



## Around the Word Devotions + the week of April 17-23, 2016

### THEME OF THE WEEK: He is Risen to Give Us Believing Joy

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! We still find ourselves in the season of Easter. Easter is not over. In fact, Easter is never over. Each and every Sunday we celebrate a “mini-Easter”. We are drawn into our Lord’s Divine Service so that He might continue to give the blessing of Easter to us: forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Each and every new day we are again drowned into our Baptisms, drowned into the death of Christ, so that He might raise us up as the new man in His resurrection. In this resurrection is the gift of joy. And this is a gift that no amount of suffering can take from us!

SUN

### SCRIPTURE: John 16:5-15: The Joy of the Holy Spirit

These are the words Jesus speaks on the night when He was betrayed. He has previously spoken about His death and resurrection and now He speaks about His Ascension and the Day of Pentecost. The promise is that although Jesus might soon ascend to the right hand of the Father, He does not leave His Church all alone in this Vale of Tears. The Holy Spirit will come and will be given to lead His people into the way of truth. The Holy Spirit will give us Jesus. In Word and Water and Bread and Wine the gift of Easter is still given to us this day. In fact, Jesus Himself is still given. This is joy beyond understanding. *Dear Father, send us Your Spirit that we might receive Jesus. Amen.*

MON

### SCRIPTURE: Psalm 82: The Joy of a Just God

The rulers of this world, both temporal and churchly, do not always judge justly; although this is their charge given by God. When this happens it is easy for the Christian to lose hope and to despair. And yet even in the midst of despair we can and do have joy. Joy is not the same thing as happiness. The promise of God is not that all things in life will be blissful, but that amidst even sufferings we have the assurance that we have already been judged by the Judge of the world. And He has found us guiltless and blameless for the sake of Christ Jesus. This is joy: that God protects the weak and the afflicted in Him, even when temporal authorities fail to do so. *Almighty God, preserve us in Your just judgment until the coming of Christ. Amen.*

TUE

### SCRIPTURE: James 1:16-21: The Joy of the Implanted Word

The Gospel of Jesus risen from the dead produces good fruit, that is what it does. This is the automatic response of a Christian living in the joy of the resurrection. We have been set free from our bondage to sin. We have been brought to the new life of the new man in Christ through our Baptisms into Him. We delight in His Word which has been implanted within us by the Holy Spirit and because of this we are lead in the ways of that Word. This is a gift, a gift which we are joyful to receive. Christ lives and because He lives, He lives in us. And as He lives in us He makes us not only hearers of the Word but joyful doers as well. *Holy Father, grant us the joy of the implanted Word, even Jesus Christ. Amen.*

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WED

### SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 12:1-6: The Joy of a Comforting God

Sin deserves punishment and death. Sin brings upon the sinner the wrath of an angry God. And yet we have the promise, through Christ, that God has turned away from His anger towards us. He comfort us with the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. This is pure joy: that we have in our midst the Holy One of Israel who comforts us with Words of Absolution, with a washing that makes us righteous, with a meal that make us one with Him. He is not far off seething in anger, but He is close at hand; close enough to hear and taste and feel upon our foreheads. *Comforting God, let Your righteous deeds forever be proclaimed and Your name highly exalted amongst the peoples. Amen.*

THU

### SCRIPTURE: John 8:21-36: The Joy of Freedom

There is a big difference between slavery and Sonship: freedom. A slave is never free. This is what we once were. This is what we still are as long as we tether ourselves to the Law in order to gain salvation. The Law promises what it cannot give. As we strive to grab hold of this empty promise it inevitably slips through our fingers as the chains of sin grip us ever tighter. But Christ has broken the bond of that slavery, severed the ties that we once had to sin. In Him we have the joy of being fellow heirs of the kingdom through the same faith that Abraham had. And in this Sonship comes freedom; the freedom of the cross, the freedom of salvation. *Heavenly Father, thank You for our freedom in Christ. Amen.*

FRI

### SCRIPTURE: II Corinthians 5:14-21: The Joy of Reconciliation

The apostle Paul implores us on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. But how is this done? The joy of reconciliation is that it is a gift. One who has sinned can never reconcile himself back to the one he has sinned against. The grieved must be the one who reconciles back the sinner. And this is what God does for us in Christ. Free and clear. No strings attached. There is nothing that we can do but receive the gifts of reconciliation. Our sin is exchanged for Christ’s righteousness. The old is gone the new has come. What sweet joy this is; that God has reconciled us back to Him for the sake of His only Son. *Gracious Father, may we continually receive the gift of reconciliation through Your Son. Amen.*

SAT

### SCRIPTURE: Lamentations 3:22-33: The Joy of Salvation

Jeremiah wrote this beautiful book in the midst of suffering. His joy was not in things temporal; in a comfortable life free from pain and anguish. Instead it was in the midst of suffering, in the midst of the cross where his joy was to be found. For the Lord does not cast off the one He loves. Even in the middle of suffering, especially in the middle of suffering, our Lord brings His salvation to us. Though He even causes grief, His steadfast love abundantly comforts us. This is the joy of a Christian, to know that while covered in sackcloth and ashes we still have the salvation which is Christ our Lord. *Merciful Father, in the midst of suffering and grief may we wait quietly for Your salvation. Amen.*

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