

## Reminiscere - The Second Sunday in Lent

Hymns: 5, 473, 477, 50

( omit Gloria, responses before & after the Gospel reading, and other ascriptions of praise during Lent. )

The INTROIT

(Ps. 25:6,2,22;1,2)

*P: Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses;*

**C: for they have been ever of old.**

*P: Let not mine enemies triumph over me;*

**C: God of Israel, deliver us out of all our troubles.**

*P: Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;*

**C: O my God, I trust in Thee; let me not be ashamed.**

*(The "Gloria in Excelsis" is omitted during the Penitential Season of Lent)*

The COLLECT

O God, who seest that of ourselves we have no strength, keep us both outwardly and inwardly that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

**Isaiah 45:20-25 (NKJV)**

“Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you who have escaped from the nations. They have no knowledge, who carry the wood of their carved image, and pray to a god that cannot save. Tell and bring forth your case; yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me.

“Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him. In the LORD all the descendants of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory.’”

THE GRADUAL

**(Ps.25:17,18; 106:1-4)**

*P: Christ hath humbled Himself and become obedient unto death; even the death of the cross.*

**C: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him; and given Him a name which is above every name.**

*P: He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.*

**C: He hath given meat unto them that fear Him; He will ever be mindful of His covenant. My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed; he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in me and I in him.**

## The EPISTLE

## 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 (NKJV)

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Philippians 2:8)

*P: Christ has humbled himself, and become obedient unto death:*

**C: even the death of the cross.**

## The HOLY GOSPEL

## St. Matthew 15:21-28 (NKJV)

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

---

## 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 — "How You Ought to Walk and to Please God"

### INTRODUCTION

- I. HOW YOU OUGHT TO WALK AND TO PLEASE GOD
- II. TO KNOW TO POSSESS (GET) HIS VESSEL IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR
- III. GOD DID NOT CALL US TO UNCLEANNESS, BUT IN HOLINESS.

### CONCLUSION

## Reminiscere - The Second Sunday in Lent

Hymns: 5, 473, 477, 50

### 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 — “How You Ought to Walk and to Please God”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The appointed Epistle reading for this day of Reminiscere is 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7:

**Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### INTRODUCTION

Reminiscere, “Remember, O LORD, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been ever of old.” Thus begins the Introit of the day. Such is the way of the LORD our God. He remembers His tender mercies and His loving-kindnesses. He remembers that He created us in His own image, male and female He created us. He created us to live in His goodness. He established the life of goodness in which we should live. He proclaimed that life for us, calling all things into existence for our happiness. Even though we forget, even though we doubt His goodness, mercy, and loving-kindnesses, He does not forget. Thus He commands that we return to Him in order that we may be renewed in the life that He has commanded for our good.

#### I. HOW YOU OUGHT TO WALK AND TO PLEASE GOD

**Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.**

“Finally then, brethren,” or “Now the remaining part, brothers. . .” After all the wonderful things that the apostle has said in the first three chapters, now something remains to be said. The congregation in Thessalonica received the Gospel under very turbulent circumstances. Yet they received the Gospel with great joy. St. Paul speaks of this in the first three chapters, sharing the joy that he and the other preachers of the Gospel have in knowing the steadfastness of the Thessalonian congregation in holding to the Word as their life. Yet the apostle also knows

the daily temptations that all Christians face. He knows how powerfully the worldly ways and the ways of the flesh work against the saints of God. Since the Old Adam continues to inhere to the flesh of the saints, causing them always to deal with the simultaneous existence of saint and sinner in their persons, St. Paul and the other evangelists are concerned that their dear brothers in the faith should be urged and encouraged to remember who they are in the Lord Jesus. So they write:

**Now the remaining part, brothers, we urge you-all and call near in LORD Jesus, just as you received from us the way necessary for you-all to walk and to please God so that you-all should super-abound even more.**

This is reminiscent of what the Lord Jesus says in John 10:9-10:

**I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**

This is the meaning of what St. Paul is writing. He wants to declare the urgency and the absolute necessity that the saints never forget the narrowness of the way that leads to life and the abundance of life. Jesus is the way and the door. This door is only the width of one man. We all must be squeezed through this one door, which means that we cannot force our way in by our own efforts. Rather, as we come to Jesus in one mind and with one mouth, knowing the one pure doctrine that has been commanded to be administered to us all and walking together as one body, namely the body of Christ, we all fit through the door as one in Christ Jesus, and enter into that new life by which we super-abound in His grace, mercy, and peace together.

This is what St. Paul and his companions preached when they came to Thessalonica that first time. This is what the people received with great joy even though they faced much opposition from their former brethren. They lost their place in the congregation or synagogue to which they had previously belonged, but their hearts were glad to be joined through LORD Jesus in the renewed congregation.

## II. TO KNOW TO POSSESS (GET) HIS VESSEL IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR

But over time this can wear people down. It often seems hard to stand apart from loved ones and former brethren. It can seem very hard to look always to the unity of the one true faith rather than to seek one's own desires. This is especially true on account of the personal war that one faces in one's own person, the war between the new man and the old Adam.

Because of this we each as individuals, and even as congregations, face the temptation of selfishness. We often find ourselves thinking only of ourselves. This selfishness is especially demonstrated regarding our sexuality. For our sexuality is a very powerful factor in our personal identity. We often flee to the sensuality of our sexuality when we feel the overwhelming struggles of daily life. Sometimes this is expressed in a form of withdrawal. Sometimes a person seeks to find safety by keeping to oneself and trying to ignore the sexual nature in which God created us all.

More often, however, is the pathos or suffering that comes from personal desire or lust. And so in one way or another the individual seeks to find a sort of renewal or affirmation of identity through sexual gratification. Mankind has been created by God as a sexual being. God

has a holy and wonderful reason for creating us in this way. His plan is that we may experience in our bodies the oneness that He intends for us all to know in Him. He wants us to experience this oneness in a way that we can understand the communion that He has established with us in His Church. He wants us to understand the necessity for His Church to draw near in His love. And so He created us with a nature of dependency upon one another.

First He fashioned Man from the soil and breathed the breath of life into him so that Adam became a living soul. Then from Man the LORD brought forth Woman. Thus she was named "Of-Man," that is, WoMan. When the LORD brought the two together to be one, He declared that in their union they were Man, created in the image of God. Through this the LORD demonstrated the necessity of the union in Him. Their happiness and their completeness could only be known in true unity in the LORD.

This is what St. Paul declares in this part of his epistle.

**This indeed is the will of God, the sanctification (holiness) of you-all, to retain you all from porneia (sexual deviation), to know each of you-all the of himself vessel to get in holiness and esteem, not in pathos of concupiscence, according as even the ethne, those not having known God.**

The Greek word order seems cumbersome, but it conveys the true intent of God's will for us. His will for us is our sanctification. His will is that we should be holy even as He is holy. This is the identity that He wants us to know. This is the identity that makes us complete and truly happy.

Yet in the weakness of our flesh we deviate from the beautiful nature in which God calls us. This is the image in which Man is created, and to which God calls us to return. But in our weakness we twist things and begin to focus upon ourselves as we perceive ourselves. Then we stop believing that we are complete in Christ and seek other ways to fulfill our needs, especially our emotional needs.

This is why St. Paul says that God's will for us, is that our sanctification will retain us from the deviation that our fallen nature would lead us to embrace for ourselves. God's will is for us to know, each of us in our own person, to get the of himself vessel in holiness and honor. This is reminiscent of the Man and Of-Man relationship that God demonstrated through the order of our creation. God intends for a man to get for himself a vessel into which he may pour himself. This is how God does with His Church, and this is how He created mankind. God created Man to receive unto himself the vessel that is of himself, so that he may give himself to her and be one with her. This is why a man looks upon his wife in a different way than the woman looks upon her husband. She is drawn to him to be received and embraced by him, and he is drawn to her to draw her unto himself in the unity that God creates and maintains.

This is a union in holiness and esteem. It is not a union of self-gratification. It is not a union of pathos. It is not a union resulting from the suffering or passions of concupiscence or overwhelming desire. Rather it is a union of sacrificing oneself for the other. Rather than seeking someone to fulfill one's own needs, it is a union of two who in the holiness of the true faith give themselves to fulfill one another. This is observed and appreciated even by those whom God does not lead into an earthly marriage, for they perceive in the union of their own parents and in the unions of other couples what God intends that we should perceive of His Holy Communion with His Church.

### III. GOD DID NOT CALL US TO UNCLEANNES, BUT IN HOLINESS.

St. Paul draws this together saying:

**Not indeed did call us God upon impurity but in holiness.**

This is a magnificent contrast. Not upon, but in. The call of God is not to go running to jump upon a bed of impurity that is based upon selfish sensual desires. God has not called us to seek our own piling up of one passion upon another. But rather He has called us in holiness. God Himself is found in holiness. God is not found atop a pile of attractions. God's call does not emanate from a pile of worldly goodies. God's call is in His holiness.

This is why we misunderstand the nature of His commandments. God does not give us His commandments for His own satisfaction. He gives them for our satisfaction. He gives them for our sake. He gives them from His own holiness, so that we may know His holiness and learn of the way in which His holiness is made to be ours. He calls us to be united with Him in His holiness so that we do not suffer the agonies and disappointments of our own deviant desires. He does not want us to be consumed by our passions, but rather to be set free to live in His holiness.

Thus, God's commandments are not demands concerning what we must do according to our own efforts. Rather, His commandments are statements of what He wills to do for us and in us. His commandments are declarations of who we will be by His gracious declaration. This declaration of righteousness is what gives us our sanctification or holiness in which we now live.

When we seek to live by our own efforts, we seek to build up a way upon which we will progress through life. When we hear the call of God we are incorporated into the holiness of God's Holy Communion. Our way is a way based upon our own works, which we continually prove to be unsatisfactory. God's way is a way in which He restores us in His holiness so that our satisfaction is already established for us by Christ.

Our way is the way that is established upon our own efforts and our own works. His way is in His holiness. Our hearts call us to build upon what we see in the world. Our hearts call us to follow upon the way of our insatiable desires. God calls us to be joined in His holiness in which we find that all our desires fade when we are made to know the fullness of God's glory in His holiness. Then we are free to look upon ourselves and upon one another as God looks upon us. Then we find that rather than seeking to pile up a stack of personal desires, rather we abide in God's holiness and good-pleasure. Then we no longer see our needs because we abide in the true contentment of knowing God's holiness, not as something to which we must aspire, but as that in which we live.

#### CONCLUSION

No wonder the Gospel is called a mystery. Surely we could not hope to explain God's gracious will toward us apart from the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Surely we could not believe in true purity in the Church and in our lives except through the pure and unadulterated Gospel. How could we ever hope to grasp this except that God pours this blessed faith into us in connection with the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost? How could we hope to continue in this blessed holiness except that God calls us to come and to partake of His holiness in the blessed Supper of His body and blood? Truly God has not called us upon the impurity our own works, but in the holiness that He has established for us in His Church, which shall stand even against the gates of hell. What a blessed marriage God has

established for us in Jesus! In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds  
in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.