

Possible Prayer of the Church 5th Sunday in Lent Judica ✕ March 22nd 2026

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. [Possible brief silence]

O God, Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, by His death You have brought us to Your holy hill, and by His resurrection You have justified us in Your sight. Lead us by the light and truth of Your Holy Word, that we may ever be vindicated in Christ and win the victory over all enemies of the Gospel. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Remember the congregations of Your Church, O LORD, which You have purchased with the holy blood of Your Son. Strengthen and defend all pastors and church workers, giving them every good gift as they attend to Your people. Cause us rightly to fear Your anger and rejoice in Your redemption. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

LORD, heavenly Father, give wisdom and strength to all fathers in the home and Church. Make them faithful in teaching Your Word to the children entrusted to their care, that these little ones would come to know You as their heavenly Father and live as true children of God. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O God of power and might, You hold in Your hand all the might of man. Give us good government and faithful leaders who will heed Your Word and pursue righteousness and justice. Bless and defend us against all destruction, and teach us to be patient and faithful citizens of this land, using ourselves and our resources wisely for the good of all. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Almighty God, because of our sins we are not worthy to pray to You, yet in Your mercy You receive our prayers through the intercession of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. Hear our supplications for those in need, suffering in body, mind or soul [*especially Our Savior & Faith Prayers*]...and all those we each name in our hearts in personal prayer. Answer our petitions on account of the merits and mediation of Your Son, our Savior. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O LORD, You have freed Your Church from slavery to this world and gathered us around Your holy mountain. Hearing again the proclamation of Your new testament, cleanse us through Christ's body and blood, which was offered for us on Calvary. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

LORD, keep us steadfast in Your Word, that we may not be deceived by that liar and murderer the devil, but know Your truth and so come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our LORD, who lives & reigns with You & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. **Amen.**

JUDICA-LENT-5 John 8:42-59 HE SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH 03.22.26 F.OS.L

TWISTED WORDS

All too often when we hear or read God's Word, we can be tempted to make it say what we want it to say. We hear it in such a way that it gets twisted to confirm our position or to attack those who are our adversaries. Instead of submitting to God's Word, **we make God's Word submit to us** and our purposes. **TEXT: John 8:42-59** [& cf. **Genesis 22:1-14**].

WHY SAY THIS, JESUS[?]

We see an example of something like that in today's Gospel reading. Jesus said this, **"If anyone keeps My Word he shall never see death."** That statement angered the Jews. At first these Jews had believed in Jesus. However as He spoke, and particularly when He said those Words, they turned against Him. **But WHY?** Because those Words offer a strong and sure promise, the promise of never seeing death. And that promise is given freely to everyone who keeps and holds onto His Words.

"TASTE" vs. "SEE"

But notice what the Jews did with what Jesus said. Notice how they **subtly altered what He said**. They replied, **"You say, 'If anyone keeps My Word he shall never taste death.'"** Did you notice that? **They changed the Lord's Words**. He said, **"see death"**; and they heard **"taste death."** But our Lord wasn't talking about tasting death. He doesn't mean, **"Whoever keeps My Words will never end up in the grave or experience the death of the body."**

NEED TO DIE[?!]

And well it should! Really, **How else can we "escape" this body of death** until it dies and is planted in the ground so that it might rise again? And how else can we finally and forever be purified and cleansed of sin, unless **the sin that adheres so fiercely and stubbornly to our flesh is killed with Christ** so that our bodies may rise with Christ restored and glorious? You know that Jesus said, **"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."** And so you die. And so your body is buried so that it might rise better than you ever imagined, fully restored to communion with God.

"KILL" THE CORRUPTIBLE

St. Paul says it this way: **"The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."** [1 Corinthians 15:42-44].

DEATH SENTENCE...IN LOVE All of this is according to the Lord's mysterious and wondrous mercy. After the disobedience of Adam and Eve, God pronounced the death sentence on all creation - **not** simply in anger, and **not** simply to punish; but also **to purify and renew and re-create**. And this is most certainly true for those who hold to Christ Jesus and His Word. For us, death is now just a slumber, and a passing from this life to the next; and, **if you can believe it, death is a blessing**. And the blessing is this: those who die, trusting in the Lord, are with the Lord. And so it is written, **"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on; that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."** [Revelation 14:13]

DEATH A ?BLESSING?!

Death is a blessing **only because our Lord Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, truly tasted death for us to take away its poison from us**. It is written in **Hebrews** [2:9], **"We see Jesus, who was**

made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone." Jesus is Himself that true and ultimate **grain of wheat planted and buried in the earth**. When He died, He didn't fake it, or pull off some trick. Even though He escaped the hands of the Jews here on this day when they tried to stone Him, He didn't hide Himself or escape death on the Cross. **He endured the death we must endure**. He died a real death. And if it is our hope to live with Him, we must also die with Him. Now **our life is tied to His in the waters of Holy Baptism**. As it is written in **Romans 6**, "*We were therefore **buried** with Him through Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be **united with Him in His Resurrection**."* We who hold to Jesus [still] **must and will taste death**. And that is good, and according to God's mercy. Because **in death, we have life more fully**. And through death, we attain **our goal – Eternal Life in the Kingdom of Heaven**.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? Yet our LORD Jesus still says today, "*Whoever keeps My Word shall never see death.*" **What does that mean?!** Well, it means that those who hold to Jesus shall **never see the full wrath, the full fury, the full punishment, and the full curse of death**. In other words, we shall never see **eternal** death and hell and the prince of darkness. And we shall never see God with His back turned against us. So, while we will taste of death, we will not see it or experience it in all its infernal horror.

HOLD FAST, NO CHANGE So, **let us hold to Jesus' Word without alteration or change**. Let us put to death our own ways and ideas and goals and desires and instead keep and receive and cling to the life that His Word gives. Ponder and meditate on the Word of Christ, because by doing so you will not see death but see Him Who is Life Incarnate, the Life of God, your Salvation.

WHO REALLY **I AM** That, of course, is the underlying reason why the Jews rejected Jesus - **they couldn't accept that He was (and is) God in the Flesh**. They were still in bondage to the lies of their father, the Devil. The thing that caused them to pick up stones to kill Jesus was when He said, "*Most assuredly I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.*" **I AM** is the Name of God revealed to Moses in the burning bush. **I AM is Yahweh, the Lord God Almighty**. That's Who Jesus claiming to be by saying this. **They considered that to be blasphemy**. But in truth, Jesus had **not only seen** Abraham and the prophets, **He IS the very Son of God Who created them and gave them life**, Who spoke to them and guided them.

GENESIS 22:1-14 ABE & IZZY In fact it was **really the Voice of CHRIST that Abraham heard** in the Old Testament, the Voice which called out to Abraham telling him not to harm Isaac when he was about to sacrifice him. It was really the **Angel** of the LORD - with a Capital A - who spoke to Abraham - that is, **the Messenger of the Father = The Son of God**. This was no created angel, because He said to Abraham, "*You have not withheld your son, your only son, from ME,*" that is from **God Himself**.

WHO ARE "ABE'S KIDS"? Though the Jews prided themselves on being descendants of Abraham and called him their father, they were **not truly his children**; because they did not share in his faith. Jesus said, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to **see My day**, and he saw it **and was glad**.*" By faith Abraham trusted in God's promises and was given to see what was coming in Christ. I believe one of the ways God showed Abraham what was coming was in this very account of the offering up of Isaac. Not only was God testing Abraham's faith here in order to strengthen it, He was also **giving a living prophecy of what His Own Son would later do**.

OT/NT COMPARISON Just consider the **details of this narrative**. Consider what is being **beautifully and mysteriously foreshadowed here**. Isaac was 1) **the only son**, the beloved son of Abraham, 2) **conceived in a miraculous way**. So too God the Father gave His Only Begotten and Beloved Son, miraculously **conceived by the Holy Spirit** in the Blessed Virgin, to deliver us from sin and Satan and the grave. 3) It was **a donkey** that carried Abraham's supplies to Moriah, even as it was **a donkey that carried our Lord into Jerusalem**. When Abraham had come to **Moriah** [on the 3rd day, BTW] he said, "*We will worship and then **we will come back to you**.*" Jesus said to His disciples, "***In a little while you will see Me no more, and then after a little while, you will see Me.***" In other words, "***I will go away and then I will come back to you in the power of the Resurrection on The Third Day.***" 4) Abraham laid the **wood** on Isaac his son, who carried it to the **top of the mountain**. Likewise, God the Father laid the wood of the Cross on His Son Jesus, and it was carried to the **top of Mt. Calvary**, the place of Sacrifice. 5) Just as Isaac was laid on the wood and bound, **so Jesus was bound to the wood of the Cross**.

COMPARISON ENDS... But the time for "**sacrificing the son**" would **not** come in Abraham's day, instead it would be **in Jesus' day**. After God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, he looked up and saw a male sheep, a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. Abraham offered it **in place of his son**. Likewise, **Jesus has offered up Himself in OUR place** so we would be set free from the judgment of death. He **purposely** caught Himself "in the thorny thicket of our sin" so we would be released from our bondage to the powers of hell and so that we now have everlasting life. The One Who wore the crown of thorns on His Head is **that Lamb of God, Who was sacrificed as our Substitute**, to take away our sin and the sin of the world. In Christ the words of Abraham are fulfilled for you, "***God Himself will provide the Lamb.***" Abraham named that place, "***The LORD will Provide.***" It was on the on the [other] Holy Mountain = **Calvary that God provided the Lamb of our Salvation in His only Son, Jesus**. In that way then, Abraham "*Saw Jesus' day ... and was exceedingly glad.*"

RIGHT HERE & NOW **We also are given to see Jesus' day and be glad**. Because this is **the LORD's Day right now**, where He gives Himself and shows Himself to you. This is the day you **TASTE Life in the Sacrament of His holy Body and Blood**, so that you might never see death. This is the day He feeds you with Himself for your forgiveness, so that He might transfigure and be recreated from your death-riddled flesh; so that one day, **you will stand** before Him in your renewed and resurrected flesh, and share with Christ in the honor and the vindication He has received from His Father. **IJ'N, Amen. SDG**