

My Cry To God.

Text: Psalm 25:1-2, 16-18

Suggested Hymns:

14T565, 851, 170, 352, 305

1) My Cry Because Of My Grievous Sins

2) My Cry For Mercy And Forgiveness

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

The text for our sermon today is based on the Introit, Psalm 25:1-2, 16-18, ***To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ² O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me.***

¹⁶ Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted. ¹⁷ The troubles of my heart have enlarged; Bring me out of my distresses! ¹⁸ Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins.
(NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The season of Trinity applies the life and teachings of our Lord, from His incarnation as the God-Man to His death and victorious resurrection and glorious ascension, as revealed to the church by God the Holy Spirit in the inspired sacred Scriptures.

This period of the church year reveals God's grace in Christ Jesus by His living, working, loving faith in His Father, that we may have His eternal blessings.

Green, the colour of abiding life and natural growth, emphasises this action of God.

The first two Sundays in Trinity emphasise this thought and action to us: *'The kingdom of God's grace revealed.'*

The Propers for these Sundays emphasise this genuine love of God revealed to us by our Lord Jesus. Today this kingdom of God's grace is applied, and its distinctive principle is emphasised, namely, the seeking of the lost and the joy over the restored, as we also heard in the Gospel reading.¹

The theme is *My Cry to God*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. My Cry Because Of My Grievous Sins

This psalm, from which our Introit is taken, pictures David kneeling before God, acknowledging his great transgressions, his bitter repentance, and his deep distress at having offended God.

It was written in his latter days, for he mentions the sins of his youth. It is the second of the seven penitential psalms, and this marks the true saint, that his sorrows of his declining years recall his sins of his former years.

“To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.” David, in this acrostic psalm, calls upon the “I AM WHO I AM.” He recalls the appearance of God to Moses in Exodus chapter 3. Moses turned to Jehovah alone in the extremity of his sins, as do all the saints of God.

Thus it is supreme mockery for us to lift our hands and voices and eyes to God in our devotions in God’s church without lifting our soul, which God has given to us eternally.

“Lift up your hearts” — *“We lift them up to the Lord,”* we respond at the Preface to the Lord’s Supper. It is futile for us to kneel for prayer and confession, raise our voices in hymns of praise, if we personally, you and I, do not lift up our souls, our inner beings, to God in sincere prayer, repenting of all our sins.

This is the reason we individually confess our sins, wrongs, and transgressions early in the Worship Service before we “Introit,” that is, before we enter into God’s sanctuary at His altar.

In times past, the faithful came to God’s house for confession of sins and absolution previous to the Lord’s Day, so that they could enter God’s temple at the Introit, lifting up their soul to Him in true thanksgiving for His forgiveness in Jesus.

Our text says, *“To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.”* This personal approach to God is mine to make. No one can make it for me. I draw near to God in sincere faith, calling Him personally my God, that is, my Good.

This takes faith, God's gift of His grace which He has given to me through His beloved Son. I trust in God to forgive me all my sins, for I have offended Him by my sins, my transgressions, that have personally violated His holy Being.

But how do I know I have sin and am a sinner? By God's proclamation to me in His holy Scriptures I know and believe this fact. His Law, His Ten Commandments, tells me of my lost condition. Thus God has graciously revealed to me His perfect holiness in language that I can understand and believe, and I find that I am totally unlike Him: hateful, slothful, completely oblivious to everyone and everything He stands for as God.

And I acknowledge my sinfulness especially in the General Confession: **“O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor miserable sinner, confess to Thee all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended Thee and justly deserved Thy punishment in time and in eternity.**

But I am heartily sorry for them and earnestly repent of them, and I pray Thee of Thy boundless mercy, and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me. ”

And the God of my salvation will not let me be put to shame because of my sins. Satan, my friends, my own self, all will not cause me to lose my faith that God has forgiven me in His own Son, who knew no sin. Through and by my Lord Jesus and His church I have found my good God, who tells me not only that He forgives me but also why He does so.

It is because He sent His Son to the accursed tree of the cross for me. And now, here at His holy altar, I have the personal assurance of His love and forgiveness in Jesus' own body and blood, given and shed for me and my sins.

At Jesus Holy Communion we cry to Him: ***To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ² O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed.***

And from Jesus' own lips we hear, and our body tastes His love for us personally: ***“Take and eat, this is the true Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, given for you. Take and drink, this is the true Blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which was shed upon the Cross for the forgiveness of sins.”***

Therefore, as the Epistle declares in 1 Peter 5:6–7, *humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

Thus, with His power and strength, we will resist the devil with sober watchfulness, remaining firm in the faith, knowing and believing that the God of all grace, who has called us to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself restore, establish, and strengthen us, so that to God is all glory and dominion forever.

2. My Cry For Mercy And Forgiveness

Our text continues, ¹⁶ *Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted.* This cry of David for mercy is also our cry for mercy. David feared that the Lord had turned His face from him in anger because of his horrible, wilful sins of adultery, murder, and deceit.

The sweet singer of Israel was uncertain of himself and his acts because he had turned from God. Note David's confession and cry for mercy: utter desolation, waste is my lot, causing me extreme affliction, and distress. And he reiterates this cry in the following verse: ¹⁷ *The troubles of my heart have enlarged; Bring me out of my distresses!*¹⁷ Note the Personal pronouns!

Often Satan-inspired unbelief suggests to us that God has turned His back on us because of our many and great transgressions of His holy will. In our weakness, compounded by our archenemy, Satan, and the half-hearted attitude of our friends, we forget how merciful God truly is to us.

But God's Scriptures constantly reaffirm His mercy, as we learn in Micah 7:18–19, ¹⁸ *Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression ... ? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.*

And not only does God say this to us in His Word, so that we, like the tax collectors and sinners in today's Gospel, "*drew near to Him to hear Him,*"² but in His Holy Supper God re-emphasises His mercy to us desolate and afflicted sinners.

Here, at God's Table, we have the present reality of God's mercy and love: His very own Son's true body and blood are given to us in His mercy, not because we are righteous or upright citizens of His kingdom.

Note that the entire Communion liturgy is God's reality of His mercy to us, for He not only tells us this fact in all these words of His new testament but also gives us, sinners that we are, His own Son's true body and blood in blest reality.

These sacred elements are not representations or symbols of an absent Lord, but the true body and blood of the very Son of God, who was so desolated and afflicted with our sins that He cried for us: ***“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”***³ Jesus' sacrifice for my sins that I might have God's mercy is constantly repeated to me and all believers in Christ in His Supper *“Given for you ... Shed for you ...”*

But my cry to God in my affliction may be described not only as a cry for His mercy, but also as a cry for His forgiveness. ***“¹⁸ Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins.”*** David was made aware of his sins by God.

In this single psalm, he speaks of his sins at least seven times, imploring God's forgiveness. And in Psalm 18 and 55, David reiterates his need for forgiveness, especially acknowledging God as his Saviour, his Deliverer, his Rock, and his Fortress. Thus the psalmist declares his total need of God for the forgiveness of all his sins, as God alone can forgive.

Our Lord Jesus likewise shows us, from the Holy Gospel for today, that there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. This trilogy of parables in Luke 15, the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, emphasises that ***“the Son of man has come to seek and to save [that is, forgive] that which was lost.”***⁴

Note that in these parables, as the ratio lessens from one out of 100, to one of ten, to one of two, the sense of loss rises, and the infinite value of every soul to God is revealed. Furthermore, we see the lengths to which God, in His love and mercy, goes to find and restore each soul by His forgiveness.

Today we prayed in the Collect for the third Sunday after Trinity: *“Lord God, protector of all who trust in You, without whom nothing is strong and nothing is holy; increase Your help and mercy to us. Grant that, by Your guidance through our lives on earth, we do not lose eternal life.”*

But we will lose the temporal and eternal things of God if we do not accept Christ's forgiveness of our my sins that He alone has obtained for us by His own Passion, death, and resurrection. We cannot forgive ourselves our sins — God alone has done that task by making *Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*⁵

Here we see God's love and grace concentrated in Christ. God's love for you and me and all mankind is shown in His stream of grace that comes to us through Jesus and His atonement for us. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the heat and warmth of God's fire of love that He grants to us by the power of His blessed Spirit.

So then as we have opportunity, come to the altar of God, receiving from His omnipotent hand the body and blood of His divine Son, the only Forgiver of all our sins. Come, in your affliction of sin, seeking and receiving His mercy and forgiveness in Jesus, who not only invites us: *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden,"*⁶ but also gives us His very body and blood in His holy Sacrament, so that we, lost and condemned sinners, shall be restored to everlasting life!

Then, having received my Lord's body and blood at His Table, we shall cry continually to God for His grace and mercy. We shall, by His strength, lift up our souls to Him and trust in Him so that we fight the good fight of faith, overcoming Satan and his evil works and ways, as God's redeemed son and daughter, doing His will of proclaiming His forgiveness to all mankind to the eternal glory of His holy name. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Luke 15:1-10

² Luke 15:1

³ Mark 15:34

⁴ Luke 19:10

⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:21

⁶ Matthew 11:28