



First Sunday after Trinity.

*The Collect.*

**O** GOD, the strength of all those who put their trust in thee; Mercifully accept our prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

God is absolute Light, and where there is no light, there remains only darkness. God is Life, and where God is absent there remains only death. God is Strength, and where God is absent, there remains only weakness and absence of any strength at all.

A father once stood at the patio window observing his four year old son try to remove a very large rock from his sandbox. The boy strained and labored. He could barely slide the rock along the sand, but he could not begin to lift it to clear the bordering beams that enclosed the sandbox. After a time of struggle and frustration, the boy began to cry. The father went outside to comfort the boy. "Why are you crying Jimmy," the father asked. "Because this large rock keeps getting in the way, and I do not have enough strength to lift it out." Have you used all of your strength available?" asked the father. "Sure I have," replied Jimmy. "No, you have not!" said the father - you have my strength as well to add to your own," and with that, the father easily lifted the rock from the sand box. How often do we struggle and labor in frustration by attempting to defeat our giants alone when we could simply call upon the strength of God, our Father to vanquish every Goliath and crush every serpent? But we cannot call upon the strength of God if we have not put our trust in Him: ***O GOD, the strength of all those who put their trust in thee.*** Archbishop Cranmer substituted 'trust' for the older word 'hope' that appeared in the original taken from the Gregorian Sacramentary.

One truth must be made clear in our hearts up front: God is not obligated to us for anything. He is Sovereign and Lord. If we are seeking His face in prayer under the terms and obligations of the Law, He will never hear our prayer. We must appeal to His Mercy and Grace when we pray. Such prayers are offered out of a humble heart and will most often be consistent with what God wills to grant to us. ***Mercifully accept our prayers.*** All prayers are answered through Mercy and not constraint.

Man has no real strength at all. Even his next breath depends upon the mercy and grace of God. Weakness is a mark of our mortal natures. ". . . and because through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee," We are incapable of doing anything good. How long will it take us in our Christian studies to realize this simple fact. Since our fallen natures of sinful, all that we imagine and act upon is sinful. But the soul that is surrendered to Christ will act according to the Mind and strength of the Lord. The resulting works will be righteous because they belong to Christ, and not us, who works and moves in our spirits. ". . . grant us the help of thy grace." Our imputed righteousness is, above all, a grant of Grace!

WITHOUT Christ, we can do nothing - WITH Christ, we can do all things because He is all-powerful! *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* (Phil 4:13) Christ cannot be manipulated. He must remain the Lord of our lives if He is to strengthen us.

". . . that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee, both in will and in deed." Do you believe the Commandments of God are a thing of the past and nothing worth? You would be in great error so to believe. Obedience to God is an act that pleases Him very well. Obedience of God's Commandments is simply complying with His perfect will. You will note the precise order of words next: both in will and in deed. This is exactly the order of imputed righteousness - first, we WILL to obey; secondly, we ACT to obey. The will must ALWAYS precede the deed for a righteous deed performed without a heart dedicated to God is still sin. If we take pride in our righteousness, we have thereby lost the favor of God: *An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.* (Prov 21:4)

All our prayers, all our thoughts, all our actions, must be determined by our faith in, and dependency upon, the Lord Jesus Christ: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.