

HOLY WEDNESDAY

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

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Collect of the Day:

Merciful and Everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all to bear our sins on the cross. Grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we fear not the power of sin, death, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Introit:

Psalm 102:1, 3-4, 12; antiphon: Phil. 2:10, 8b, 11b – *At the Name of Jesus, every knee shall bow*

Psalm:

Psalm 70 (antiphon: v. 5) – *O Lord, do not delay*

Old Testament

Reading:

Isaiah 62:11-63:7 – *Zion's coming Salvation*

Gradual:

Psalm 69:17, 1-2a – *Save me, O God*

Epistle:

Revelation 1:5b-7 – *Jesus Christ, the Firstborn from the dead*

Tract:

Psalm 102:1-2, 13 – *Do not hide Your face from me*

Luke 22:1–23:56 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused His Word to be written through St. Luke between AD 58-60. This is the historical account of Christ's betrayal, suffering, crucifixion, and death.

22:²⁴ A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵ And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷ For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. ²⁸ You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

- "Christ clearly bans lordship among the apostles. This was the very question: When Christ spoke of His passion, the apostles were disputing over who should be the head of the others, and, as it were, the vicar of the absent Christ. Christ rebukes this error of the apostles and teaches that there shall not be lordship or superiority among them. Instead,

the apostles would be sent forth as equals to the common ministry of the Gospel. . . . The contrast here shows that lordship [among the apostles] is not approved" (*The Power and Primacy of the Pope*, 8).

- "The apostles no doubt were thinking, 'If we are to be trampled upon by everyone's feet, what is to become of the glorious promises about Christ's kingdom that the prophets prophesied? We thought we would have some position in Christ's kingdom!' It is such thoughts that Christ confronted with these words, as if to say, "Be of good cheer, My disciples! Although the world persecuted Me, you always stayed with Me in My trials, and therefore I will now go and prepare the kingdom for you: not earthly but heavenly; not physical but spiritual one. I will not make you princes of the world but princes of heaven. The kings and princes of this world will not invite you to their table much, but rather persecute you and afflict you with hunger and thirst. But I will arrange for you to eat and drink at My table in My kingdom. The kings and princes of this world will not permit you to practice worldly law and pronounce judgments, but I will arrange for you to sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel." (Johann Spangenberg, *The Christian Year of Grace*, 439).

³¹ Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

- “You”—The “you” that Satan demanded to have is plural. Satan demanded to have all of the disciples, just as Satan demands to have all Christians. But Christ prayed for Peter (the second “you” is singular) so that God would keep him. This teaches us that by our very nature all men would be lost, have no faith, and be shaken and sifted like wheat by the devil.
- “Scripture names as the external cause of sin the devil and thus portrays to us the realm of sin in its true colors. Scripture teaches that Satan is active not only in the unbelievers (Ephesians 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:20), but also is the cause of sins of the children of God. He provoked David to take the census of Israel (1 Chronicles 21:1), induced Peter to deny the Lord (Luke 22:31), and through Peter sought to keep Christ from going up to Jerusalem (Matthew 16:23). The causal relation of the devil to the actual sins of the children of God is illustrated in his temptation of Christ, though in this case the diabolical *causa* failed” (Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, I:560).

⁴² ... “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” 43) And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44) And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

- “How are we to understand this coexistence of omnipotence and limited power? . . . Scripture explains this fact by pointing to the office which Christ had to perform on earth among men and for men. He came into this world not to parade His deity before men, but to suffer and die in the place of men and by His death to destroy him who had the power of death over men. When the execution of this office demanded it, Christ refrained from the use of the divine omnipotence dwelling in His human nature. He possessed omnipotence, but did not always use it. At His will it remained ‘quiescent’ in Him. Christ was poor, weak, suffered and died, ‘by the resting of the *logos*,’ as Irenaeus put it” (Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, II:161).
- “What He laid aside (the *obiectum exinanitionis*) was not the communicated divine majesty; for if He had laid this aside, the personal union would have been destroyed. . . . But what He abstained from was the *morphs theou*, that is, the state of being made like God, or the plenary, universal, and uninterrupted use of the divine majesty” (Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, II:283).

23:²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

- Christ preaches the Law to these impenitent women and He redirects their weeping for Him to themselves. Rather than crying at the horrific sight of His suffering, He directs them to repent.
- “[T]he wrath of God over the sin of men can and should be taught also from the suffering and death of Christ. Christ Himself makes this use of His suffering and death. But in so far as it is thus used, not Gospel, but Law is being preached, both terms taken in their proper sense. This fact, too, the Formula of Concord clearly sets forth in Luther’s words: ‘Anything that preaches concerning our sins and God’s wrath, let it be done how or when it will, that is all a preaching of the Law. . . . Yea, what more forcible, more terrible declaration and preaching of God’s wrath against sin is there than just the suffering and death of Christ, His Son? But as long as all this preaches God’s wrath and terrifies men, it is not yet the preaching of the Gospel nor Christ’s own preaching, but that of Moses and the Law against the impenitent. For the Gospel and Christ were never ordained and given for the purpose of terrifying and condemning, but of comforting and cheering those who are terrified and timid” (Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, III:235).

