

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity

- Friday-

*Such as be blessed of Him shall inherit the earth;
and they that be cursed of Him shall be cut off. – Psalm 37:22*

In the Lord's vast domain, which extends over all, there are such as are blessed of Him, and such as are cursed of Him. They that are "blessed of Him" are those whom, from eternity already, impelled solely by His grace for Christ's sake, the Lord has chosen and predestinated to everlasting life, those whom He purposed to bringing to saving faith by the Gospel, those whom in time He made partakers of His grace through faith, those whom He sanctified to live and walk according to His Word as His blessed children, and those whom He promises to keep in the true and saving faith even unto the end (Ephesians 1:3-14; Romans 8:29-30). All this is wrought solely the grace of God in Christ and in no respect whatever is to be attributed to any work, doing, conduct, or merit of God's blessed children themselves. ---Those who are "cursed of Him" are those whom the Lord from eternity, impelled by His grace, for Christ's sake, most earnestly desired to save (Ezekiel 33:11; I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:9b), redeemed by the vicarious sacrifice of His Son (I Corinthians 5:15a, 21; I John 2:2), justified on the basis of Christ's perfect satisfaction of divine justice (II Corinthians 5:19), and whom in time He sought to make partakers, through faith, of this blessing of salvation by His Holy Spirit through His Word (I Timothy 2:4; Romans 10:18). But, according to their carnal mind (Romans 8:7), they "would not" have this blessing (Matthew 23:37), "even denying the Lord that bought them" (II Peter 2:1), and they reject in unbelief the blessed truth of God's gracious justification (II Thessalonians 2:12). Persistent unbelievers live and walk according to their own imaginations and lusts and, without salvation, bring upon themselves swift destruction. And all this is entirely their own fault and in no respect whatever the Lord's will or doing; nor is it because the Lord had neglected them in any way or did not sincerely desire to save them. Now, such as are "blessed of Him shall inherit the earth," the Psalmist tells us, the temporal earth in which they live now in time and the "new earth" (Revelation 21:1) which is their inheritance in eternity. But they that be "cursed of Him shall be cut off." God permits them to live on earth a while yet, and is longsuffering toward them in the time of grace, "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9); but whoever persists in unbelief "shall be damned," Jesus says (Mark 16:16b); whoever continues to despise God's grace in Christ Jesus and refuses to obey the Gospel (Romans 10:16) shall at last "be cut off;" he shall not see the new heaven and the new earth; he shall be damned, "cursed of Him" because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:19; 4:6, 11).

PRAYER – My God, I give Thee humble thanks that Thou hast from eternity chosen me in Christ Jesus to be Thine own dear child and an heir of everlasting life. Cause me to make my calling and election sure by walking in the paths of righteousness, and keep me Thine own through the power of the means of grace, that no one may pluck me out of my Savior's hand. Into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things for time and for eternity for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Not so th' ungodly race, they no such blessings find.
Their hopes shall flee like empty chaff before the driving wind.

How will they bear to stand before that judgment seat,
where all the saints at Christ's right hand in full assembly meet?

He knows and He approves the way the righteous go;
but sinners and their works shall meet a dreadful overthrow.

Hymn 414, 4-6:

* Scripture reading for Friday: Acts 7:55-60 Theme this week: Hope