

INSPIRED WORD

April 24, 2019

PRAYER

Praise You, Lord! Praise You, Lord! We glorify Your name, O God. We praise You; we give You glory and honor, honor to the King of kings. You are worth all the praise. Glory to You, Lord.

SCRIPTURE / PRAYER

Psalm 84:5-11: *Blessed is the man whose strength is in you, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the valley of Baca they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! O God, behold our shield and look upon the face of your anointed. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly.* Dear Lord God, I just praise and exalt and magnify Your holy name, for You alone are worthy. Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb of God, worthy is the Lamb, for You alone are worthy. We praise and exalt and magnify Your name, for You alone are worthy. We praise and exalt and magnify Your name.

SHARING

That psalm that Jimmie just quoted is one of the psalms they call the Psalms of the Ascents. Those were the psalms that the Jewish people would sing and praise as they went up to Jerusalem to the temple of the Lord. They gathered together and they sang... they went through the dry valley but their voices lifted in praise. People, that's why we're here. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 29:11-13: *For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart.*

EXHORTATION

And Lord, yes, we want that. We want that heartfelt desire for You, Lord. It's a grace. So Holy Spirit, give us that desire. Let us seek the Lord with all of our hearts. Let us respond to that grace. We ask for it.

SCRIPTURE

Always, always. There's no farther down, I think, than slavery and there was a time when a small group of dedicated people can back to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. **Ezra 3** describes this. First it describes all the builders by name, by households. (**vs. 10-11**) *And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the directions of David, king of Israel; and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever toward Israel."* At the very bottom... this particular praise is repeated over and over because the Lord is consistent.

SCRIPTURE / EXHORTATION

From **Luke 24:1-8**: *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright, the women bowed down with faces to the ground. But the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen. Remember how he had told you while he was still with you in Galilee; the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and on the third day be raised again." And they remembered his words.* Why do you seek the living among the dead? Why do you seek the living among the dead? As the scent of the Easter lilies fills this place, let us remember the words of the Lord to us. He says He will bless; He says He loves; He says He heals; He says He comes. Why do we look for the living among the dead? What are our dead spots that we keep going back to and saying, "Why has nothing changed?" Because we're going back to the same spots, and we're looking for something that's not there. Jesus moved on. He said, "Come with me, follow me. I will make you fishers of men. Follow me. Drop your nets and leave the old behind. Come, walk with me. I have been raised. Be raised with me. Let go of the dead. Come back to life. Find me."

SCRIPTURE / PRAYER

And the angel said, "He is not here. He is risen!" And the angel said, "He is not here. He is risen!" And the angel said, "He is not here. He is risen!" Glory to You, O Lord. He is not here; He has risen. Praise to you, Lord Jesus, risen Lord, almighty Lord, Savior God. You are indeed risen. Glory to you.

SHARING / EXHORTATION

Before CiCi read that, I was thinking of that same part of our story. And you know, one of the things they often say is to put yourself into the story, like how would you react if you were this character or that character. So I put myself... we should put ourselves in the role of those

women. And knowing what we know now, okay, we put ourselves into that role, we go there, we see the tomb is empty, and we know. We get it. They didn't understand but we do. I mean, high fives and celebration and jumping up and down and running to tell everybody you know. I mean, like Fr. Baron said at Easter Sunday mass – we're in Easter celebration mode. Celebrate! We celebrate that. And really, tonight really shouldn't be like any other Wednesday night. We should be in a celebratory mood. The Lord has risen. We know that; we've seen Him after that.

SCRIPTURE

And the angel said, "He is not here. He has risen!"

SHARING / EXHORTATION

I love the phrase: The day after Easter is just not the end of Lent. It's the beginning of a 50-day party that brings us to Pentecost. As much as we embrace Lent, let us embrace the 50 days of partying. We only had to do 40 days of sacrificing; let's do 50 days of partying to celebrate and let that sink in to our bones that He is risen.

SCRIPTURE

Perhaps someone knows the book and the verse numbers but the phrase that keeps recurring to me is "*Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near*" (**Isaiah 55:6**).

IMAGE / SENSE

While we sang that song of amazing love, I just had a sense of the Lord moving among us with a pitcher of... it looked like water. But as He passed each person here, He poured from that His amazing love. And as that amazing love poured over each person, it went down deep to the parts that are dry and parched, the parts where we look for the living among the dead. And He began to bring new life to those parts. And He says, "I pour my amazing love out on you, that you may be alive with my love. I pour my amazing love out on you that others may know that you are alive with my love. I pour my amazing love on you that you may pour my amazing love on this world."

PRAYER

Help us to receive that, Lord.