

Text: Psalm 118:19-29

Theme: Open the Gate!

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, as well as those watching online, the text for our meditation this morning is the Introit of Psalm one hundred eighteen verses nineteen through twenty-nine.

Good morning boys and girls! How are you this morning? Good? Excellent! One of my favorite jokes in the world are knock knock jokes. For example, Knock, knock. Who's there? Little old lady. Little old lady who? I didn't know you could yodel. What do you do when someone knocks on the door? You would go and open it right. Knocking on door is great for getting them to open. What would you do, if you came to church and the church doors were locked? Maybe mom and dad just would have turned around and come home? Maybe wait until someone with a key came to church to let you in? Would any of you have been sad or cried because you could not get in? I am sure that some of you would have been sad. I know that your parents would have been. I am sure that you would have been knocking on the door demanding that you be let in. In our Psalm for today, that is the cry that we hear. The cry of open the gate that the righteous may enter, who are the righteous and how can we be a part of them? Let's listen and unpack that today.

The doors are locked, the entrance is shut, how will you get in? In the movie as well as the book, *The Return of the King*. " By J.R.R Tolkien. The character Aragon utters a very famous phrase, he says, "The way is shut. It was made by those who are Dead, and the Dead keep it, until the time comes. The way is shut." This is the problem that the Psalmist declares, the gate of the righteous, the entrance to the Temple, is shut unless Someone opens it. The Psalmist calls upon the Levities to fulfill their roles as the priests as the guardians of the gates,

open the gates of the temple that he may enter and give thanks to the Lord for being His salvation. The temple of God was meant for the righteous to enter and offer the sacrifices of righteousness, hence the gates are called the gates of righteousness. Righteous deeds were done within its walls, and righteous teachings sounded forth from its courts.

Are you righteous? Are you holy? Not on your own or by your own actions. You are anything but righteous. You break the Law of God on a daily basis in your thoughts, words, deeds and actions. You lie, you cheat, you steal, you look at others with lustful desires. You covet the good things your neighbor has and wish that they would get all the bad while you get all the good things. You complain about the good things God gives to you, for example the weather, “It’s too hot, it’s too cold. It’s too windy.” You do not fear, love, and trust in God alone. If you were righteous on your own, you would not confess your sins. There would be no need to. Instead, you cry out “Hosanna, Save us now! Son of David”

You cry out Hosanna to the Son of David. Who is this Son of David? He is Jesus, David’s Son through Mary and Joseph and David’s Lord, true God in the flesh for us. Knowing your sins, knowing how unrighteous you are, you cry out to God for Salvation, and He answers, as the Psalmist states “I thank you that You have answered me and have become my salvation.” You cry out for salvation and God answers your cry. God gives to you Salvation and His righteousness. He does all this by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh. Jesus, by His perfect Obedience to the will of the Father, fulfills all of the Law on our behalf. On the Cross, God lays on Him all of our sins, all of our faults, all of our guilt and shame, all of our unrighteousness. Jesus is despised and rejected by men, handed over to be raised up upon a cross, to suffer, bleed, and die for you. Jesus, He who the builders rejected, God has made the cornerstone of our salvation. Jesus has taken all of our

sins and given us His perfect righteousness. It is the Lord who does it. Through this great exchange, He makes us perfect.

What is our response to this great action? We give thanks and praise to God. We extol Him for all of His wonderful works and deeds. We praise and honor Him for His steadfast love. That God has not left us in our darkness and sin, but has brought us to light and life forever. We give Him thanks that He not closed the gates of heaven forever. Rather, because of Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead, the gates of heaven stand for us wide open, that we may walk through them when Jesus comes again in power and glory, and we live with Him forever and ever.

Knock knock, who's there? Jesus, Jesus who? Your Lord and Savior, He who makes you righteous by His death and resurrection, He has opened for you the gates of heaven that you may be with Him in paradise and bliss forever and ever.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.