ask in Your Son’s name. Mercifully incline Your ears to us who have now made prayers and supplications to You, and grant that those things that we have faithfully asked according to Your will, we may receive or meet our needs and bring glory to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

P: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

R: Amen.

Sending Hymn “Go, My Children, with My Blessing” *LSB 922*