

## **A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME**

### **JUST AS IF YOU NEVER SINNED**

Romans 8:33 “ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.”

Have you wondered why you end up exhausted, discouraged, bitter, and cynical? “What a tragedy this is! The Lord does not ask us to trust in Him because He wants to burden us but because He wants to give us every good thing by grace.” (Large Catechism, page 189)

Left to your own devices, or seeking out the assistance of others, you often end up exhausted, discouraged, bitter, and cynical. Why? Because your conscience is a stern taskmaster accusing you what you should do and did not do and what you did when you knew you should not. Where can you find relief from this burden of guilt?

God, out of His love for you, offers you release from your exhaustion, discouragement, bitterness, and cynicism. He declares you not guilty of the sins that burden you. He forgives you of your short-comings and failures in your thoughts, words, and activities. You receive this precious blessing through your baptism. (Romans 6:1-10) This is what your pastor announces to you after you confess your sins, “Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the “Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” (LSB, page 203) This is the benefit you receive from the Lord’s table, ““The words given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins’ show you that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.” (Small Catechism, page 235)

When God, out of His love for you through the saving work of His Son Jesus, declares you forgiven of your sins, He declares you not guilty. In this way He declares to the world that you have never sinned. Jesus took all your sins upon Himself, paid their price in full and gives you His robes of righteousness. There are no charges against you!

Prayer: Holy Spirit, help me everyday to remember and be comforted by the forgiveness I receive by the power of my baptism, the reception of the Lord's Supper and the Good News of the Gospel. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Before the throne of God above I have a strong, a perfect plea:  
A great High Priest, whose name is Love, Who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on His hands, My name is written on His heart;  
I know that while in heav'n He stands No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair, And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look, and see Him there Who made an end of all my sin.

Because the sinless Savior died, My sinful soul is counted free;  
For God, the just, is satisfied To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there! The risen Lamb! My perfect spotless righteousness,  
The great unchangeable I AM, The King of glory and of grace!

At one with Him, I cannot die, My soul is purchased by His blood;  
My life is hid with Christ on high, With Christ, my Savior and my God.  
(LSB 574)