

A reading from 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 16-21. You can find the reading on page 966 in your pew Bible.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please join me in praying Psalm 139.

Leader: O LORD, you have searched me and known me!

**People: You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.**

Leader: You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.

**People: Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.**

Leader: You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

**People: Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.**

Leader: Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?

**People: If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!**

Leader: If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

**People: even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.**

Leader: If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"

**People: even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you.**

Leader: For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

People: I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Leader: Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.

**People: My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

Leader: Your eyes saw my unformed substance;

**People: in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.**

Leader: How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

**People: If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.**

Leader: Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!

**People: And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!**

**All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it
was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Leader: Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

(allow them time to stand)

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.**

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

(John 3:1-21 ESV)

After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

(John 19:38-42 ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.