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## THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

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*Daily Devotion at Zion + October 18, 2020 AD + **Pentecost Season***

### **This Week: Devotion at Noon**

How good to remember our Lord in the middle of the day!

God has filled the hour of noon with many remembrances of His grace and power. Primarily and most profoundly, it was at noon that our Lord was crucified for the sins of the world and darkness covered the land (Matt. 27:45, Mark 15:33, Luke 23:44, John 19:14-16). That moment recalled the word of many prophets. They could use the image of darkness at midday to describe spiritual blindness (Isaiah 59:10, Amos 8:9), and they could describe noon as the hour of God's judgment (Zephaniah 2:4) and His people's renewed righteousness (Isaiah 58:10). How fitting that the Lord of light should leverage the day's brightest hour to preach His Word!

How shall we make it an hour for listening to that Word?

Christians have paused at noon to listen and pray for centuries. Monks and nuns in their cells, churches in the country, college chapels in the city, the family at its table, a woman or man traveling alone—the Christian faith has gathered them all to a life of devotion at this hour so full of meaning. We pause to remember our Lord's death, and so also to remember our own salvation. We feel the sun's heat, and remember both the warmth of God's love and the fire of His judgment. Noon, like evening and morning, becomes a time to pause, turn to the Lord, and say, "Amen."

### **About the Cover Art**

*Albrecht Altdorfer gives his viewers a number of subtle Bible lessons in this painting, "Crucifixion," from 1514. The pale skin of Jesus and the thieves indicate that death has occurred, its pallor setting in. Mingled at the foot of His cross is both the centurion who confesses that He is God's Son (Mark 15:39) and the Lord's mother, seated in her traditional blue robe, comforted by John the disciple (John 19:26-27). The contrast between Christ's colorlessness and the bright colors on everyone else teaches the greatest lesson of all: all sin fell on Jesus at the cross, but all His glory fell upon the sinners for whom He died.*

## A Traditional Noonday Prayer

What Christians pray at noon on Good Friday has also served as a traditional prayer at midday:

*Gracious Jesus, our Lord and our God, at this hour you bore our sins in Your own body on the tree so that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness. Have mercy upon us now and at the hour of our death, and grant to us, Your servants, with all others who devoutly remember Your blessed passion, a holy and peaceful life in this world and, through Your grace, eternal glory in the life to come; where, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, You live and reign, God forever. Amen*

At noon we may feel the first strains of the day's weariness. In this prayer, God draws us to rest in the shade of that Tree of the cross, so vile in its sprouting but so fruitful in its harvest, that our Lord bravely planted and tended for our salvation.

### Daily Readings for the Week of Oct. 25 (Pentecost 21)

**S** Hosea 5:8—6:6  
1 Corinthians 2:6-16  
Matthew 14:1-12

**Th** Hosea 9:1-9  
Acts 24:1-23  
Luke 7:36-50

**M** Hosea 6:7—7:7  
Acts 22:30—23:11  
Luke 6:39-49

**F** Hosea 9:10-17  
Acts 24:24—25:12  
Luke 8:1-15

**T** Hosea 7:8-16  
Acts 23:12-24  
Luke 7:1-17

**Sa** Hosea 10:1-15  
Acts 25:13-27  
Luke 8:16-25

**W** Hosea 8:1-14  
Acts 23:23-35  
Luke 7:18-35

*These readings correspond to pages 1005-1044 in Vol. IV of For All the Saints. To acquire For All the Saints or other devotionals, please contact the church office.*

## Ways to Keep Watch at Noon

“Keep watch! For you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man comes” (Matthew 25:13). So says our Lord Jesus to His disciples. By commanding us to keep watch for Him, He consoles us with the promise that He is coming, and by not telling us the day or the hour, He fills every hour with that promise.

So noon becomes an oasis between our pause at morning and evening to be strengthened by the task of keeping watch for Him who loves and knows us best. How shall we do so? Here are some suggestions:

1. **Spend time with the cross.** Since our Lord’s passion started at noon, use it as a particular time to meditate on His sufferings for your sake. Set your eyes upon an image of His death; cross yourself with thought as to why you do so; use the prayer printed on page 3. Be strengthened, in the midst of your daily labors, by the Lord’s labor for your sake.
2. **Read the psalms.** The psalms, noon, and the cross all belong together, for it was the psalms that our Lord used as He died: “Father, into your hands I commend My spirit” (Psalm 31:5); “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1). Some good psalms for use at noon are 22, 31, 32, 51, and 116.
3. **Pray intercessory prayer.** “Intercessory” prayer is prayer on behalf of others: the church, the creation, family and personal needs, enemies and strangers. As you look over the events of the morning, and look towards the evening, who or what need your prayers? What strength might you need for the rest of the day? For what might you give thanks?

Evening, morning, and noon I cry out in distress, and He hears my voice. (Psalm 55:17)