

The Faith of Our Fathers

Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed we find that those who do not wish to hear God's Word follow the devil so persistently that he ultimately takes total possession of them; and the longer he holds onto them the more wicked they become. This is exactly what we see occurring in today's Gospel. In their contempt for the Word, the Jews fall into the horrible sin of blaspheming God and His Word and in the end become raving mad. Thus you can see what it means not to be of God and to be of the devil, that is, not to hear God's Word but to revile and blaspheme it. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

For the ungodly, life's story is: I live, I know not how long; I die, I know not when I pass away, I know not where to. They will not be able to outrun death but must forever remain in everlasting death, because they have disdained the wonderful, mighty medicine of God's Word which makes death into everlasting life. For believing Christians, the song is: I live, I let God decide how long; I die, God wills when and what way; I pass away, I know where I am heading; I am mystified that I am still sorrowful. They will not see or experience death. Though death holds some dread for them, they will not come into eternal death nor will death's sting pierce their heart, but they will fall asleep without angst or sorrow. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

Look with admiration at father Abraham. He does not wear gold and silk but is adorned, surrounded, crowned, and clothed with the divine light, the Word of God. We Christians are truly blessed if we recognize the benefits Our Lord has given us. In fact, just as we now praise Abraham because of the gift the Lord gave him, so Abraham praises us even more. For he saw the day of Christ. But he saw it only in faith and in the Spirit. We see this glory face to face. We hear God speaking with us and promising forgiveness of sins in Baptism, in the Supper of His Son, and in the true use of the keys. These Abraham did not have, for he saw in the spirit and believed. Therefore our glory is greater than his. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

For *Judica* or *Passion Sunday*. These excerpts are intended as mediative pieces for the Day's pericopes. They have been edited and abridged for style, sense and space.

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He who is of God hears the words of God, and he who is not of God cannot hear them. So the minds of the unbelievers, unable to endure the words Jesus spoke to them about eternity, rushed to stone Him, trying to overwhelm Him whom they could not understand. So Jesus hid Himself. Yet why Our Lord should turn away from His persecutors arouses great wonder. If He wanted, Jesus could have used His divine power to stop them in their assault with a silent command, or overwhelmed them forever by His chastisement. But since He came to suffer, He did not want to exercise judgment. Yet when the hour of His passion came, He suffered what He came to endure. (St. Gregory the Great) ❧❧❧

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