

Third Sunday in Lent–Parable of the Wedding Feast

Matthew 22:1–14

This parable gives us insight into the heart of the Father. Like a human father might today, God the Father takes great pleasure in honoring his Son at his wedding feast. He opens up the best wine, slaughters and cooks the fattest animals. (There’s no refrigeration, so you gotta eat it all in one day!)

But the people he invited “didn’t have time” . . . they were “busy”! This is a common refrain pastors hear when a family “can’t make it to worship this month,” even though they complain about their friends who “can’t make time for us to hang out anymore.”

This devotion could easily become about time management and individuals being too arrogant. But that would distract from the star of the show: Jesus Christ. This parable is about the Father glorifying His Son at His wedding feast. We know that the Lord “prepare[s] a table before [Jesus] in the presence of [His] enemies” (Ps 23:5), yet thanks be to God, though we are enemies of God because of our sinfulness, “while we were still sinners, God shows his love for us” through “Christ’s death” (Rom 5:8).

It glorifies both the Father and the Son to save even one lost sheep. The time is up for endless and pointless squabbles (2 Tim 2:23). Instead, focus on whether you are wearing your “wedding garment” (Matt 22:12) of faith so that you aren’t found speechless before the Father. Then, go and spread the Gospel message, first to your family, friends, enemies, neighbor. “Come to your senses and stop sinning; for some people still don’t know God. I say this to your shame” (1 Cor 15:34). Maybe the change in how you live will witness to the hope that you have in Christ Jesus our living King.

Monday, March 21st–Amaziah: King of Judah

2 Kings 14:1–20

2 Chronicles 25:1–28

Proverbs 1:15–16 *My son, do not walk in the way with [evildoers],*

Keep your foot from their path;

For their feet run to evil,

And they make haste to shed blood.

“It’s not how you start, it’s how you finish,” or so the saying goes. So too, Amaziah of Judah, who started well enough like his father, left the door open to his own ruin by not destroying the high places of the false gods. Further, St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor 10:12; see also 2 Pet 3:17).

About halfway through his reign, Amaziah ran into trouble with an Edomite insurrection. To bring them swiftly back to heel he hired 100,000 Israelite mercenaries. But he sent them home when a prophet came to court and rebuked him, reminding the king that God was not with Israel. Indeed, God would make Judah fall in battle no matter how mighty his army. There are consequences for actions taken without God’s wisdom sought. The mercenaries were angry at being denied spoils of war and raided cities of Judah on their way back to Israel.

It is when God gives us victories over our enemies that we must be the most careful of our souls. Satan attacks when our guard is down, like he did with Amaziah. The king, wanting to celebrate Judah’s victory (and forgetting God’s help), carried Edom’s idols back to Jerusalem and worshiped them. Amaziah grieved God by engaging in the very false belief that was unable to save Edom.

Then, perhaps remembering what the mercenaries had done, Amaziah challenged Jehoash. In judgment, God gave Amaziah over to his pride. God ironically used Jehoash and the idolatrous Israel to humble Amaziah in battle. Out of grace, for the sake of the One in whose kingly office he sat, Amaziah would live on, being given a chance by God to repent and return in faith.

Tuesday, March 22nd–Jehoram (or Joram): King of Israel

2 Kings 3:1–9:25

2 Chronicles 22:5–7

2 Kings 3:1–3 *Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.*

Jehoram of Israel was the son of Ahab and Jezebel and the brother of the previous king Ahaziah. That’s quite the pedigree of wicked idolatry. For all of that, he wasn’t as bad as his father and brother. He took down the sacred pillar of Baal that his mother had made Ahab erect for her. We’re not told why he did it, but we can know that he didn’t do it out of love for the Lord and His statutes. For he kept the twisted reforms that Jeroboam had introduced into the religion of the people, and so he was much more subtly leading his people into continued apostasy. Most of his reign is spent in battle, first with Moab and later with Syria. He would die at the hands of his successor, a man named Jehu who was chosen by God to reign after destroying the house of Ahab and Jezebel. Jehoram died a coward’s death by being shot in the back by Jehu when he attempted to flee.

In many ways, we look at Jehoram of Israel and see someone who “is on the right track.” He realized the wickedness of the kingdom and was reforming it, but he just kept getting caught up in war. The truth is, Jehoram had heard the prophet Elijah speak to his father and his brother and himself received the testimony of Elisha. Yet he never returned Israel to the proper worship that God had commanded. He didn’t fear and love the Lord our God; he feared and loved himself. How often does this reflect our own lives. The Psalmist often declares, “Oh, how I love Your law!” And we can agree with that, but the Psalmist continues, “It is my meditation all the day.” (Ps 119:97). Woah, hold up there, Sparky! All the day? Surely that’s a little excessive. How about instead of “all the day” we go with “one hour a week?” That’s a compromise we can live with, right? Lord, let our hearts turn to you this Lenten season, not in half measure, but in whole. Amen.

Saturday, March 19th–Ahaziah: King of Israel

1 Kings 22:51–53; 2 Kings 1:1–18

2 Chronicles 20:35–37

2 Kings 1:2 *Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, “Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury.”*

Ahaziah, the son of Ahab and Jezebel, certainly followed in the steps of his father and mother, chasing after other gods rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In him we see this unbelief powerfully at work. Elijah the prophet is active in the Northern Kingdom of Israel at this time, but Ahaziah does not turn to him. Elijah, whose prayers to Jesus Christ raised the widow’s son from the dead, is ignored. Instead, Ahaziah wants to know if the god of Ekron can heal him.

Ekron is a Philistine town that is roughly 40 miles away from Samaria. They worship a “god” called Baal-Zebul, which means “Baal is lofty/highest”. The writer of Kings instead renames this piece of wood and stone to “Baal-Zebub” which means “Lord/master of the flies.” This god was supposedly a god of healing, of restoring life. Yet he has no power over life; the only thing that he does is lead people to eternal death where the flies feast forever on the rotting flesh and souls of those who reject Jesus Christ. Yet it is to this false god that Ahaziah clings when he falls out of a window and wonders whether he will survive. God through the prophet Elijah tells him that he will not rise from the bed he is in. So Jezebel’s son, like her, dies from falling from a window, a sharp divine irony that certainly doesn’t go unnoticed.

Yet we often flee to our own false gods like Ahaziah. Luther exposes it quite well in his explanation of the first commandment, “A god means that from which we are to expect all good and to which we are to take refuge in all distress, so that to have a God is nothing else than to trust and believe Him from the [whole] heart; as I have often said that the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. (LC I:2)” These gods don’t suffer for us. These gods don’t die for us. Jesus is the true God who turns it upside down. Abandon your false gods and cling to Him this Lenten season. Amen.

Friday, March 18th—Joash (or Jehoash): King of Judah

2 Kings 11:1–12:21

2 Chronicles 22:10–24:27

If there was one time when the royal line of David was almost cut off, it was in the destruction that Queen Athaliah brought to the palace after her husband and son were murdered. By God’s providence, Joash’s aunt saved him from her wrath. It would take the bravery of a priest, Jehoiada, to orchestrate a coup against Athaliah and restore Joash (or Jehoash) to his throne at age seven.

How many of us would trust a kingdom into the hands of a seven-year-old? How frightened could this seven-year-old have been at being entrusted by God with the rule of Israel? Yet God was with him, for “Jehoiada the priest instructed him” (2 Kings 12:2). He ruled for forty years.

Joash’s rule was mixed. He himself followed the Lord, and he worked to repair the temple, but he did nothing against the pagan high places. He also sent the temple gold as tribute to a foreign king. In the end, he was struck down by a coup against him.

We see in Joash a mix of faithfulness and sin—perhaps it reminds us of St. Paul’s conflict with his sinful nature in Romans 7. Where he is good, we see a picture of Christ building up and purifying the church. He is also an example for us. From childhood on, we ought to be trained by the Word of God in godly wisdom to navigate our own days. His errors are common to our sinful nature: fear of our enemies, internal and external. “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom 7:24–25a).

Wednesday, March 23rd—Uzziah (Azariah): King of Judah

2 Kings 15:1–7

2 Chronicles 26:1–23

Psalm 2:7–12

2 Chronicles 26:18b *“It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the Lord God.”*

Uzziah was a mighty king of Judah. Like David, he was a warrior, going into battle against the enemies of Judah and returning victorious. He dashed to pieces those who opposed Judah, and the nations brought tribute to him. Uzziah fortified Jerusalem and Judah and brought agricultural and military advancements to the land. By all measures, he was a great king.

But being a good king was not enough for Uzziah. He entered one day into the Temple to burn incense—the responsibility of Aaron’s sons, the priests. Azariah the high priest, along with 80 priests, stopped him, warning him of God’s wrath.

Uzziah would not listen. In his anger he lifted up the censer of incense—and the Lord struck Uzziah with leprosy. For the rest of his days, Uzziah was a leper: excluded from the Temple, excluded from his palace, excluded even from burial in the tomb of his fathers. Here lies a mighty king, but a dreadful priest.

Yet, Christ was born of Uzziah’s line. The One sent to heal many lepers. The One sent to break the nations with His two-edged sword, and dash stone hearts to pieces. The One sent to offer up His own body at the altar and the pleasing aroma of His blood poured out upon the mercy seat. This One who is both King and Priest for your sake. To him be all glory and honor to all ages. Amen.

Thursday, March 24th –Jehu: King of Israel

1 Kings 19:1–18

Psalm 37:1–11 (12–40)

Elijah despaired. None of his fellow Israelites trusted in YHWH. They offered sacrifices instead to Baal: murdering their children and visiting prostitutes, all in the hope of getting a little rain. YHWH had sent the drought to punish Israel for idolatry, but no one remembered that. For a moment, Elijah wished it was all over. Jezebel had won. Nothing could change the heart of Ahab, let alone Israel. “Take my life,” Elijah cried, “for I am no better than my fathers!” (1 Kings 19:4). No prophet could fix Israel.

God heard Elijah’s prayer, and He answered it, but not in the way that Elijah expected. The Angel of YHWH (the pre-incarnate Jesus!) visited Elijah and fed the weary prophet with bread and water. Then God sent Elijah to anoint three men: Hazael as king of Syria, Jehu as king of Israel, and Elisha as Elijah’s replacement. These men would bring an end to Jezebel and Ahab’s wickedness.

Elijah was delivered. Hazael would punish the people of Israel and Judah through military conquest. Jehu would slaughter the house of Ahab, including the Sidonian witch Jezebel. Through Jehu’s kingship, written about in 2 Kings 9–10 and 2 Chronicles 22, God brought the wicked into judgment. Elisha would continue to preach God’s Word to the next generation.

The wicked will not reign forever, and judgment won’t be long now. In the meantime, remember. Seven thousand had not bowed the knee to Baal. Neither are you alone. Gather with your flock, arise, and eat what your shepherd offers. The journey of this life is truly too great for you. It is not too great for Him.

“In my distress I cried to the Lord, and He heard me” (Ps. 120:1).

Thursday, March 17th–Ahab: King of Israel

1 Kings 16:28–22:40

2 Chronicles 18:1–34

When Ishmael first hears the name of the captain of the Pequod, he blurts out, “When that wicked king was slain, the dogs, did they not lick his blood?” This leads a fellow whaler to respond, “He did not name himself” (Moby Dick, ch. 16). Yes, sometimes our names precede us. Our reputation can invalidate any chance to prove our worth in another’s eyes.

Take for example King Ahab of Israel. Everyone remembers him as no good. His entire life can be summed up in one sentence, “There was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of YHWH, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up” (1 Kings 21:25). He married a pagan, Jezebel, and she encouraged him to lead Israel into Baal worship. Whoops!

Due to his sin, YHWH declared a drought in the land through his prophet, Elijah. But Ahab persecuted Elijah among other prophets for speaking God’s Word against him. Despite this, Elijah was granted victory over the prophets of Baal, which brings many to repentance (2 Kings 18:17–40).

Ahab received his due reward by being killed in battle, though he was disguised as a charioteer to avoid being targeted (2 Chron 18:34). The dogs licked up his blood as he died.

Consider the opposite to many of these wicked kings: Jesus Christ, our true King. Even though he was surrounded by “dogs” at his crucifixion (Ps 22:16), yet His blood is saved for us who drink His blood of the New Covenant.

Neither did He name himself. The Father gave him his name, “YHWH saves” (Matt 1:21), beginning a lifetime of the Son’s earthly perfect obedience to the Father. His last will and testament was to forgive us, and to give us life in full by forgiving our sins. Amen.

Wednesday, March 16th–Athaliah: Queen of Judah

2 Kings 11:1–20

2 Chronicles 22:1–23:21

Queen Athaliah was the first and last woman to rule over the Kingdom of Judah. Girl power! Right? However, this doesn't seem to be the way that YHWH would have women exhibit strength. Instead, Athaliah seems to be a continuation of Jezebel's negative example for faithful Christian women to avoid instead of emulate (being her daughter and all).

Athaliah is the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel of Israel (a match made in heaven), and then she was married off as part of a peace treaty deal to King Jehoram of Judah after he killed all six of his brothers (how about that for a season of *The Bachelorette*?). After Jehoram, her husband, and Ahaziah, her son, were both killed, she claimed the title of Queen of Judah for herself. This is where things get really bad.

She tries her best to kill all of the heirs of the Davidic line and to preserve the worship of Baal in Judah. (Baal was a Canaanite demon idol of fertility to which newborn children were sacrificed.) There is no end here to the amount of subversion that Queen Athaliah had done.

From the rebellion against YHWH's will in proclaiming herself queen, to her desire to mislead the nation in sexuality and worship in the Baal cult, to her direct attack on the line of David which would yield the Messiah, Athaliah is one of the worst so far of Eve's descendants.

But thanks be to God, He worked and still works against her and all like her. The one who "crushed the serpent's head" though Satan "snaps at His heel" (Gen 3:15). The Lord Jesus Christ, Son of David against all odds, lives and reigns eternally over sin, death, the devil, and the plans of (wo)man because of his death and resurrection. Amen.

Friday, March 25th–Jotham: Regent & King of Judah

2 Kings 15:32–38

Psalm 72:1–7 (8–20)

The kingly office wields a two-edged sword. He can do two actions: protect and destroy. Many kings protected iniquity and destroyed the righteous. Some kings destroy iniquity and protect the righteous. King Jotham of Judah built great defenses for Judah (2 Chr 27:3–5). He contributed mightily to the protection of his people and the temple of the Lord. Yet he neglected to destroy evil and punish wickedness.

In this way, Jehu and Jotham are a good pairing, for they each reflect the opposite error a king can make. Protect and reward the righteous, punish and destroy iniquity. A good king must do both, or all his efforts on the one will be brought to nothing by the neglect of the other.

The Christian man is in need of both sides of the coin: repentance and regeneration. The Old Adam must be drowned, yet the New Man must arise. Daily. God's Word accomplishes both tasks. It destroys the self-righteousness and wickedness of the Old Adam and makes alive the New Man through the waters of Holy Baptism and the Word of Absolution.

The King of Psalm 72, our Lord Jesus Christ, does both things. He protects the weak and destroys the wicked. He wields His two-edged sword, Law and Gospel, for the chastisement of the impenitent and the consolation of the penitent.

Every king should follow suit in their sphere of responsibility: destroy and protect. Tear down the idols of your heart, cut off the hand that clings to Hell, and confess your sins. Listen to the absolution, protect your mind and heart with God's Word, and build up your local congregation and pastor.

What Jotham built was good. What he failed to destroy was evil. A good king must do both.

Saturday, March 26th—Jehoahaz (Joahaz): King of Judah

2 Kings 8:16–24

2 Chronicles 21:1–20

Jeremiah 22:10–12 *Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan him; Weep bitterly for him who goes away, For he shall return no more, Nor see his native country. For thus says the Lord concerning Shallum [Jehoahaz] the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, who went from this place: “He shall not return here anymore, but he shall die in the place where they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.”*

Jehoahaz the son of Jehu reigned over Israel for seventeen years, yet we know little about these years. Syria had been carving off portions of Israel for itself over the course of his father’s reign, and it appears that most of Jehoahaz’s reign was spent under the thumb of Syria. We do know that Jehoahaz was not a follower of Jesus Christ. He kept the religion of Jeroboam, he erected Asherah poles and other idols, even after God delivered Israel from Syria. In other words, I doubt we’ll see him numbered among the sheep on that final day.

Yet when Jehoahaz reached out to God, his prayer wasn’t rejected. God heard even him. Even this pagan ruler who would continue to be a pagan ruler after God answered his prayer and delivered him. Why? Because God remembers His promises. Even though His people had forsaken Him, He hadn’t forsaken them. He still loved them and cared for them. Yes, He disciplined and chastised them through the oppression of the Syrians. But He hadn’t abandoned them. He was still their God even though they were whoring after other gods.

I believe that the days are coming when our world is going to get a lot more barbaric, a lot more violent. And in those days, I’d wager that there will be people who are only marginally acquainted with Jesus Christ who will call out to him for mercy. He will answer their prayers, even if they can’t understand His answer. And you, dear Christian who are reading this, you can be certain that God will hear your prayers. So bring your cares and concerns to Him, who doesn’t reject even the prayers of a pagan king. He will not reject the prayers of one washed in the blood of His beloved Son. Amen.

Tuesday, March 15th—Omri: King of Israel

1 Kings 16:15–28

1 Kings 16:23–26 *In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, and reigned twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah. And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill. Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him. For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their idols.*

Omri was the commander of the army in Israel. As his king had been betrayed, slain, and usurped by Zimri, he was called by the nation itself to be the new king. Omri besieged Zimri, and when the city was taken, the traitor committed suicide by fire.

As is often the case, the Lord used a wicked man to punish another. As far as idolatry goes, Omri was no better than Zimri. In fact, he was even worse! He ruled for 12 years and built the city of Samaria. Omri’s legacy would continue in his son Ahab, who would marry Jezebel of Sidon.

Omri built a foundation that he hoped will endure, a foundation ultimately built on sand. Samaria did not endure and would eventually be destroyed and become a byword for apostate believers. Omri could have returned to the Lord; he had complete control of the army and quashed a rebellion against his rule, but he didn’t. He followed the footsteps of Jeroboam and followed his own heart rather than God. He led his people further from God. Thank God for the abundance of His Word that we have before us today. May we recognize this treasure and use it. For when we are steeped in His Word, Christ is our leader, and He will not lead us astray.

Monday, March 14th—Ahaziah: King of Judah

2 Kings 8:24–9:29

2 Chronicles 22:1–9

Ahaziah, king of Judah, was the only surviving son of Joram. All the others had been killed by Arabian raiders. His mother was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, a king of Israel. Ahaziah was also son-in-law to the house of Ahab. The alliance that the king's grandfather Jehoshaphat had forged with the house of Ahab was leading his house ever further into their sins, the sins of Jezebel.

Not much of Ahaziah's accomplishments are recorded. Together with Joram, king of Israel, he waged war against the Syrians. Joram retreated to Jezreel, wounded and sick, and Ahaziah came to see him. There they were confronted and slain by Jehu, who was anointed king of Israel by prophet Elisha. The evil of Ahaziah's mother Athaliah knew no bounds—she slew all the heirs of his son, save for one who was hidden, Joash.

The corruption that the house of David had contracted by allying with the kings of Israel was still growing and had not yet reached its peak. The fruits of idolatry had not yet matured. How much of this is true of our church bodies today? How long until the fruits of our idolatry mature? We've allied ourselves with this world thinking that we can do good and convince them if we're just nice enough, if we just give a little here and there on some less important points of doctrine. Meanwhile they have been busy slaughtering the heirs of the kingdom directly through evils such as abortion and more indirectly through the indoctrination they call public school. Jesus Christ will, like Jehu, come and put an end to it. May we cling to His promises to deliver us and keep us until that day. Come quickly, Lord Jesus.

Fourth Sunday in Lent—Parable of the Vineyard Workers

Matthew 20:1–16

Matthew 20:13b–16 *“Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.”*

The human desire for justice is strong. This is especially the case with regards to justice for ourselves. We want what is due to us when it is in our favor. Thankfully, God does not work this way. He does not give us the punishment we deserve. But even his mercy and forgiveness are not given according to what we deserve: they are given freely by grace.

This is grating to many. Jesus tells a parable that highlights this. A master of a house hires laborers at different times of the day. He promises the first ones a denarius, typical wages for a day's work. But to all the others he promises “whatever is right”—and they trust him enough to work the rest of the day. He gives a denarius to each, regardless of whether they worked a full day or only an hour.

Those who worked the whole day are angry. They had been doing the math. Surely they deserve far more for their work! But God's math is not man's math. He gives his mercy to all because all have deserved damnation equally. The mercy shown to them is far greater than any small increase that they are complaining over. God's justice was focused on Jesus Christ as he died on the cross, and God's mercy is found in the crucifixion and in the gifts that God now gives to you free of charge and free from works.

Monday, March 28th–Ahaz: King of Judah

2 Kings 16:1–20

2 Chronicles 28:1–27

Isaiah 7:9b “*If you will not believe, Surely you shall not be established.*”

There are rulers who seek to do a little good in return for a plethora of evil, though they do not see it at the time. Ahaz neutralized threats to his rule, but it came at the complete expense of his soul and the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Judah. Even before appealing to Assyria, Ahaz was sealing his intended villainy with the blood of his own sons in the wicked acts of sacrificing to Moloch.

And yet, God sees an opportunity to demonstrate His unsearchable capacity for mercy, that He truly is the King over all kings, no matter the vile machinations they concoct in the dark corners of their hearts. With war at his doorstep, God sends Isaiah to Ahaz with the promise of a sign testifying to a greater promise that the kingdoms rising against Judah will not prevail. Remarkably, Ahaz will not ask for one; perhaps because he knows that God’s word is true, and it would not give him justification to align with the glory of Assyria, nor support from those who also witness the sign.

The homage Ahaz went on to pay to Assyria’s pagan rule was a deliberate affront to God’s long-established, spoken will against such treaties, placing the kingdom into a vassal state. This nefarious king gleefully traded regular tributes from Judah’s wealth for worldly honor, unclean sacrifices to a demonic nation.

Satan cannot overcome the Church. So, when a ruler like Ahaz positions himself against God after the fashion of the fallen prince, there will be strife for the Christian community within those borders. Ahaz means to work for evil. But God works good for His people. Thus, God gives Ahaz a sign nonetheless, a prophecy that points to the coming of the Christ by a virgin.

Second Sunday in Lent–Parable of the Mustard Seed

Matthew 13:31b–32 *The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.*

The tiniest mustard seed grows into a great tree, giving shelter to the birds of the heavens. This is the Kingdom of Heaven, the dominion of Jesus Christ. This is not the only image of kingship in the Scriptures. Another one is in the book of Judges (ch. 9), of the murderous rule of Abimelech son of Jerubbaal, who conspired with the men of Shechem to be made king. He murdered all 70 of his brothers but the youngest, Jotham. The last survivor spoke a parable of his rule, comparing him not to the noble olive tree, the sweet fig tree, or the cheerful vine, but to the lowly bramble. The trees of the forest want to have a king, but all the good ones decline the honor. The spiteful bramble, however, is quick to seize the opportunity. The arrogance of the bramble knows no bounds. He even dares to invite the cedars of Lebanon to take shelter under his branches, only to light them on fire.

The Kingdom of Christ is not a kingdom of spiteful and impudent brambles, but of peaceful breezes among the green leaves. Even the gentlest of heavenly creatures find shelter in the branches. Is this not an image of the union of heaven and earth? In Christ, heaven and earth are united in kisses of peace.

This Kingdom is tiny and often concealed by all the other plants. It does not brag of itself. It does not care to overshadow the plants of the garden. But it will finally be elevated to a great stature there. The tiny and humble mustard seed will grow to be the great tree of Paradise. Such is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, our beloved Lord and Savior.

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A Note from Rev. Franson (Nythrius):

You will need your Bible! This devotional is a study on the kings of Israel & Judah, but we cannot possibly fit the entire reign of each king in this booklet. Some of the entries will have a selection from the Scripture reading printed, but others will not. With every devotional, there will be a selection from the books of Kings and Chronicles listed that contains the record of their rule. Please read those passages to get a full understanding of what the devotional writer is saying.

Come quickly, O Jesus Christ, King of Kings. Amen.

The Sons of Solomon Discipline:

The Sons of Solomon is an ecumenical prayer habitus of catholic Christian men worldwide focused on the Psalms and Proverbs. We agree on what we all confess: The Three Ecumenical Creeds. We pray the prayers God gave us to pray, and seek together the wisdom that is from above.

How?

1. Carry a bible, prayer book, and crucifix with you.
What is a prayer book?

Anything that points you back to the scriptures in your daily life: a hymnal, catechism, theological book...Anything by which you find inspiration to open, read and ponder the scriptures

Is this required at all times?

We are not practitioners of Judaism.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

Do not abandon prudence, practice wisdom and discipline.

Let the image of the perfect man be your spiritual focus.

2. Meditate on a Proverb every day.

How might one do that?

Translate the Proverb into your own words. Carry that thought with you on a piece of paper for a day. Pray that you might use the thought in a conversation. Leave the note alone for a week, then read it again and repeat the process. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures. Let the author teach you wisdom, that you may be thoroughly equipped.

3. Read the Psalms of the Diaspora each day:

Morning: Psalms 123, 125, 127

Mid-day: Psalms 124, 129

Vespers: Psalms 126, 128

Evening: Psalms 130, 131

The Daughters of Wisdom Discipline:
Mothers, Sisters, Daughters, pray for the Patriarchy. Pray for the blessings God has promised. Pray for God's will to be done.

Morning: Psalm 133, 1 Samuel 2: 1-10

Meditate on how joyous it is when brothers dwell together in unity!
For additional morning encouragement, add the Song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, as she gives thanks to God.

Midday: Proverbs 31

The Wisdom of the mother of King Lemuel. Meditate on the promises God gives to the wife that trust his words. Meditate on the blessings you are given. Consider the life presented therein, and rejoice in it.

Vespers: Psalm 135 (optional)

Remember the mighty works of the LORD Jesus, and remember the folly of those who trust in idols of silver and gold (and plastic).

Compline: Psalm 134, Magnificat

Bless the LORD Jesus at the end of the day, and add in the Song of Mary, the mother of our LORD, as she gives thanks to God.

Learn more about this discipline at <https://sonsofsolomon.net/dow>

*Lenten devotional for Christians who wait for the King of Kings
Second Sunday in Lent - Fourth Sunday in Lent*

