

## 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**

Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the LORD? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

THE GRADUAL

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

*P: The troubles of my heart are enlarged:*

**C: Oh, bring Thou me out of my distresses.**

*P: Look upon mine affliction and my pain:*

**C: and forgive all my sins.**

*P: Oh, give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good:*

**C: for His mercy endureth forever.**

*P: Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?*

**C: Who can show forth His praise?**

*P: Blessed are they that keep judgment:*

**C: and he that doeth righteousness at all times.**

*P: Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that Thou bearest unto Thy people:*

**C: Oh, visit me with Thy salvation.**

## The EPISTLE

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-7**

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto 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**

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

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## 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 — “So Ye Would Abound More and More”

### INTRODUCTION

I. IN LORD JESUS

II. SO YE WOULD ABOUND MORE AND MORE

III. FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD

### CONCLUSION

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### 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 — “So Ye Would Abound More and More”

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:

**Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto 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. This is what the LORD holds before us throughout His Holy Scriptures. From Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, God’s servants have recorded the revelation of the tender mercies and loving-kindnesses of the LORD. Knowing God as He has revealed Himself through His Scriptures that teach us of His Son Jesus and the salvation and life that are in and of Him, this changes us. This changes how we know ourselves and how we understand the purpose of our lives. This changes how we appreciate the many marvelous gifts that God bestows upon us. This knowledge, this understanding, this faith causes us to superabound exceedingly.

#### I. IN LORD JESUS

**Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God.**

When we speak to persuade others concerning what they should hear and obey, we tend to use the sense of “by” the authority of an office or someone greater. We say something like, “**You had better believe it, by God!**” But this is not the manner in which St. Paul speaks in today’s text. Rather, he says, “**The remaining part, therefore, brethren, we beseech you-all and call near in LORD Jesus, just as you-all received from us the way necessary for you-all to walk and to please God.**”

This is not the way that we think according to our sinful nature. This is not the way of the world or of our sinful flesh. This is the way of the body of Christ. This is the way of those whom the Lord has called near through the Gospel. St. Paul and the others joining with him in this urgent plea stand as ambassadors of Christ, humbly calling near in LORD Jesus. Notice the lack of any threats. This is the calling near to receive the blessings and promises of God in Christ. This is the language of God's Holy Communion.

It is nevertheless the language spoken to and heard by slaves and servants. It is the true language of genuine family. Listen carefully to this language used by the dear apostle: **“The remaining part, therefore, brethren, we beseech you-all and call near in LORD Jesus, just as you-all received from us the way necessary for you-all to walk and to please God.”**

He calls us near to hear the life of those who are counted as brethren, family. This is a calling near to the shared life of love in which those who are one with one another are bound together inseparably. It is a very strong bondage that maintains this unity. It is the bondage of agape. It is the bondage of God's holy will that is poured out to us with the Holy Spirit in Baptism. It is the bondage that changes our wills to be made the same as God's holy will. It is the bondage that subjects us to one another in the fear and love of Christ.

We are bound to one another in Lord Jesus. We are called to be one in Lord Jesus. We are united in the blessings of God in Lord Jesus. Therefore, together we walk in Lord Jesus. Therefore, our desire is to please God in Lord Jesus.

This is not a sense of obligation but a true and earnest desire that is born in us on account of being renewed in God's Holy Communion. God's love is such that it makes the first to be last and the last to be first. God Himself in love humbled Himself to be the very last of all of mankind. He made Himself to be born of the virgin to be the world's castaway, the world's refuse, the sinner of sinners. This He did to lift us up from the filth of our sinfulness to live in His righteousness and holiness forevermore.

The word that St. Paul uses for “to please” God actually means “to lift up.” Even as God desires to lift us up from our wretchedness, so also having been lifted up by God we naturally desire to lift Him up through every activity of our life. We seek God's good pleasure not from a sense of obligation but from deeply held gratitude and renewed love. The good pleasure of the new life that God works in us fills us to such a degree that we naturally want to respond to God in the same way that He acts toward us. God makes us to be like Himself again so that our desire is to please Him by demonstrating the new life that He has generated within us.

As St. Paul explains, this truly is necessary. This necessity is like the need for a living being to breathe. For as long as we are alive we are in bondage to this need to breathe. But whoever even imagines this to be a burden or an obligation? If something robs us of our ability to breathe, we gasp for our next breath. Whatever it is that hinders us from breathing we count as a terrible oppressor. We think only of the inability to breathe as the burden. As soon as free breathing is restored, we no longer feel burdened but relieved! It is the same for the regenerated spirit and the need to please God. The call to be restored to this is like performing the Heimlich maneuver on a choking individual. It is an act of loving compassion and care.

II. SO YE WOULD ABOUND MORE AND MORE

**The remaining part, therefore, brethren, we beseech you-all and call near in LORD Jesus, just as you-all 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.**

In Lord Jesus we enter into the kingdom of God and we are saved and we go in and we go out freely, eating and drinking at His Table, being strengthened to go forth in the fullness of His grace, mercy, and peace. Any other way robs us of the abundant life that God desires for us.

When we consider the way of those who are truly united in love as family, what form of expressing this do they use? Do they not draw near to one another and embrace one another by wrapping their arms around each other and squeezing each other as closely as possible? We call this a hug and an embrace. It is a bondage that we willingly and joyfully impose upon ourselves and those who likewise willingly enter it.

What is the result of such bondage? Does it restrict us or do we count it as causing us to superabound even more? Do we count the bondage of a hug to be a burden? Perhaps if we are forced to hug someone for whom we do not care, then we would resist it with revulsion. But when invited to embrace one whom we love and hold dear, we count it as great joy.

But there are things that interfere with this joyous bondage of love. St. Paul admonishes us against these in the portions that follow.

### III. FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF 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 dear apostle goes on with additional aspects of the worldly ways and the ways of the flesh that break our bondage of love and steal away the superabundance that is in God's Holy Communion. But with this he directs us first to the ways that impact us in our own bodies. He reminds us of the commandments that we have been taught. He then reminds us that the will of God is not to restrict us, but to work in us and to maintain our sanctification. For the ways of the world do not bring us satisfaction, even though we may imagine that they do. According to our sinful lusts we never find true satisfaction. Giving in to our fleshly lusts only fans our lusts into flames that consume us. We burn with more and more passion, never finding satisfaction.

This is not the way to which God calls us. This is not His holy will for us. Rather, He desires to give His righteousness and His holiness to us. His will for us is our sanctification. He calls us to be separated unto Himself in His Holy Communion, separated from the destructive

ways of the world and of the sinful flesh.

In Lord Jesus we discover the meaning of true contentment. As we walk in His ways, we learn the faithfulness of the LORD our God. We see that His ways truly are righteous and pleasing. We learn that He is our true Father who desires only good for us. We learn that trusting in Him is the way of peace and contentment. And so, as His love fills us we desire to continue in the ways that please Him. After all, the ways that please Him are the ways that bring peace and contentment to us. The more that we find ourselves walking according to His good and gracious will, the more we find ourselves superabounding.

If, however, we turn aside from the way into which the Lord calls us to walk, we become dissatisfied and malcontent. We begin struggling within our own hearts and souls and minds. We find ourselves striving within ourselves and against our fellow man. The harder that we strive after what we mistakenly have counted as the good things in life, the farther we find ourselves from true happiness and contentment.

From this the LORD calls us to be turned again back to Him and His good and gracious will. He calls us near together in Lord Jesus, in His body, to receive the holy absolution that He purchased with His own blood and offers to us in the Holy Sacrament. As we heed His calling and draw near through the means of grace, once again we find that we are satisfied completely and we begin once again to superabound even more.

This is the way of sanctification that the Holy Spirit works within us. This is the way of cleanness and holiness. This is the way of peace and hope and joy.

#### CONCLUSION

The Introit begins with us calling to the LORD to remember His tender mercies and His loving-kindnesses. But does God ever forget these? The truth is that we are the ones who forget and turn aside, seeking good from sources of our own choosing. By this we cheat ourselves of the good things to which God calls us. And so today, we hear again the call to draw near in the congregation of the body of Lord Jesus. In Him we walk and please God, for His good pleasure and will is our sanctification. His will is that we should superabound even more than we can imagine, certainly more than we can by the ways of destruction that we are tempted to follow according to the lusts of our flesh and of the world. As the LORD gathers us unto Himself in His Holy Communion, we partake of the fullness of His goodness and we are renewed in the life that is in Him. This is the will of our gracious God and Father. Nothing is required of us except that we receive from God what He desires to give to us. Who would ever count this to be a burden? 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.