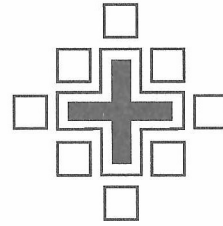


Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

November 14, 2021



INTROIT Ps. 48:11–14; antiphon: Mark 13:13b

The one who endures | to the end*
will | be saved.

Let Mount Zion | be glad!*

Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your | judgments!
Walk about Zion, go around her, number her | towers,*
consider well her ramparts, go through her | citadels,
that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and | ever.*
He will guide us for- | ever.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

The one who endures | to the end*
will | be saved.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

O Lord, by Your bountiful goodness release us from the bonds of our sins, which by reason of our weakness we have brought upon ourselves, that we may stand firm until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

GRADUAL Rev. 7:14b; Ps. 84:5

These are the ones coming out of the great tribu- | lation.*

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood | of the Lamb.
Blessèd are those whose strength is | in you,*
in whose heart are the highways to | Zion.

DAILY READINGS

November 14: Jer. 29:1–19; Matt. 26:36–56; **15:** Jer. 30:1–24; Matt. 26:57–75; **16:** Jer. 31:1–17, 23–34; Matt. 27:1–10; **17:** Jer. 33:1–22; Matt. 27:11–32; **18:** Jer. 37:1–21; Matt. 27:33–56; **19:** Jer. 38:1–28; Matt. 27:57–66; **20:** Dan. 1:1–21; Matt. 28:1–20.

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Old Testament Reading: Daniel 12:1–3

¹“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ²And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

Epistle: Hebrews 10:11–25

¹Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵The Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,”

¹⁷then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Holy Gospel: Mark 13:1–13

¹As [Jesus] came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” ²And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

³And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?” ⁵And Jesus began to say to them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁶Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. ⁷And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. ¹⁰And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹²And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. ¹³And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

What Could Be Lacking in Christ's Afflictions?

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church. (Colossians 1:24)

Written by Paul, these strange words might be an example of what Peter had in mind when he said concerning Paul's letters, "There are some things in them that are hard to understand" (2 Peter 3:16).

The words "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" do not indicate that something more must be still added to the suffering and death of Jesus for us and for our salvation. The Scriptures are clear on that point:

- "[Christ did not] offer Himself repeatedly. . . . But as it is, He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:25–26). According to those words, there is no additional act needed for the putting away of our sin; Christ, our Lord, "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."
- "When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished'" (John 19:30). The word for "finished" could also be translated as "paid in full." Christ Jesus our Lord covered the entire price for our eternal life!

"I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions." Since Paul was not making a reference to the literal suffering and death of Jesus, he must have been using a figure of speech. The key to unlocking this figure of speech can be found at the end of the verse: To what does "[Christ's] body" refer? "The church."

In the same way that Christ Jesus our Lord suffered during the days of His humiliation, so also does His body, the Church, likewise suffer. Paul's words about "what is lacking" give us the benefit of connecting our various afflictions to the afflictions that Christ Himself expe-

rienced. We, like Jesus, bear the cross in our daily lives. As Martin Luther explained,

The cross of Christ" does not mean, of course, the wood that Christ carried on His shoulders and to which He then was nailed. No, it refers in general to all the afflictions of all the faithful, whose sufferings are the sufferings of Christ. (LW 27:135)

So what did Paul mean when he stated, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions"? Paul was indicating that he was glad to receive the beating rather than have the beating fall upon his fellow Christians! Paul was happy to suffer on their behalf, just as Christ Himself had suffered on Paul's behalf, in order to bring Paul to God.

Shouldn't a husband do the same for his wife? Shouldn't a mother be willing to suffer for her child? Where is the Christian pastor who wouldn't gladly lay down his life for his sheep? We each have people whom we love, people for whom we can gladly suffer, especially if it means that our suffering spares them from suffering! That is the sort of love that Paul exerted for his fellow Christians; that is the sort of love our Christ exerted for us. Such love is neighborly because such love is divine: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Author: Rev. Erik Rottmann

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