***Introit (Psalm 92)***

P: True good to thank the Lord!

**C: Sing praises to Your name, Most High God!**

P: God’s holy people are strong the same-as a tree.

**C: They grow same-as a tall tree.**

P: God plants His people in His house.

**C: They grow in God’s house.**

P: When God’s people are old, they continue doing good.

**C: His people are always full with life.**

P: We announce the Lord is righteous.

**C: He is our rock. There is no wrong in Him.**

**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: Blessed Lord, You gave all the Holy Bible to teach us. Help us attend to Your word. Help us read, understand, and learn Your word. Put Your word in our heart. Then we will believe and always trust Your promise to give us eternal life. 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 Ezekiel chapter 17.

 God says, “I will take the highest branch from the tall CEDAR tree. I will cut the newest twig from the end of that branch, and I will put that on a high mountain. I will put that on the highest mountain in Israel. And that twig will grow branches and grow fruit. It will truly become a tall and beautiful cedar tree. Many birds will make nests in that tree. And all trees in the field will know that I am the Lord. I cut down the tall tree. I make the small tree become tall. I made the green tree become dry, and I made the dry tree grow healthy. I am the Lord. I announce and I will do that.”

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

*The New Testament lesson has a short reading from 2 Corinthians 5 or a long reading from 2 Cor. 5. Choose one.*

*Short reading.*

The New Testament lesson is from 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

 We now live on earth in this body, same-as a tent. We live in this body (tent) only a short time. We know if this tent gets destroyed, we have a building from God. God built our house in heaven, and that will continue forever. But now we suffer in this body. We want God to give us our heavenly house.

 God will clothe us and we will not be-naked. While we live in this tent, our body on earth, we suffer and we have burdens. We don’t want to give-up life, no! We want a better life in heaven, then eternal life can cover-up our earthly life. God made us to live with Him. God gave us the Holy Spirit as a promise, proof that He will give us new life.

 Now we are full of courage. We know that while we live in this body, we are not with the Lord. What we see doesn’t guide our life. Faith guides our life. We are full of courage and want to leave this body and go live with the Lord. But if we live here or in heaven, no-matter, we want to please the Lord. All of us must stand in front of Christ’s judgment throne. Christ will pay each person agreeing with the things that person did in his life, good or bad.

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

*Longer reading.*

The New Testament lesson is from 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

 We now live on earth in this body, same-as a tent. We live in this body (tent) only a short time. We know if this tent gets destroyed, we have a building from God. God built our house in heaven, and that will continue forever. But now we suffer in this body. We want God to give us our heavenly house.

 God will clothe us and we will not be-naked. While we live in this tent, our body on earth, we suffer and we have burdens. We don’t want to give-up life, no! We want a better life in heaven, then eternal life can cover-up our earthly life. God made us to live with Him. God gave us the Holy Spirit as a promise, proof that He will give us new life.

 Now we are full of courage. We know that while we live in this body, we are not with the Lord. What we see doesn’t guide our life. Faith guides our life. We are full of courage and want to leave this body and go live with the Lord. But if we live here or in heaven, no-matter, we want to please the Lord. All of us must stand in front of Christ’s judgment throne. Christ will pay each person agreeing with the things that person did in his life, good or bad.

 Because we honor the Lord, we work to tell and convince other people. God knows who we are. I hope in your hearts you know who we are. We are not introducing ourselves again. We are giving you a reason to boast about us. There are some people who like to boast about what they do, but they say nothing about what they believe in their heart. We want you to have an answer for them.

 If we look crazy, we do that for God. If we are thinking right, we do that for you. Christ’s love controls us, because we know this: one man (Jesus) died for all people, and that means all people died. Jesus died for everyone. Now people who live will not live for themselves. They will live for Jesus, He died for them and raised alive again.

 From now on, we don’t think about people the same-as people think. In the past, we thought about Christ the same-as people think, but no more. If anyone belongs to Christ, God makes that person new. The old is gone, the new person is here.

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

The Gospel lesson is from Mark chapter 4.

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

 Jesus said, “God’s kingdom is the same-as a man throwing seeds on the ground. The man sleeps at night and wakes-up in the morning. At the same time the seed grows, but the man doesn’t understand how. The ground makes the seed grow; first the green leaf, then the small food, and finally the full grown WHEAT. When the WHEAT is ready, the man starts to work to pick the good WHEAT.”

 Jesus said, “What can we say about God’s kingdom? What story can we tell? God’s kingdom is the same-as a tiny MUSTARD seed. That is the smallest of all seeds in the world. A man takes that seed and puts that in the ground, and it grows to become a large tree. It grows large that birds come and make homes in the branches.”

 Jesus told many stories to teach the people God’s word. Jesus told them only the things they could understand. Jesus always spoke to the people with stories. But when Jesus was alone with His disciples, Jesus explained everything to them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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