

SERMON/DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS FOR JULY 11, 2021

TEXT: PSALM 85: 1-7

THEME: CALL UPON THE LORD

Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.² You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin. *Selah* You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.⁴ Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us! ⁵ Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? ⁶ Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you? ⁷ Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

In the name of Jesus:

The Psalms are called the prayerbook of the Bible. Psalm 85 is one such prayer, a prayer of a saint who remembered the mercies of God, and in remembering, went to the Lord in prayer, asking for His blessing. The Psalmist writes during the time of the Babylonian exile, in fact, he is one of the exiles. He was taken from his homeland, Israel, to the foreign land of Babylon. There he lived, but he longed to go back home.

The people of God were taken to Babylon as punishment for rejecting the mercies of Yahweh. God had blessed them, giving them the Promised Land, but not being satisfied with what God had given to them, they rejected God, worshipped the idols of other nations, and rejected God and His gifts.

The Psalmist recognizes not only his sins but the sins of his nation, he repents, and asks God for mercy. He asks God to grant to him his request to go back home to the Promised Land.

God blesses us each and everyday, and we, like the people of old, many times take God for granted. We love other things more than God, we have other priorities which push God to the sidelines. Like the Psalmist we need God's forgiveness.

He remembers the mercies of God. God has forgiven in the past. He will forgive even today. So he turns to the Lord to find favor, for in the Lord and with the Lord there is Life and salvation. He turns to the Lord in prayer, confident that the Lord will hear his prayer and grant his request, not because of his own goodness or righteousness, but because of the love of the Lord.

Today in this service we recall the words of the Psalmist and the lesson he teaches us. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in mercy. We deserve no good thing from God, and yet He is still the Good Giver of all good gifts. He has shown us His love in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He died for you. Jesus loves you. And He loves to listen to you and answer your prayer.

And so we humble ourselves before the Lord and go to the Lord in prayer. We each have many needs, and we take these needs to the Lord, confident that He will hear our prayer and grant us our petitions according to His good pleasure and His good and gracious will.

We specifically come to the Lord today to ask His blessing as we seek His direction and blessing for our preschool. As you know, Becky Daubenmire is retiring, and so today we thank God for the service Becky has given to the Lord. After an exhausting search, Kate Jurecki, our kindergarten teacher, will lead our preschool on an interim basis this coming year. We thank God for Kate's willingness and acceptance of this position and pray God's blessing upon her and our school.

And today we pray to the Lord that He will send us the worker from the field to lead our preschool and church education programs. Our Early Childhood Board is seeking to begin a process to call a Director of Education from the Synod, to not only lead our school program but also to work in our congregation. This is a huge endeavor. And so we humble ourselves, asking God's leading and blessing, confident that He will hear our prayer and grant our petitions in His time and according to His will, all on account of His Son, our Savior, Jesus.

And so in these next moments we go to the Lord in prayer. “Call upon Me on the day of trouble and I will deliver you” says the Lord. “Ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened.” And so we pray, we ask, seek, knock, and plead the Lord’s direction and guidance, for these and all of our needs. May the Lord continue to bless us and be merciful to us! To His honor and glory and in Jesus’ name.

Amen