

God pleads with his people that they would admit and renounce their evil ways, allowing him to lead them into righteousness and joy.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel (33:7-11)

You, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life. Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: "Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" Say to them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

PSALM 119:33-40

Read Responsively by Half Verse

³³ Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, *

and I shall keep it to the end.

³⁴ Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law; *

I shall keep it with all my heart.

³⁵ Make me go in the path of your commandments, *

for that is my desire.

³⁶ Incline my heart to your decrees *

and not to unjust gain.

³⁷ Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless; *

give me life in your ways.

³⁸ Fulfill your promise to your servant, *

which you make to those who fear you.

³⁹ Turn away the reproach which I dread, *

because your judgments are good.

⁴⁰ Behold, I long for your commandments; *

in your righteousness preserve my life.

The law of love has no loopholes; indeed, its purpose is to blanket all situations and thereby to transform us as vessels of God's great love.

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (13:8-14)

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

The **Holy Gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew (18:15-20)

People: ***Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

D: The Gospel of the Lord.

P: Praise to you, Lord Christ.