

## 354. Trinity 14 – I

*Lord, cleanse us and lead us to live and to praise You. Amen.*

**Luke 17:11–19** Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

All of us are lepers from birth. “Can a clean person come from an unclean one?” But we who live here in the Church with the Word and Sacraments are also all cleansed, and if we let leprosy get the upper hand again, the Lord is near so that we can cry out to Him: “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” All who see that they are unclean and feel that they are sick also cry out for help. Then the Lord says: “Go and be cleansed; go and believe My Word, believe in the cleansing power of My blood, and you are clean! You can come confidently with My holy people, sit at My Supper, and appear before My Father in heaven.” We must do just as these ten who went at the Lord’s word before they saw they were clean. They went in *faith*, believed His Word, trusted that they would be cleansed, because He said it. They went to show themselves as clean, while they still saw and felt their uncleanness; we should do that also. All who see their sin and feel themselves to be sick and poor, lost and condemned, should hear the Lord’s word: “I have cleansed you with the washing of water in the Word... You are clean through the Word that I have spoken to you.” And they should go and believe the Word, and they are cleansed indeed. They are received in grace with God, are justified, have forgiveness, and no one can accuse or condemn them. Let all the Jewish priests and Jesus’ worst enemies, let all the faithful and all the wicked, all spirits and all angels, see someone who *believes* this word from the Lord: “I have cleansed you with water and blood; you are clean.” And they shall confess that it is true; for as the mouth of the Lord speaks, so it is, and whoever believes has it.

Then you should go and thank Him. Only in this way can you preserve your purity; only with Jesus can the cleansed remain clean. The nine are to warn us, and the one is to encourage us. Keep coming back to the Savior again and again, and thank Him! Never forget what He has done for you! There are indeed not many who forget to give thanks as soon as they are cleansed; but when one has been nourished in grace for a longer time, it becomes commonplace, and it is easy to forget to praise the Lord. Therefore it is so very necessary that you see your sin ever more clearly, and eagerly and always feel how wonderful it is to receive forgiveness. Never, never let Jesus’ blood or the precious washing of Baptism become insignificant to you, and never neglect giving thanks for them. Always sing a new song for the old grace of God, which is ever new, yes, ever greater and greater, ever fresher and richer! “Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies” [*Psa 103:1-4*]. Happy child of God, praise the Lord now, in this hour and in the next hour, today, tonight, tomorrow, constantly, as long as you live. Fall down at Jesus’ feet with thanksgiving forever. It is His will and your salvation; Satan cannot hinder it!

Blessed are You, Lord Jesus. You atoned for all my sin with Your holy and precious blood! You are greatly to be praised for the saving Word of the Gospel, for the cleansing water of Baptism, and for the healing food of the Holy Supper! You are greatly to be praised for the grace of the Spirit who kindled in my soul the spark of faith and created a new, holy life within. Guard my faith, and increase it, and let nothing lead me away from You, the only One in my soul in time and eternity. Amen.

My soul, now bless thy Maker!  
Let all within me bless His name  
Who maketh thee partaker  
Of mercies more than I dare claim.  
Forget Him not whose meekness  
Still bears with all thy sin,  
Who healeth all thy weakness,  
Renews thy life within;  
Whose grace and care are endless  
And saved thee through the past;  
Who leaves no sufferer friendless  
But rights the wronged at last.

He shows to man His treasure  
Of judgment, truth, and righteousness,  
His love beyond all measure,  
His yearning pity o'er distress,  
Nor treats us as we merit,  
But lays His anger by.  
The humble, contrite spirit  
Finds His compassion nigh;  
And high as heav'n above us,  
As break from close of day,  
So far, since He doth love us,  
He puts our sins away.

*Gramann: My soul, now bless thy Maker L 77:1-2 ELH 456:1-2 tr. C. Winkworth; tune: Nun lob, mein Seel*

## 355. Trinity 14 – II

*Lord God, give us the Holy Spirit of liberty. Amen.*

**Galatians 5:16–24** I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

**T**o “walk in the Spirit” is the opposite of “being under the Law.” The Apostle contrasts “the Spirit” with “the flesh.” He also shows walking in “the Spirit” and slavery under “the Law” to be opposites. But make no mistake: Those who “are not under the Law” are not “without the Law.” The carnal would like to be without the Law; but they have its judgment in their conscience, whether they know it or not, and they are all in reality its slaves; they are not children of the Spirit. The spiritual, on the other hand, who are free

from slavery, embrace the law of love and follow it. The Law condemns the works of the flesh, and those of the flesh hate the Law; but there is no law against the works of the Spirit, and the spiritual are not opposed to the Law.

The believers know that the command to love is pure and just; they believe Christ has fulfilled it for them, and God the Holy Spirit through faith gives them the new life of love in their soul. What Christ has done, I know, is given to me in Baptism and is completely accounted as if I had done it. Thus I am righteous and blessed and free from all the demands of the Law and all the condemnation of the Law; yes, in this way the Law no longer exists for me, but is nailed to the cross, dead and gone. But with such faith in God's love I love God from my inmost heart, and love all people, even my worst enemies. By the Gospel God has given me His love, thus written His Law in my heart. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom 8:2-4). Meanwhile, we still have the flesh, which works so that our life is weak and imperfect. And when the Apostle says: "the flesh lusts against the Spirit ... so that you do not do the things that *you* wish," we understand that the believers should humbly acknowledge the desires of the flesh as their own. What *the flesh* desires, what *you* wish, should be rejected. I should not forget that I—the same one who loves God with holy love—I bear in my self-will, in my flesh, such shameful things as fornication, adultery, impurity, etc., but all of them (thank God!) are crucified. I should *suffer* "so that" I might learn meekness and self-denial; but I should *not follow* it to become its slave; I should mortify the flesh with its lusts and desires. On the other hand, let us come forward with the fruits of the Spirit! The roots of the heart grow deeper in God's love every single day! Let us walk more steadily, more fully, in a free, happy, childlike spirit! Richer expression of it in all heavenly deeds!

Grant us this grace, merciful God, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus, help conquer! My lusts—O subdue them!  
Nor in my flesh leave them longer to reign!  
Works of the Spirit—I now would pursue them,—  
Upward my course to Thy glory maintain.  
Strengthen the will, and succeed my endeavor,  
Body and soul shall rejoice in Thy favor.

Jesus, help conquer!—I still must bewail me,  
While my offenses keep ever in view.  
Help, when the past and its follies assail me,  
Conscience the mem'ry of these would renew:  
Give me to taste of the joys of Thy pardon,  
Then shall my soul of its guilt lose the burden.

*Schröder: Jesus, giv Seier! L 471:2-3 tr. H. Mills; tune: Store Profet (Jensen's Koralborg);  
alternate hymn: Holy Ghost, with light divine ELH 402*

## 356. Trinity 14 – Monday

**Psalm 6** O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure. Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O LORD—how long? Return, O LORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake! For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks? I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears. My eye wastes away because of grief; It grows old because of all my enemies. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; For the LORD has heard the

voice of my weeping. The LORD has heard my supplication; The LORD will receive my prayer. Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled; Let them turn back and be ashamed suddenly.

**P**ersecution by enemies was the occasion of the psalmist's deep affliction. For the saints know that sin and trouble go together. Their spiritual distress can come from an individual sin, but it can also arise from earthly misfortune: poverty, sickness, death, loss of property, human wickedness, slanderous tongues, and other things; and often they do not really know whether it is "godly sorrow" or "worldly sorrow" that makes this anguish even greater. The punishment for all our sins Jesus has taken, so that it is not the wrath of the Judge, but the Father's chastisement that disciplines the believers. Yet all suffering as a fruit of sin has a completely different meaning for *their* conscience than for the world's. That's why we hear in this psalm and other places in Scripture the most heroic soul in anguish, trembling and weeping like a child. So it happens that the faithful do not have a thick-skinned, unbelieving heart, but a living sense of what is good and what is evil. No one found suffering so bitter as did our Lord Jesus. No one shed more tears than He, the boldest and strongest Hero against death and hell.

There is great help for the afflicted in words of God such as this psalm; for here the believers recognize the feelings of their own heart and find expression for them with God. Not all the saints are as harshly afflicted as David who many times in his life "made his bed swim all night" with sweat and tears; for he was to learn both to sing lamentation, in which every one of us finds his own troubles expressed, and to play the songs of joy in which the heart of the whole Church rejoices. But everyone must taste *some* of the bitterness of death, either sooner or later in his time of grace. Then one feels nothing but punishing wrath; God stands before you, just as the faithful powerful ruler in Egypt stood before the sons of Jacob [*Gen 42*], so that we remember our sins. We wither and dry up; the happy days of grace and the light of life is gone; we *were* happy, we *were* blessed — *that's over*. And yet the soul cries out to God who seems all anger: "Be gracious to me, Lord; save me for the sake of Your mercy." It is the true art and distinguishing characteristic of the saints: *that they submit to God and continually flee to Him*. Then the soul sighs and cries out: "O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure." "O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O LORD—how long? Return, O LORD, deliver me!" I am Yours, Your dearly-bought possession, Lord Jesus! You must, You must have mercy! Do with me what You will, but do not deliver me to the power of the devil and the darkness of death. You have created me and purchased me, to Your glory, and *that* is my salvation. You cannot and You will not forsake me!

And the Lord saves indeed; "with Him there is escape from death." Note how the psalmist ends his lament with *praise*. Hope in the Lord; commit your way to Him "with hope against hope" and you shall surely sing. It may be long after your prayer: "Lord, how long?" which has been the favorite passage of some saints for their whole life; but indeed, you shall surely sing: "The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer." "Away with you, you false, troubling accusers, you spirits and powers who threaten me with wrath and punishment and death and want to make my happy victorious life a living hell!" Come, Spirit of life, my Comforter in all tribulation, and teach me to sing songs of thanksgiving to God. Amen.

By day and by night in her anguish  
My soul is lamenting in woe:  
O Lord, in my grief I must languish,  
No counsel, no help do I know;  
When shall I Thy mercy awaken?  
When shall I, the poor and forsaken,  
Before Thee appear, O my God?

His light and His truth, they shall lead me  
In peace to His temple at last;  
I rest on His Word, He will speed me,  
And conflict and sorrow are past;  
Yea, joyful I anthems will raise Him.  
With heart and with voice will I praise Him—  
My health and my life and my God.

*Grundtvig: As after the waterbrooks L 518:2.7 ELH 462:2.7 tr. C. Doving; tune: Som tørstige Hjort*

## 357. Trinity 14 – Tuesday

*Lord, heal us and we shall be healed. Amen. [Jer 17:14]*

**John 5:2–9. 14** Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. ... Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.”

All Jesus’ miracles reveal His glory and strengthen our faith. But when He is a present Savior to us, then we experience His power in ourselves. What He did, He still does; when we read about the sick that He healed, we experience it. Though it is a spiritual healing, it is no less real; besides, His physical healings and cures give eternal living power *to our bodies*.

Our lesson can give a sincere reader much edification. You yourself must consider that this hospital is called “*Bethesda*” (house of mercy), which strongly reminds us of Christ’s Church. It is the Sheep Gate, *where animals for sacrifices were sold*. It had five porches. Outside there were many sick people. They were *blind, lame, and paralyzed*. It is in the *water* they are healed. It is *an angel* (one sent from God) who stirs the water. They are *helped* down, and so on. I will say just a word about the one sick man and Jesus. This man is obviously the most miserable of all, or at least one of the worst. *Him* Jesus saves. He has waited for help a long, long time; now he has almost lost all hope. He is abandoned by all. Jesus asks: “Do you want to be made well?” And thus He awakens the man’s dormant desire for healing. Why does God let some lie there sick for so long? Because they are greater and worse sinners? No, but to humble them. For some He uses sickness, for others something else. Sin and sickness go together, as we have often seen. The Lord shows us the same thing in these words: “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” We see then that *Jesus can help and really does help the worst*, if only we acknowledge our sinful guilt and feel our helplessness. *The Lord speaks* first. He comes first; He begins, He finishes our salvation. Then when He has opened our ears, He speaks

again, and in His word is *life*, and in it He gives us *faith* to receive it. Jesus' words: "Stand up!" raised the sick man from his bed. The Word entered his heart, and made him *believe* that he should stand up, and then he could.

Haven't you also experienced this? When your soul, in sin and need, heard Jesus' words: "I save you, I take your sin; you shall inherit eternal life, stand up and walk with God," then you received new life, stood up, and praised the Lord. Or if it *has* not happened, then listen now. Do you want Jesus to save you from sin and sickness and make you eternally well in soul and body? If you want this, then hear His words to you: "Rise and walk!" Obey them. Do this. You can do it by the power of the Word. "Go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

Precious Savior, You are the Lord who heals me. Let me know this, until I become perfectly well in eternity. Amen.

And thus we come, O God, today  
And all our woes before Thee lay;  
For sorely tried, cast down, we stand,  
Perplexed by fears on ev'ry hand.

Ah! hide not for our sins Thy face,  
Absolve us through Thy boundless grace;  
Be with us in our anguish still;  
Free us at last from ev'ry ill

That so with all our hearts we may  
To Thee our glad thanksgiving pay,  
Then walk obedient to Thy Word,  
And now and ever praise Thee, Lord.

*Eber: When in the hour of utmost need L 220:5-7 ELH 257:5-7 tr. C. Winkworth; tune: Wenn wir in höchsten*

## 358. Trinity 14 – Wednesday

*Teach me, Your way, O Lord, that I may walk in Your truth. Amen. [Psa 86:11]*

**2 Timothy 2:19–22** Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

**G**od's holy Church, built on Christ the chief Cornerstone, and the doctrine of truth in the Church allows no false teachers to overthrow it. As the devil came to Eve in paradise, his prophets come into the church, mingle with the saints, and disguise who they are. But as the inscription on a seal stands firm, has its special meaning, shows to whom it belongs, and prevents fraud, so this seal stands indelibly on God's Church: 1) "*The Lord knows those who are His,*" so that no one can sneak in among them without being known by the Lord. He has already condemned and marked the deceivers. We can be assured they shall neither break down the foundation nor corrupt those who have the seal of the living God on their forehead [*Rev 9:4*]. 2) "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." All the people of the Lord busy themselves in sanctification. None of them can live in lies, pride, fleshly lust, greed, gluttony, arrogance, lust for power, partisan-spirit, or other impurity. This is written to admonish us Christians to examine ourselves and as a testimony to the world.

It must not surprise us that there are vessels of both gold and wood in a great house; for here on earth it cannot be otherwise. In the outward organization of the church there are two kinds of people with many differences within each kind; but our Bible passage isn't talking about vessels of dishonor. — If you know before God that you walk in the truth, then you are a vessel for honor, you endure the fire of purification and should not avoid it, but suffer evil as a good soldier of Christ. “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God.” *Be diligent in this.* Let it be your full sincerity to stand *approved to God.* “Remember Jesus Christ” and walk in His footsteps. If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we hold fast, we shall also rule with Him (2Ti 2:3.8.11.12.15). Keep yourself pure from the vessels of dishonor; do not cultivate spiritual fellowship with the works of the flesh, and the Lord shall sanctify you and use you for honor, to the upbuilding of the Church and for every good work. “Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Pursue these things! Listen! *Pursue* them! Not slowly, not lukewarmly, but fervently and eagerly in the Spirit! *Pursue* these things! Then the Lord shall free you from every evil work and deliver you into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever! Amen.

Jesus, help conquer!—nor yield me to terror,—  
 Infidel science exults in its lore,—  
 Truth, by wrong colors, confounding with error;  
 Show to me now Thy own wisdom the more!  
 Cherish my faith in Thy Word, and its merits!  
 Teach me to judge, by first trying the spirits!

Jesus, help conquer! While watchful I'm praying,  
 Shepherd from sleep and from slumbering free,  
 Thy intercession my courage be staying!  
 Hast Thou not promised to make it for me?  
 When too, at night, by fatigue I'm o'ertaken,  
 Lord, with Thy presence my spirits awaken!

*Schröder: Jesu, giv Sejer L 471:5-6 tr. H. Mills; tune: Store Profet (Jensen's Koralborg);  
 alternate hymn: Eternal Son of God ELH 68*

## 359. Trinity 14 – Thursday

**Psalm 103:1–4** Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!  
 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities,  
 Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with  
 lovingkindness and tender mercies.

**W**hen you wake up in the morning, let your first thought be that the Lord is good, and your first spiritual activity to thank Him! In the daytime, when you are working or resting, in the evening, when you lie down, and at night, before you go to sleep, thank the Lord. You Christians both young and old, what will your Christianity be like? How will you be able to take part in the song of praise before the throne with the blessed, while here you are discontented because of your sin or at least slow in praising the Lord? It is good that you know and regret your sin; yes, it is absolutely necessary. And it is good that you are tried by different temptations, for that is the lot of the saints on earth. They bear the cross and feel it pressing down on them. But it is not good that worry should conquer and songs of praise be missing. All who humble themselves receive grace. The Lord chastens, but also comforts. The poor and meek shall enjoy great peace. There is an enormous difference in the soul whose basic song is complaint and lament, and the soul in whose lamenting there is selflessness, victory, and hope. Why is your life so poor in songs of praise? Because your repentance is so superficial. You complain enough, but it is murmuring against God, complaining against the church or fellow believers with little or no

meekness. How can David sing such a glorious *hymn of praise*? Because he can sing such deep *hymns of repentance*. How can his cry for help end in thanks and praise? Because even his song of lament praises God's righteousness.

Humble yourself, and believe God's grace. Humble yourself and believe God's Word of grace: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life" [Psa 23:6], and then you must indeed give thanks! Be simple before the Lord; become one of those David describes in other places, when he says: "Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance. In Your name they rejoice all day long, And in Your righteousness they are exalted. For You are the glory of their strength, And in Your favor our horn is exalted. For our shield belongs to the LORD, And our king to the Holy One of Israel" (Psa 89:15-18). Blessed are those whose hearts are full of harp-strings that sound gently to the Lord's praise! *You* can be so blessed, for "He forgives all your iniquities, He heals all your diseases, He redeems your life from destruction, He crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies." Shouldn't everything that is in you bless His name?

Lord God, I confess my sin, my great unthankfulness, and I pray sincerely: Give me grace to humble myself and to believe. Give me victory over the pride and unbelief of my evil heart. Give me abundant grace that I praise You my whole life, that I may thank and praise You for everything with all my heart. Amen.

All ye who on this earth do dwell,  
Give thanks and glorify  
The Lord whose praises ever swell  
In seraph songs on high.

Lift up your hearts in praise to God,  
Himself best Gift of all,  
Who works His wonders all abroad,  
Upholding great and small.

Since first our life began to be,  
He has preserved our frame;  
And when man's strength was vanity,  
He as our Helper came.

Though often we His patience try  
And well deserve His frown,  
In grace He lays His anger by  
And pours new blessings down.

'Tis He revives our fainting soul,  
Gives joyful hearts to men;  
And when great waves of trouble roll,  
He drives them back again.

*Gerhardt: All ye who on this earth do dwell L 519:1-4 ELH 52:1-5 tr. A. Ramsey; tune: Nun danket all*

## 360. Trinity 14 – Friday

*Holy Father, sanctify us in Your truth. Amen. [Joh 17:17]*

**1 Peter 1:14–19** As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your sojourning here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things,

like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

**T**he least spot of leprosy made an Israelite unclean and excluded him from the people. The least dominion of sin excludes you from God's Israel, and everyone who will come into the perfect holiness of heaven must be cleansed perfectly from all sin. The Father is holy, and the children must be holy. The Son is holy, and the blood with which He cleanses you is the blood of the spotless and obedient Lamb. The Spirit who lives in the believers is the Holy Spirit Himself. You were bought at a great price; noble and pure you must also be. Frightful was the wickedness You freed us from; and "a burned child fears the fire." Righteous is He whom you call "Father"; He doesn't close His eyes to the deeds of His children, as Eli did [1Sa 3:13]. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then you no longer live in sin, for you are washed, justified, and sanctified through Jesus' blood and God's Spirit. But as long as you live in the flesh, when you have sin and evil desires, then you should continually mortify them, so that you become ever more holy in all your behavior.

To that end, God gives you both desire and strength. When He says: "Be holy; for I am holy," then let your heart answer: "Cleanse me, Lord; sanctify me thoroughly, merciful God!" And your prayer is heard since the power of sanctification is given to you. Use it, and day by day become more pure and more faithful; your hatred of sin and your love for God should be stronger today than yesterday, your patience greater, your mercy warmer, your hymns of praise fuller, all your behavior more like the Lord Jesus. If you are a child of God, then let angels and humans see it. Distinguish yourself from the world by a truly holy life. "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Co 6:17-7:1).

Lord God, You work in Your saints both to will and to do according to Your good pleasure: Give us grace to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and to receive the desire and strength of holiness from You in Word and Sacrament, so that we daily awake to likeness in Your image. Holy Lord God, sanctify us completely in spirit and soul and body. Amen.

For God observes our thoughts and deeds,  
The secrets of our heart He reads;  
The wicked cannot be concealed,  
Their evil ways shall be revealed,  
He ev'ry true believer knows,  
And love and grace on him bestows.

O gracious God, wilt Thou my heart  
So fashion in each secret part,  
That Thou be sanctified in me,  
Till Thee in heaven above I see,  
Where holy, holy, holy, Lord,  
We sing to Thee with sweet accord.

*Kingo: How fair the Church of Christ L 484:5.7 ELH 418:5.7 tr. O. T. (Sanden) Arneson; tune: Melita*

## **361. Trinity 14 – Saturday**

**Psalm 139:13-18** For You have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I

was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

**Y**es, the Lord created man wondrously and gloriously. Deep is the great sea, deeper is space, but deeper still is the spirit of man. Skillfully and beautifully was our body created; eyes and ears and tongue, yes, all even to the smallest member. What a miracle! Respiration and digestion and all the functions of life, what human thinking could discover them or create them? But what is this compared to *the soul*, the spirit, which God breathed into us from the beginning? There is understanding and memory with their ever increasing abilities; there is the will which no power can bend, but which can bend itself when it is healthy. There is the conscience, this heavenly witness. There is the heart — the heart which can give itself, can love, can receive divine love, and be united with God in the most glorious liberty and the most lively bond. God, You have thought of everything from eternity, and Your thoughts and Your ways created me skillfully in secret, in my mother's womb.

And as You wondrously created me, You lead me wondrously on the paths which not I, but You, my God, have found. I am fallen, and my form has become corrupt; but You heal me and lead me on the paths of salvation; You have chosen me for eternal life, and You give it to me. You care for me in everything; nothing touches me without Your counsel; not one day, not one moment do You forsake me. "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. ... You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. ... You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. In the height and in the depth, day and night You shine before me."

Let's think about this! We must marvel over the Lord's wisdom and almighty power and His unending goodness toward us; it always follows us: Shouldn't we always praise it? Thus we go to sleep in the evening, thus we wake up in the morning. When we lie down we are with the Lord, when we get up we are with the Lord, always with the Lord with soul and body. With the Lord we dwell, with the Lord we eat, with the Lord we work, with the Lord we rest, with the Lord we live, with the Lord we die. Blessed is everyone who knows You, Lord! Your mercy reaches to heaven, Your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mountains, Your judgments are a great deep. How precious is Your mercy, O God, and mankind seeks shelter in the shadow of Your wings. Blessed be Your glorious name forever! Amen.

O all ye pow'rs that He implanted,  
Arise, and silence keep no more;  
Put forth the strength that He hath granted,  
Your noblest work is to adore.  
O soul and body, be ye meet  
With heartfelt praise your Lord to greet!

Ye forest leaves so green and tender,  
That dance for joy in summer air;  
Ye meadow grasses, bright and slender;  
Ye flow'rs, so wondrous sweet and fair;  
Ye live to show His praise alone,  
With me now make His glory known.

*Mentzer: O that I had a thousand voices L 514:2-3 ELH 443:2-3 tr. The Lutheran Hymnal;  
tune: O dass ich tausend Zungen hätte*