

The fact that verse 25 begins with the word, "therefore," rather implies that the two verses are connected. The statements from verses 25-30 are rooted in that fact that no one can be devoted to two competing interests. We prove that fact every Sunday when the world offers an alternative event to worship, for then we must pick one; God or event. We end up having to choose between time with God or time without, which only increases our fear. "O you of little faith," your faith isn't going to get stronger following a path that leads away from Jesus, so, "seek the kingdom," not just first but primarily, and the blessings will be added through your understanding.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

℟ Blessed are You, O Lord, and blessed is Your Holy name. You forgive all our iniquities and heal our diseases. You redeem us from destruction and crown us with steadfast Love and mercy. You renew our youth like the eagle's by satisfying us with good things. You do not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. Accept, O Lord, our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

We confess that our lives have not always been letters of recommendation. We have often been guilty of trying to keep the letter of the Law, while forgetting its spirit. As letters of Christ to a world lost in religious confusion, our testimony leaves much to be desired. We have often attempted to mend the flaws in our lives with patches of our own good works. For our failure to live up to Your expectations, forgive us, O Lord.

Visit us with Your Holy Spirit, and change our hearts to love You more completely. Help us rejoice in Your mercy as revealed to us by Your Son Jesus Christ. Grant us serenity in the midst of trials and afflictions. Give us power to be worthy examples of Your Love in a loveless world. Permeate the councils of nations and of our own nation with Your spirit of justice, mercy, and forgiveness.

Through Your beloved Son Jesus Christ, You have revealed Your Word in the flesh. Send us Your Holy Spirit that we may hear Him speaking to us in Your Word. Give us the courage to hold high the light of Your Word to those who sit in darkness, and bless it in the hearts of those who hear it.

Extend Your healing hand to the sick, help them know the power of Christ. Enter with Your presence for the lonely, help them feel the presence of Christ. Be the life of the bereaved, help them know the wonder of eternal life. Grant Your aid to the hungry, the homeless, the stranger, the oppressed, the orphan and the imprisoned.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)  
In the most Holy name of Jesus we pray.

© Amen.

## EPIPHANY EIGHT

### Chant Tone



### Introit

Trust in Him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart be — fore Him;\*  
God is a refuge — for us.

For God alone my soul waits in — silence;\*  
from Him comes my sal — vation.  
He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my — fortress;\*  
I shall not be greatly — shaken.

Once God has spoken; twice have I  
— heard this:\*

that power belongs to God, and that to  
You, O Lord, belongs | steadfast love.  
For You will render | to a man\*  
according | to his work.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy — Spirit;  
as it was in the be — ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

Trust in Him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart be — fore Him;\*  
God is a refuge — for us.

(Antiphon, Psalm 62:8;  
Psalm 62:1-2, 11-12)

### Collect of the Day

O Lord, mercifully hear our prayers and having set us free from the bonds of our sins deliver us from every evil; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

### Gradual

Praise the Lord, all — nations!\*  
Extol Him, all — peoples!  
For great is His | Love toward us,\*  
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for — ever.  
Ascribe to the Lord the glory | due His name;\*  
bring an offering and come in | to His courts!

(Psalm 117:1-2a; 96:8)

**ENTRANCE PRAYER:** Lord God, You know what I am, give me the courage to face the truth about myself. Keep me from pride and deceit. Do not permit me to make my life counterfeit or to hide behind some cheap pretense. In the crucified Christ let me see the depth of my sin, the grossness of my selfishness, and the judgment of death I deserve. In the risen Christ let me see the new life You have given me by Your grace, experiencing the deliverance from my old self and the freedom to live for You. With the mind of Christ ruling me, let me be honest with You, with myself, and with all people. In the every exalted name of Christ I pray. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

**A FRIEND AND I GOT A WILD IDEA IN 1972.** We decided that we were going to get to the roof of as many of the buildings in downtown Oklahoma City as possible. We made friends with building maintenance people, building owners, and building managers. A few of them chased us off, but more than a dozen took us to the roof. Our adventure wound down to an end the day that my friend admitted he was having height anxieties. His fun of being on top of the world, was begin overwhelmed by a creeping fear of heights. Atheists have an anxiety that makes them fear the existence of God. The fun of faith is overwhelmed by the fear that they would never be acceptable to God. Far from being in fear or anxiety, they should simply join us as we live out the wonder of being made over by God into people He proclaims as worthy of eternal life. We thank everyone for setting aside your fear to come and worship God in the person of Jesus our Savior.

#### THEME OF THE DAY:

Seek The Kingdom

#### INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 62:8;) Psalm 62:1-2, 11-12

This Psalm was written by David during a time when his enemies were seeking to destroy him. We use the introduction verses 1-2 where we read of patience, the center verse 8, where we are reminded to trust God for He is the refuge, and the end verses 11-12, where we read, our faith will be rewarded.

#### COLLECT

To follow on our Introit we ask for release from our sins and additionally a strong defense against all evil.

#### OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 49:8-16a

This is one of those times when taking a set of verses out of the larger context doesn't quite work. It is important to know that chapter 49 of Isaiah is the second of the "Servant Songs," the second of the four times that the coming Savior is portrayed as the suffering servant. Verse 6 makes the point of the servant, and was used by Simeon when he sang the Nunc Dimittis. Verses 8-16 are a statement from God concerning the blessings He is adding to those being called out by the Savior the Lord is sending among them. Perhaps the greatest of these verses is the promise that the believers will not be forgotten because their names and likeness will be tattooed onto the palms of His hands.

#### GRADUAL—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

Psalm 117 praises God for adding to our daily blessings by making us into His people. Psalm 96 looks to the reign of the Christ.

#### EPISTLE LESSON—1 Corinthians 4:1-13

In chapter 3 Paul made the argument for listening to the spiritual teachers. He began chapter 4 by pointing out that all of the teachers are stewards of the mysteries of God, not owners of the mystery, but servants of Christ. It is important for the believers to discern the trustworthiness of those stewards. But, the Corinthian's judgment of Paul was being done with the wrong measure. He put before them the fact that He was looking forward to being judged by God. The Corinthians were being told by others that Paul was teaching a nice beginning but they needed to follow the pure law (the 613 laws of the Jews.) Paul told them they have all they need it was added to them in Christ.

#### GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 6:24-34

Our ESV Bibles (and others) separate verse 24 from 25. This makes verse 24 a memory verse to be trotted out during stewardship campaigns to prove that real Christians should give all of their money to the church.