***Introit (Psalm 132)***

P: Lord, give righteousness the same-as clothes for Your priests.

**C: Let Your holy people shout with joy.**

P: The Lord chose His holy city,

**C: He wants to live there.**

P: The Lord says, “This is My resting place forever.”

**C: “I will live here. I desire that.”**

P: The Lord will give everything the city needs.

**C: He will satisfy the poor people with bread.**

P: He will give salvation the same-as clothes for the priests.

**C: The holy people will shout with joy.**

P: God will make a ruler come from David.

**C: He prepared a light for the leader He chose.**

P: God will cover His enemies with shame.

**C: But God will put a bright crown on His leader.**

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

***Prayer for God’s Word***

P: Lord, show mercy and attend our prayers. We were slaves obeying sin, but You finished freed us. Now save us from every evil thing. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Jesus lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: (copy) Amen.

The Old Testament lesson is from Hosea chapter 2.

 God said, “Look! I will encourage Israel, I will take her into the desert and speak kind words to her. I will give her vineyards. The valley of trouble will become a door of hope. Israel will sing the same-as long ago when she was young, the same-as when she came here from Egypt.”

 The Lord announces, “On that day, you will name Me, ‘My Husband.’ You will no longer name Me, ‘My BAAL.’ Because I will take-away the idol name BAAL. No one will say the idol names again. I will make an agreement with the WILD animals, the birds, and all the animals on the ground. I will do that for Israel. I will stop all war and fighting with the bow and sword in the land. I will make everyone lie down in safety.”

 “I will make you married to Me forever. I will make you married in righteousness, right judgment, continuing love, and mercy. I will marry you in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord.”

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

The New Testament lesson is from Second Corinthians chapters 2 and 3.

 The Lord made the time right, and I came to the city TROAS to preach the gospel of Christ. But I didn’t have peace because I couldn’t find my coworker TITUS there. So I left and went to the country MACEDONIA.

 Give thanks to God! In Jesus, God always leads in in a victory parade. Through us, He gives knowledge about Him in every place. That is the same as a pleasing smell. We smell the same-as Christ for people who are saved and people not saved. For people not saved, we smell the same-as death, and they die. For people saved, we smell the same-as life, and they live. Who is good enough for these things? We don’t sell God’s word for money. Many other people do that. But we are honest men. God sent us, and for God, we preach about Christ.

 Do we need to tell you about us again? Some people need letters introducing them to a group of people. Do we need those letters to meet you, or do we need those letters from you so we can meet other people? No. You yourselves are our letter. You are written on our hearts, and everyone knows that and can read that. In truth, you are a letter from Christ, and we can show people that letter. God did not use ink to write about you. The Spirit of the living God wrote on you, not on stone, but on your hearts.

 So because of Christ, we have strong trust in God. We aren’t good enough ourselves, we can’t say we gave you anything. We are good enough because God makes us good enough. He made us servants to announce His new promises. God’s promises are from the Holy Spirit, not from the law. Because the law kills, but the Holy Spirit gives life.

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

*There are two choices for the Gospel lesson, a shorter reading from Mark 2 and a longer reading from Mark 2. Choose one.*

*The shorter reading.*

The Gospel lesson is from Mark chapter 2.

C: (copy) Glory to You, O Lord.

 John’s disciples and the Pharisees stopped eating as part of their worship. People went to Jesus and asked, “John’s disciples and the Pharisees stopped eating. But Your disciples are eating. Why?”

 Jesus said, “When the groom comes for the wedding, will his friends stop eating? No! When the groom is with them, they eat. They will not stop. But someone will take-away the groom from them. Then they will stop eating. No one sews new cloth on old clothes. If you do that, then the new cloth will rip the old cloth and the hole will become worse. No one puts new wine in old wine bags. The new wine will break the old bags and that destroys both the wine and the bags. Instead, you put new wine into new bags.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: (copy) Praise to You, O Christ.

*The longer reading.*

The Gospel lesson is from Mark chapter 2.

C: (copy) Glory to You, O Lord.

 Jesus went again to the sea. The crowd of people came to Jesus and He was teaching them. Jesus was walking and He saw a man named LEVI, the son of ALPHAEUS, sitting in a place to collect taxes. Jesus told LEVI, “Follow Me.” LEVI stood up and followed Jesus.

 Later, Jesus was eating in LEVI’s house. Many tax collectors and sinners ate with Jesus and His disciples. Many people followed Jesus. Some of the Law teachers who were Pharisees saw Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors. They asked Jesus’ disciples, “Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinner?”

 Jesus heard that and He said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor. Sick people need a doctor. I didn’t come for righteous people. I came to call sinners.”

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 Jesus said, “When the groom comes for the wedding, will his friends stop eating? No! When the groom is with them, they eat. They will not stop. But someone will take-away the groom from them. Then they will stop eating. No one sews new cloth on old clothes. If you do that, then the new cloth will rip the old cloth and the hole will become worse. No one puts new wine in old wine bags. The new wine will break the old bags and that destroys both the wine and the bags. Instead, you put new wine into new bags.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: (copy) Praise to You, O Christ.