

Let us say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I put my trust."

The Word

Luke 23:26-43 (*Jesus forgives, forgives, forgives*)

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. 27 And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. 28 But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' 31 For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" 32 Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. 33 And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 And Jesus said, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" And they cast lots to divide his garments. 35 And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" 36 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine 37 and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" 38 There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." 39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he said, "*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*" 43 And he said to him, "*Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.*"



ESV

The Reflection

Why did Jesus refuse to save himself? When have you been in a situation helping another and been tempted to make your life easier rather than bear the full burden of doing what needs to be done? What makes the difference within us that leads us to spiritual victory in such situations?

The Prayer

O Crucified God, who shows strength in the form of weakness and glory in the face of humility, forgive us for we did not know what we were doing. Forgive us for we do not know what we do. Forgive us for we will not know what we will be doing. Forgive us, O Crucified God, for all the ways our ignorance creates hatred and fear that leads to violence. In full knowledge of our sin, may we, too, look forward with hope to being with you in Paradise.

The Blessing

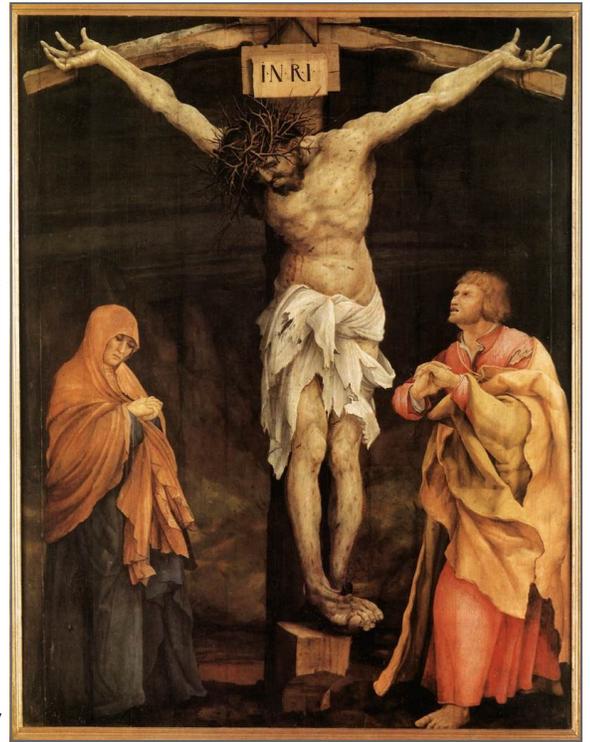
In all things God is at work to shower us with love and draw us into the likeness of Christ Jesus our Lord: rejoice in the knowledge that nothing can separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus.

Let us say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I put my trust."

The Word

John 19:24-37 (*Jesus' death fulfills prophecy*)

While the soldiers were looking after themselves, 25 Jesus' mother, his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross. 26 Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her. He said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." 27 Then to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that moment the disciple accepted her as his own mother. 28 Jesus, seeing that everything had been completed so that the Scripture record might also be complete, then said, "I'm thirsty." 29 A jug of sour wine was standing by. Someone put a sponge soaked with the wine on a javelin and lifted it to his mouth. 30 After he took the wine, Jesus said, "It's done . . . complete." Bowing his head, he offered up his spirit. 31 Then the Jews, since it was the day of Sabbath preparation, and so the bodies wouldn't stay on the crosses over the Sabbath (it was a high holy day that year), petitioned Pilate that their legs be broken to speed death, and the bodies taken down. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man crucified with Jesus, and then the other. 33 *When they got to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs.* 34 *One of the soldiers stabbed him in the side with his spear. Blood and water gushed out.* 35 *The eyewitness to these things has presented an accurate report. He saw it himself and is telling the truth so that you, also, will believe.* 36 *These things that happened confirmed the Scripture, "Not a bone in his body was broken,"* 37 *and the other Scripture that reads, "They will stare at the one they pierced."*



THE MESSAGE

The Reflection

For what spiritual values do you most thirst? What do you imagine it will feel like if, when you come to the end of your life, you are able to say that your life's work, your life's purpose is finished, whole, complete?

The Prayer

O Crucified God, who shows strength in the form of weakness and glory in the face of humility, your death is finished, complete and by it we are made whole. Your death, our life. Your sacrifice, our salvation. Your thirst, our water unto eternal life. Thank you, O Crucified One, for the heights and depths, the breadth and length to which you journeyed that we might have life anew, life abundant and life eternal. Glory and honor and wisdom and power be yours forever. Amen.

The Blessing

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The Word

Matthew 27:57-66 (*Religious leaders try to prevent the resurrection*)

Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. 59 When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. 62 On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, *the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' 64 Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."* 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.



NKJV

The Reflection

How did the leadership try to stop the will of God through their human efforts? Our human efforts cannot always make us safe from thieves, how will it ever keep us from God's sovereign purpose?

The Prayer

O Crucified God, who shows strength in the form of weakness and glory in the face of humility, we thank you that Pilate and the religious leadership went to great effort to prevent the resurrection, for now we can be assured that the good news of Jesus isn't merely a hoax. Father, help us to recognize when we try to prevent your plans by our human effort, for we know that your will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Blessing

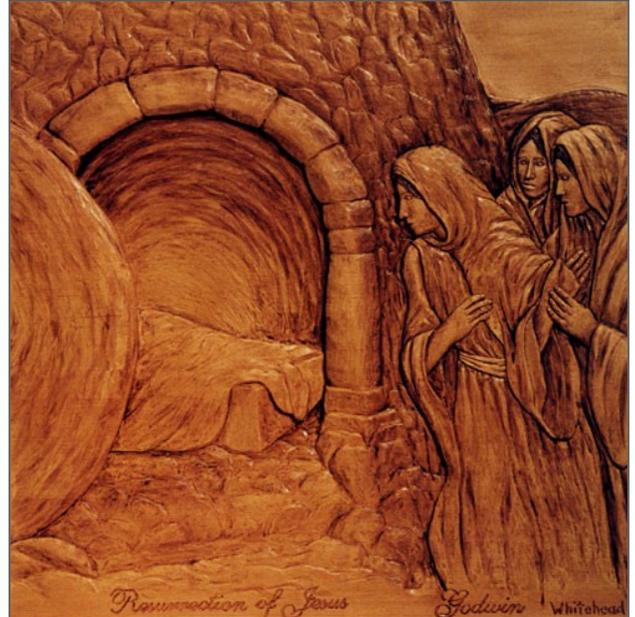
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The Lord is risen! Alleluia! He is risen indeed.

The Word

Mark 16:1-8 (*The women are afraid: do they tell the good news?*)

The day after the Sabbath day, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought some sweet-smelling spices to put on Jesus' body. 2 Very early on that day, the first day of the week, soon after sunrise, the women were on their way to the tomb. 3 They said to each other, "Who will roll away for us the stone that covers the entrance of the tomb?" 4 Then the women looked and saw that the stone had already been rolled away, even though it was very large. 5 The women entered the tomb and saw a young man wearing a white robe and sitting on the right side, and they were afraid. 6 But the man said, "Don't be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who has been crucified. He has risen from the dead; he is not here. Look, here is the place they laid him. 7 Now go and tell his followers and Peter, 'Jesus is going into Galilee ahead of you, and you will see him there as he told you before.'" 8 *The women were confused and shaking with fear, so they left the tomb and ran away. They did not tell anyone about what happened, because they were afraid.*



NCV

The Reflection

When has God done something that surprised you? How did you react: fear, confusion, joy? How can you serve Jesus today as the women sought to serve him? How can you look for Jesus as the women looked for him?

The Prayer

Living God, who raised Jesus from the dead, take away our fear of serving, our fear of proclaiming good news, our fear of the unknown, for you are in the unknown. And you go before us. Give us the assurance of your presence in all things and for all things. Today may we live with courage and character in Christ, with honesty and hope through him.

The Blessing

May the God of Peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working among you that which is pleasing in God's sight.

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The Word

Matthew 28 (*Jesus gives the great commission: make disciples*)

Now after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 Suddenly there was a severe earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were shaken and became like dead men because they were so afraid of him. 5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has been raised, just as he said. Come and see the place where he was lying. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there.' Listen, I have told you!" 8 So they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 But Jesus met them, saying, "Greetings!" They came to him, held on to his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. They will see me there." 11 While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. 12 After they had assembled with the elders and formed a plan, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came at night and stole his body while we were asleep.' 14 If this matter is heard before the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story is told among the Jews to this day. 16 So the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain Jesus had designated. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came up and said to them, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"



NET Bible

The Reflection

Remember your baptism or tell the story of the most recent baptism in your family. What are ways your baptism is, for your faith journey, its beginning, its end and its everything in between?

The Prayer

Living God, who raised Jesus from the dead, all authority is yours, and in our baptism you share your power with us. You give us the power of the Holy Spirit that we might serve you throughout the world as we seek to fulfill your Great Commission. Teach us to obey, give us the power to serve, and may we remember that you are God-with-us even to the end of the age.

The Blessing

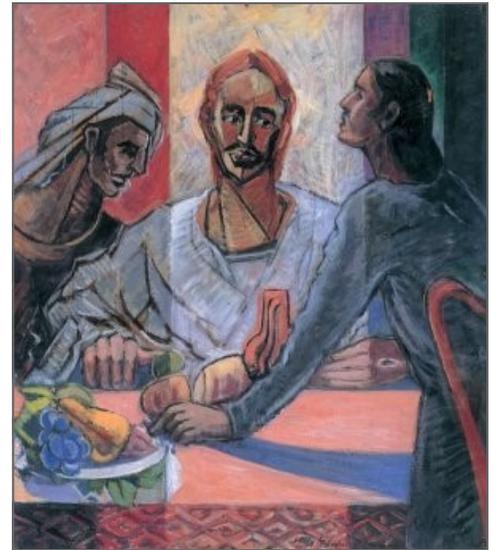
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The Word

Luke 24:13-31, 35 (*Jesus is known in Word and sacrament*)

On the same day, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village called Emmaus. It was about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. 15 While they were talking, Jesus approached them and began walking with them. 16 Although they saw him, they didn't recognize him. 17 He asked them, "What are you discussing?" They stopped and looked very sad. 18 One of them, Cleopas, replied, "Are you the only one in Jerusalem who doesn't know what has happened recently?" 19 "What happened?" he asked. They said to him, "We were discussing what happened to Jesus from Nazareth. He was a powerful prophet in what he did and said in the sight of God and all the people. 20 Our chief priests and rulers had him condemned to death and crucified. 21 We were hoping that he was the one who would free Israel. What's more, this is now the third day since everything happened. 22 Some of the women from our group startled us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 and didn't find his body. They told us that they had seen angels who said that he's alive. 24 Some of our men went to the tomb and found it empty, as the women had said, but they didn't see him." 25 Then Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are! You're so slow to believe everything the prophets said! 26 Didn't the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 *Then he began with Moses' Teachings and the Prophets to explain to them what was said about him throughout the Scriptures.* 28 *When they came near the village where they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther.* 29 *They urged him, "Stay with us! It's getting late, and the day is almost over."* So he went to stay with them. 30 *While he was at the table with them, he took bread and blessed it. He broke the bread and gave it to them.* 31 *Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. But he vanished from their sight...* 35 Then the two disciples told what had happened on the road and how they had recognized Jesus when he broke the bread.



GWNBS

The Reflection

What is most meaningful to you about receiving communion? How do you recognize Jesus in communion?

The Prayer

Living God, who raised Jesus from the dead, in Holy Communion you share with us your presence. Forgive us, Living God, for all the ways your people fuss and fight about how you are present while ignoring the miracle and mystery that you *are* present. Help us to see you when we share your joyous feast; may our hearts burn for you in the sacrament in ways that lead us to serve you in all of our lives.

The Blessing

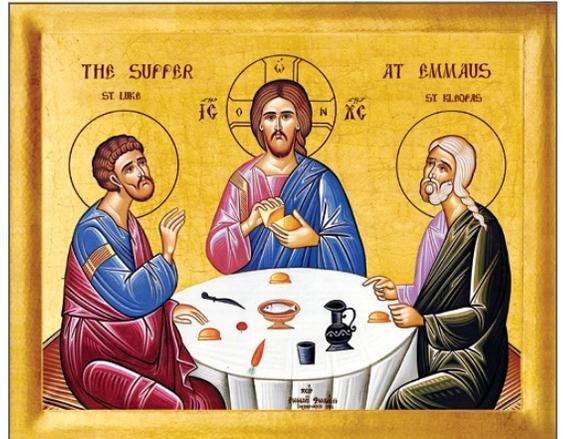
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The Lord is risen! Alleluia! He is risen indeed.

The Word

Luke 24:36-53 (*The resurrected Lord reviews the essentials of the gospel*)

And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them, and greeted them. 37 The whole group was terribly frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! 38 "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why do you doubt that it is really I? 39 Look at my hands! Look at my feet! You can see that it is I, myself! Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost! For ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do!" 40 As he spoke, he held out his hands for them to see [the marks of the nails], and showed them [the wounds in] his feet. 41 Still they stood there undecided, filled with joy and doubt. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he ate it as they watched! 44 Then he said, "When I was with you before, don't you remember my telling you that everything written about me by Moses, the prophets and in the Psalms must all come true?" 45 Then he opened their minds to understand at last these many Scriptures! 46 And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day; 47 and that this message of salvation should be taken from Jerusalem to all the nations: There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me. 48 You have seen these prophecies come true. 49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit upon you, just as my Father promised. Don't begin telling others yet—stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven." 50 Then Jesus led them out along the road to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them, 51 and then began rising into the sky, and went on to heaven. 52 And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem filled with mighty joy, 53 and were continually in the Temple, praising God.



TLB

The Reflection

Jesus summarizes the gospel: all was written in Moses and the Prophets; Messiah must die; Messiah will rise again; salvation and forgiveness are in his name; this good news must go to all nations; the Holy Spirit will be given to fulfill this work. Which of these points seems most significant to you?

The Prayer

Living God, who raised Jesus from the dead, so often we experience joy and doubt together: is the blessing you give really ours? Is the struggle we know one that will lead to growth? Do you really call us your beloved? O Living God, help us to believe even when we doubt, and may our doubts call us forward toward a deeper believing, that the joy of life with you will grow deeper, wider and more profound.

The Blessing

May the God of Peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working among you that which is pleasing in God's sight.