# May 26, 2024

**This Week:** 9:30 a.m. Catechism Reading Service (LD41Q109)

6:30 p.m. Reading Service

**Next Week:** 9:30 a.m. Catechism Reading Service (LD42)

6:30 p.m. Reading Service

-All the Lord willing-

Collections: Today: 1st General Fund Next week: 1st General Fund

2<sup>nd</sup> Alpha Center 2<sup>nd</sup> Hudson Taylor

New Periodicals: (last week) Banner, Insight Into, Paul

## We Remember in Prayer:

-Drake, son of Mr. & Mrs. Derek and Laura Kattenberg, who was flown to Denver, CO for a tumor on his brain stem. He had surgery to remove fluid on Friday and will return for surgery in the coming weeks to remove the tumor, the Lord willing.

-Our widows and lonely ones, prodigal sons and daughters, and those with hidden crosses

# **MEDITATIONS**

### AN AFFLICTED AND POOR PEOPLE

"I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people." Zephaniah 3:12a

The word of our meditation contains a rich promise. There will be a remnant according to God's electing grace. That will be His own work! It does not say, "some people will endure or persevere." It says: "I will leave ... an afflicted and poor people." Where? "In the midst of thee." In the midst of Israel there will be a people in which the Lord will magnify His grace in spite of all His judgments. That people will not only be chastened by the hand of the Almighty, but also won over by His Spirit to bow at His feet. Have we found that place already? Did we learn to bow as an afflicted and poor people? Before the fall in Adam, man was rich and happy in God. But as a result of our deep fall, we have become totally unhappy and poor. And we do not even realize that; we are blind to that. A wonder will have to take place. The blind eyes of our soul have to be opened. We have to be converted unto God. Oh, ask for it! How happy is that people which has been drawn by the Lord, bought with Jesus' blood and loved from all eternity.

How, then, can they be called afflicted and poor? Of that people

the psalmist sings: "How blessed, Lord, are they who know the joyful sound, who, when they hear Thy voice, in happiness abound!" They possess everything in Jesus Christ, and Him crucified! They are engraved upon the palms of His hands and they share in the love of the Father! And yet it is an afflicted people. They learn that they have forfeited everything. They have no ground to stand before the Lord and no right to exist. They are afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted.

Why? First of all, because of the burden of sin. Oh, that bitter plague of their heart! It seems to become worse rather than better. Secondly, because of the inward temptations. They cannot believe that others experience the same struggles. Thirdly, because of their daily strife. They are the constant target of the devil with his fiery darts. Myriad woes beset their heart; myriad doubts and bitternesses.

They are also called a poor people: poor because they are afflicted; sometimes poor in material things, but certainly poor in a spiritual sense. Poor in knowledge of God and Christ: they must receive everything from above. Poor in righteousness: they have a naked soul. Poor in faith: they feel like Thomas. Poor in love: they come so often short before God and their neighbour. Poor in courage and strength: with Elijah they lie under the juniper tree. Poor in prayer: they cannot cease praying, but they dare not call their prayer a true prayer. Their poverty is a real poverty. They do not merely talk about it, but they experience it. They do not cover their poverty, but as condemnable sinners in themselves they flee unto the Lord.

Dear reader, do you know something of these matters? That people of Zephaniah 3 may be very much afflicted and poor, yet they have a great privilege: they have been discovered to their poverty. It has become guilt and shame to them. Ah, they are so poor and afflicted that they cannot do without Christ and His merits any more. Their arms are too short to lay hold of Him, but they cry, "Give me Jesus, else I die!"

Let us examine our hearts. How many are like Laodicea: rich and increased with goods, they have lack of nothing. They do not know that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They may talk poor, but they are not poor. The Lord makes His children poor, and He keeps them poor in every step of the life of grace, with all the benefits and blessings they have received. This is a fruit of the work of God's Spirit. The Lord says, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people." If He would not bring them to that place, they would never get there. If the Lord would let them go, they would grow above themselves and become big Christians. Then that tender life begins to fade and they become unprofitable. That's why the Lord will always bring them into deep ways again, inwardly or outwardly, and sometimes both at the same time. Thus, they are left as an afflicted and poor people. "And they shall trust in the Name of the LORD!" -Rev C Sonnevelt

# Q. What kind of Surety and Mediator should we look for then?

A. One who is at the same time truly human and righteous and yet more powerful than any creature, that is, true, eternal God. This person is Jesus Christ—crucified and raised again on our behalf, the only way to eternal life, whom God Himself from the beginning revealed from heaven to the poor, lost human race. For the merciful Father did not wait until humanity came to Him and asked for grace. Rather, He approached humanity, who had fled from Him, and out of His great mercy gave humanity His promise that He would restore it. He first gave this promise to Adam in Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity," says the Lord to the serpent, "

between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Later He gave the promise even more clearly to Abraham and his descendants: "By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, ... in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 22[:16, 18]). Finally, the promise was given also to David, as in the 89th Psalm. Hence Christ also, because of the promise given to David, is called a son of David.

This Savior, promised by God and then sent into the world, is Christ Jesus—truly human and righteous and at the same time more powerful than any creature, that is, true, eternal God, who gave Himself as a sacrifice on the cross to pay for all our sins. The Father Himself bears witness of Him from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him!" [Matt. 17:5]. And Christ confirms this testimony of the Father when He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" [John 14:6]. Caspar Olevianus

Remember children are born with a decided bias toward evil, and therefore if you let them choose for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong. The mother cannot tell what her tender infant may grow up to be—tall or short, weak or strong, wise or foolish: he may be any of these things or not—it is all uncertain. But one thing the mother can say with certainty: he will have a corrupt and sinful heart. It is natural to us to do wrong.... Our hearts are like the earth on which we tread; let it alone, and it is sure to bear weeds. JC Ryle

### Consistory

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# NETHERLANDS REFORMED CONGREGATION

Sioux Falls, SD



Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Psalm 103:1

Services at 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.