

We bow our hearts in prayer: Lord, grant that we may grow in strength and godly wisdom, and in favor with You. Amen.

Dear Fellow Redeemed, Merry 5<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas,

The day on which one's true love gifted her with 5 golden rings.

May it be that on this 5<sup>th</sup> day, you may also receive 5 golden treasures from your Lord to enrich your faith so that you cherish His relationship with you all the more.

Before we hear the beautiful treasures mined from this Psalm, a little context might be helpful for understanding the beginning verses of our reading, which speaks of portions and lots and lines.

When Israel first came into the promised land to conquer it,

the Lord had them cast lots to determine who would inherit which tracts of land.

**Wherever the lot falls for anyone, that shall be his.** <sup>Numbers 33:54</sup> He said.

This land, allotted to each tribe and each clan and each family, God said in Leviticus 25 was never to be sold permanently, for this was their portion of the Lord's inheritance.

The allotted land was a picture that the Lord used to depict His eternal inheritance with Jesus.

It was to elicit confidence that God had allotted a place to every single Israelite

who would die in faith in the coming Messiah. ... *We read as follows in Jesus' name:*

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The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; You hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; In the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; My flesh also dwells secure. For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol, Or let Your holy One see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; In Your presence there is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth.** Amen* <sup>(John 17:17)</sup>

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Here is the first of the 5 golden rings given to you by your true Love.

1. This Psalm is first and foremost of Jesus.

This becomes very clear in Acts 2 where St. Peter quotes it extensively during his Pentecost sermon in order to prove that Jesus, the Christ, who had been crucified before their very eyes, also was prophesied to rise again, so that His body saw no corruption in the grave...

The interesting thing about St. Peter's use of this Psalm is that he quotes

more than what was immediately necessary to prove his point about Jesus' resurrection.

He goes a few verses before that particular verse to show Jesus' perfect trust in God.

**I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

The Jews at Pentecost very likely heard the story of Jesus' mock trial before the Sanhedrin.

No doubt they wondered what was so important to Jesus that He would give up His life for it because after all, the ultimate sacrifice of one's life seems pretty final.

So St. Peter makes it very clear in quoting this Psalm that Jesus gave up His life

because it was the Lord's will for Him. Jesus had **set the Lord always before Him.**

And while it looked like His enemies got the upper hand over Him, Jesus **was not shaken,**

nor did the Lord disappoint, but proved faithful even by raising Him from the dead.  
This leads us to our second golden ring..

2. Jesus is 100% true man, having both a human soul and a human body.

This resurrection has a two-fold reality the Psalm tells us.

**For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol, Or let Your holy One see corruption.**

To be a true resurrection, what physical death had separated must be reunited.

At death, the human soul is separated from the body to go to its eternal habitation.

The term Sheol here is a reference, not to hell, but to death.

Normally, the body then, as a result of the corruption of sin in our lives begins its rapid process of breaking down to eventually return to the dust from which it was taken.

But with Jesus, this corruption and breaking down of the body did not take place.

Why? Because Jesus had no inherited or actual sin to corrupt His body.

Though He had taken the world's sin upon Himself, it was not His sin that He was punished for, so the punishment could not remain on Him after He had given up His life.

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But we are in the Christmas season, and here we are talking about death and resurrection.

Jesus has scarcely been born, and we are already anticipating His death???

Yes, it is true, but this is not our idea. This is God's idea. Our Gospel text does the same, leading us to our third golden ring...

3. Jesus' lot in life was good, but not easy.

Simeon prophesied to Mary, **This child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."**

Jesus would bring division – not that He instigated the division (since it is sin that separates) – but that people would recognize the divisions that sin had caused.

Those who opposed Jesus, **this child**, opposed the Father who sent Him.

Eventually Jesus grew up and was **strong, filled with wisdom**, our gospel lesson reports.

This godly wisdom would not justify others' sins, nor look down in pride upon them.

He was able and willing to trust His Father implicitly, no matter what the consequences to Him were.

That Mary's soul would be pierced was Simeon's recounting of Jesus' death at the hands of sinners.

It was not an easy lot that Jesus was given.

There were a lot of temptations and a lot of responsibilities upon His shoulders.

If He failed once and fell into temptation, the whole world would be lost to eternal fire & torment.

Of course, I simplify it saying it was not an easy lot in life. But it is an impossible lot for us.

It is difficult enough not to sin against our neighbors, not to hurt, cheat, steal from, or betray them, but to trust the Father implicitly, to be wronged unjustly for the sins of others,

to bear the frailties of others with perfect patience and love,

to trust only in the Father no matter the consequences for you, this is impossible for you.

Our sinful nature wants to make us gods,

so that you can judge and meet out punishment as you see fit,

so that you can make the laws and rules to fit your circumstances in the most convenient and beneficial way for a life of ease and happiness.

But the Psalm says of Jesus, **The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;**

**Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.**

This was accounted, not only of His earthly life, but of His whole life, His earthly and heavenly life.

We are told in Hebrews<sup>[12:2]</sup> Jesus, **who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.**

The cross, while the glory of God, is not the joy of God.

The cross was the instrument by which His joy was realized, that forgiveness and salvation were accomplished for all people so we could inherit eternal paradise with Him,

leading us to our 4<sup>th</sup> golden ring...

#### 4. The Psalm is also about you.

You are Jesus' lot, His portion. You are His inheritance from the Father.

It is over you that His **heart is gladdened, and His whole being rejoices.**

Because of Jesus, your lot given by the Father is also good, even if not easy.

This is beautifully illustrated in the story of Naboth's Vineyard.

Remember how King Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard and offered to purchase it from him?

But Naboth, remembering God's command not to sell his inheritance, refused Ahab's request, even knowing how evil Ahab and Jezebel were.

For his faithfulness, he and his family were put to death.

The vineyard, their earthly lot, was made into a vegetable garden.

Yet, do not feel bad for Naboth. He gave up the shadow for the reality,

because when he was killed, He received his eternal lot, his inheritance in paradise with his Lord.

What Jesus endured, He endured for you, so that you may be united with Him in His kingdom.

As with Naboth, the Lord has promised a lot for you in paradise.

In fact, He has gone before you to prepare a place for you.

But in going, He has not left you. He is still with you, protecting you and sustaining you.

The Psalm also reminds us that we, like Naboth, are also instructed by the Lord.

**I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; In the night also my heart instructs me.**

Leading us to our fifth and final golden ring...

#### 5. The Lord gives you all you need:

The Father created you and everything around you, given you *your body and soul, food and clothing, home and family*, vocations and duties, *and still preserves them.*

He sent His only-begotten Son to take on human flesh to live, die, and rise for you.

All this He did without asking you or seeking your input.

Everything we have is from the Lord, even and especially our salvation.

We see this also in the Psalm:

as He gives us faith, **making known the path of life,**

He states: **In Your presence there is fullness of joy** which is only possible

where there is a clean conscience through the forgiveness won by Jesus' death.

And He gives us eternal salvation, as He says, **At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

St. Peter said in his epistle, **you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.**

As Israel settled in the Promised Land, the priestly tribe of Levi did not receive an allotment of land.

For them the Lord said, **You shall have no inheritance in their land,  
neither shall you have any portion among them.**

**I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.**  
So it is here in this life. The Lord is your portion and your inheritance.

*Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. Amen*

*Soli Deo Gloria*