

from Christ. For our little part of the Sermon on the Mount, today, Jesus was speaking of our true fulfilment of the Law, which is, in fact, not our fulfilment at all. Jesus fulfilled the Law of God in our place. He was faithful to the whole Law all the precepts of God and He went to His death, just-so-that, He could place His faithfulness on our hearts where it abounds to faith. Everything spoken by Jesus in verses 38-48 was fulfilled by Him. He was beaten without retaliation, they took away all His clothing, they forced Him to carry His cross to the place of His murder. Yet He Loved us even as it was the punishment for our sin that put Him on the cross.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

¶ Lord God, heavenly Father, healer of our souls and caretaker of our bodies, accept our praise for the spiritual and physical blessings You give us every day. We have nothing to give You but our sins, and yet You tell us that You will remember them no more. For the peace of mind and assurance this gives, accept our thanks.

Without the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, we would be unable to bear the burdens of physical afflictions. You have changed our despair into expectation by the assurance of Your salvation. All Your promises are made certain in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Send us Your Holy Spirit that He will keep us firm in our faith. Help us recognize the real needs of others, and bless our efforts toward meeting those needs. Allow us to hear the Word of Jesus to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us that we would be primarily concerned for their spiritual needs. Bless our heart and tongue that we would greet those who visit our church as brothers and sisters.

To that end we pray for the well being of Your Church throughout the world; that we would be guided and governed by Your Good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians are led in the way of the truth. Send down on all Ministers of the Gospel and the congregations committed to their care the healthful spirit of Your grace.

We further implore You to look in mercy on all who have needs, all who have any affliction of body, mind or spirit. Give them patience in the midst of their suffering, and a happy release from their afflictions. Be with those who are traveling this day, and especially we pray for those of our brothers and sisters who could not be with us as we praise Your Holy name.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

Bless our nation with peace, and help us dwell in harmony with Your will. Help us as Your Church fulfill our primary mission and assure us of Your presence. In Jesus' name we pray.

© Amen.

EPIPHANY SEVEN

Chant Tone



Introit

Bless the Lord, | O my soul,*
and forget not all His — benefits,
Who forgives all your in | iquity,*
Who heals all your dis — eases.

The Lord is merciful and — gracious,*
slow to anger and abounding in
| steadfast love.

He will not | always chide,*
nor will He keep His anger for — ever.
He does not deal with us according | to
our sins,*
nor repay us according to our
in | iquities.

For as high as the heavens are | above
the Earth,*
so great is His steadfast love toward
those who — fear Him.

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.

Bless the Lord, | O my soul,*
and forget not all His — benefits,
Who forgives all your in | iquity,*
Who heals all your dis — eases.

(Antiphon, Psalm 103:2-3;
Psalm 103:8-11)

Collect of the Day

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in You, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; 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: Dear God, in You I live if I am to be alive. I confess I am filled with sadness. I have lost the sense of joy. I have become sick of today, and I do not care about tomorrow. I feel the hours drag on. God, my Father, release me from this emptiness. In the midst of this oppressive weakness, restore to me the joy of Your salvation. Remind me of the cross on which Your Son bore the guilt of my sin. Remind me of the empty tomb by which He gained for me the freedom to live. Help me live in the joy of my freedom and prepare me to meet every new day, every new task and even the terrors of this world with joy and confidence. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

A FORMER EMPLOYER WAS DRIVING A GROUP OF US HOME FROM A DISTANT JOB SITE. The conversation rolled around to the state lottery which was at some millions of dollars mark. Several of the men in the truck asked him to stop and let them buy lottery tickets. The "boss" asked them what they would do with the money. After hearing their litany of material goods, he refused to stop, stating that as their desires were all selfish. He too would be selfish and serve his needs. (If they won the money he would lose a worker.) The seeking of vengeance, the rejection of strangers is a selfishness that could keep someone from the true knowledge of Jesus, selfishness on our part could prevent someone from hearing the wonderful Word of salvation. May we give up our selfish desires and our every vengeance to promote the Gospel in the world. We thank everyone, this day, who has gathered with us in the name and for the sake of Jesus our Savior.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Be Perfect

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 103:2-3;) Psalm 103:8-11

In Psalm 103, David gave thanks for the benefit of the confidence that we are God's children. We address our personal faith and healing, and then move to a recitation of God's Loving kindness toward us.

COLLECT

This is a return to the historic prayer. We very simply ask to be protected from the struggles that would tear us away from God.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18

The only other time we use the book of Leviticus in our three year cycle of readings is Proper 10 in the "C" cycle. Curiously we also read verses 9-18 of chapter 19 on that day. One would think this is the only important information in the entire book. At the beginning of Leviticus 19, God commanded Moses to deliver a summary of the Law to the people. We can only imagine him going from large gathering to large gathering until he had spoken to them all. We chose only the "love your neighbor as yourself," passages, to remind ourselves that the relationship of faith is both vertical (between God and man) and horizontal (man to man.)

GRADUAL—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

Psalm 117 praises God for making us into His people. Psalm 96 looks to the reign of the Christ.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 Corinthians 3:10-23

This is an exposition by Paul telling the Corinthians how to regard their spiritual teachers for the work performed among them. Verses 10- 15 are a statement of Paul's work among them and the work others have done on the foundation he laid. Paul acknowledged that even the simplest of teaching about Jesus (that done with hay) has merit to be mentioned to those whose teaching is solid "gold." 16 and 17 are a warning against listening to teachers who bring something other than the pure Word of God, for God will destroy them. Finally he wrapped up these thoughts with the admonition that there is only one true and pure knowledge of God. Paul got dramatic in verse 22 (flinging himself into apocalyptic language) to make the point of the volume of what we own by way of our knowledge of Christ.

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 5:38-48

We are still on the Mountain with Jesus for this part of our Sermon on the Mount. We tie the event of Moses' recitation of the Law among the people to this passage, for in His way, Moses was acting in the place of Christ. Moses and Paul, were teaching information they had received