



The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. *Amen*

17. But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear him: And his justice unto children's children, 18. To such as keep his covenant, And are mindful of his commandments to do them. (Psalm 103:17-18)

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God First and foremost in this Collect, we observe that praise and recognition that should precede our every petition – here we note that God is **OMNIPOTENT** (Almighty), and God is **ETERNAL** in that omnipotence. *13 I beheld, therefore, in the vision of the night, and lo, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came even to the ancient of days: and they presented him before him. 14 And he gave him power, and glory, and a kingdom: and all peoples, tribes, and tongues shall serve him: his power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away: and his kingdom that shall not be destroyed.* (Daniel 7:13-14) The Ancient of Days is another name for God the Father, here, who is without beginning or end. The Son of Man referenced is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ according to His own Words: ***And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. And then shall all***

tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. (Matt 24:30) God is the essence of all goodness, righteousness and love to those who fear Him. I am sorry to say that He also is an instrument of destruction and judgment to those who do not fear Him. ***For our God is a consuming fire.*** (Hebrews 12:29) That fire will not consume precious metals and gems (those who emulate His character), but rather the stubble and refuse of the field (those who disdain the merits of God).

"...*who art always more ready to hear than we to pray*" Secondly, we recognize that God is ALWAYS more ready to hear the prayer of a sinner, or of His chosen, than they are ready to pray. The heart of God is inclined toward us at all times – not just at times of great trial and hardship. He is disposed to hear us when our hearts are merry and surrounded in the beauty of a glorious sunrise, as well as those moments when the pain of death and suffering have fallen upon us. Why will we not share our joys as well as our pains with the Lord? To quote the words sent by a friend this morning, *"Isn't it strange that you can't find a word to say when you're praying but.. you have no trouble thinking what to talk about with a Friend?"* Perhaps we do not pray with a believing heart for, if we did, we would share all our joys, pains, and needs with the Lord.

".....*and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve*" Thirdly, it is very true that God intends to give us more than we either **DESIRE** or **DESERVE**. If we will remember that prayer is **CONVERSATION** and **NOT DICTATION**, we might pray with greater results. If we pray foremost, as did Solomon, for wisdom, God will give wisdom plus a great deal more. If we have wisdom, we will use our wealth and resources according to God's will and not our own. If we seek wealth BEFORE wisdom, God will give neither. We ALWAYS need more than we desire. We may only desire bread to satisfy our hunger, but God desires to give us more – bread for our bodies AND **Bread for our Souls**. If God grants us anything at all, it will ALWAYS be more than we deserve. We did not make ourselves, we do not sustain our lives moment by moment, we do not deserve forgiveness for our many sins and faults; but God supplies all of our NEEDS which shall always be more than our desires (though perhaps different in nature).

Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy Fourthly, the mercies we receive from God daily are more in abundance than we even consider. The next breath we take is not deserved, but granted by the sustaining mercy of God. *For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.* (Isaiah 54:6-8) That Redeemer is He who even suffered a terrible death on the cross for the very purpose of redeeming you. How discourteous would it be of us in offending the Sovereign of Heaven by trampling the Blood of His only Begotten underfoot? Our just deserts for our natural-born sin is death, but God, in His mercy, offers redemption in Christ. Do you DESERVE this? NO! We DESERVE death. It is only the mercy of God in Christ that will spare us and impute the necessary righteousness to us required of Heaven.

"...*forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid*" Sin puts a separation between us and our Father in Heaven. When we sin, we are ashamed to look

Jesus in the eye. My heart bleeds for poor Peter whose love for Christ was great, but his courage failed him when in the court of the Sanhedrin. *And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.* (Luke 22:60-62) At that moment, Peter could not look Christ in the eye, but Christ could look Peter in the eye. Those hot tears of repentance were, perhaps, the greatest prayer Peter ever uttered. God hears our tears just as He hears our words. Sin separates us from God from our own perspective, but God never separates Himself from us if we are His. Imagine the heart-pain Peter felt over the next three days in which Christ supinely lay in the cold Tomb of the Garden! How elated was Peter to be reconciled with that "*Friend that sticketh closer than a brother*" by Galilee's Waters. (Proverbs 18:24) Christ is already sorrowful over our sins – so much so that He died to propitiate for them. But often must we also be full of sorrow and run to the feet of Christ seeking His face of favor once more. It is good that our consciences condemn us, for it drives us to the mercy seat. Those whose consciences are calloused and seared have not the tether to draw them to Christ.

"....and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask" A child may pitch a tantrum for sweet candy, but the mother kindly gives the child a more wholesome food – bread. We, too, pitch tantrums over our lustful desires which God refuses often to grant; but He always supplies a good heart with good nutrients for the soul. The baby receives its mother's milk, not because it has done a single thing to deserve that milk, but because the mother loves the baby with an immeasurable (and undeserved) love. The love of God even far exceeds that sacrificial love of a mother. We are mature enough in years to know better, yet we bawl and scream for our wants as incorrigible children. God may feel it expedient to remove even some of our favorite playthings when we behave so – not to punish, but to awaken us from our immaturity and lack of gratitude for ALL that He has given. We cannot even be aware of all the benefits that come daily from the hand of God. As long as we feel healthy, we are pleased to be, but fail to thank God for the good health He grants us. What of our families? Do we thank Him daily for our loved ones as well as for the food we eat? Do we thank Him for our rest and sleep, our warm and secure homes, our liberties granted by God through our national government? So many, many things we take for granted and are too prone to say, "God has not blessed!" The most memorable answer I have ever received from anyone during my years of ministry came from an eleven year old girl. When I asked the youth group, "What has God done for you this week" the young girl looked me straight in the eyes and answered, "EVERYTHING." So I learned what God means when He says "*a little child shall lead them.*"

"....but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord" Surely, we have deserved nothing for which we ask of our Maker, but we do not rest our petitions upon our own merits, but upon the merits of the One who bled and died for us – even the son of God! Reader, has God blessed you today, this very moment?