

PSALM 116

Return, O my soul, to your rest;
for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

(PSALM 116:7)

STRUCTURE

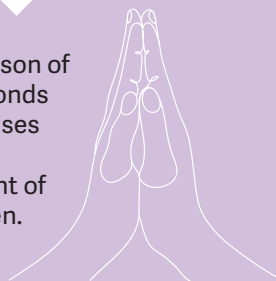
- v. 1-5** Recognition that God answers prayer.
- v. 6-8** Recognition that God preserves the righteous.
- v. 9-11** Those whom God has preserved are thankful in their daily lives.
- v. 12-19** Those whom God has preserved are thankful in their liturgical lives.

AT A GLANCE

- WHO'S TALKING?** As early as 1515, Luther saw this psalm as wholly referring to Christ.
- IN A WORD** In the Septuagint (LXX Psalm 114), this psalm begins with the word "Hallelujah."
- AUTHOR** This psalm's author is anonymous, helping us paint ourselves into the picture.
- NOTE** This psalm is divided in the Greek and Latin Psalter into Verses 1-9 and verses 10-19.

CHRIST IS HERE

The speaker in verse 16 is Christ, son of the Lord's maidservant, whose bonds have been loosed and who promises to offer the ultimate sacrifice of thanksgiving. Precious in the sight of the Lord is this holiest of holy men.



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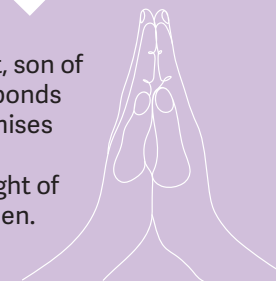
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The speaker in verse 16 is Christ, son of the Lord's maidservant, whose bonds have been loosed and who promises to offer the ultimate sacrifice of thanksgiving. Precious in the sight of the Lord is this holiest of holy men.



Saint Paul quotes the Septuagint version of this psalm in 2 Cor. 4:13: “I believed, and so I spoke.” Thus, in the mind of Paul, this psalm calls us to recognize that God’s goodness is intrinsically tied to the way that we live, act and worship. In the mind of the psalmist, if believing results in speaking a certain way about God, so also believing shapes the way that we act in both our daily lives and our worship lives. The author of this psalm asks himself what he could possibly render to the Lord, concluding that the greatest gift he can give is to lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, participating in that which God has freely given His people. Verses 15–16 are difficult to understand in the immediate context of this psalm, but when read them as a foreshadowing of that which will be accomplished by Christ, we realize that to take up the cup of salvation and pay vows in the presence of the Lord is nothing more than to praise God for the death of His Son, the son of His maidservant, as a sacrifice of thanksgiving and atonement for all.



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USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: v. 2a or 10a

In the Daily Office: Mondays at Vespers; Vespers on Holy (Maundy) Thursday, for Apostles and for Martyrs (v. 10)

At the Divine Service:

LSB Verse for Martyrs (v. 15)

Psalm for Holy (Maundy) Thursday (ant: v. 17)

One-Year:

Gradual for Trinity 24 (v. 8, 1)

Verse for Trinity 17 (v. 1)

Psalm for Trinity 22 (ant: v. 13)

Three-Year:

Introit for Lent 5A (ant: v. 15) and Proper 20A (ant: v. 17); Introit verses for Lent 5B.

Psalm for Easter 3A and Proper 19B (ant: v. 5)

Liturgical Use: Offertory in Divine Services 1 and 2 (v. 12–13, 17–19)

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SPIRITUAL CARE

- At Holy Communion.
- In thanksgiving.
- During times of blessing.
- At a baptism.
- At a Christian funeral.



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PSALM PRAYER

PSALM

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O most merciful and righteous Lord, deliver our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from stumbling. Maintain Your gentleness to us, that if we are disciplined by Your justice, we may also be guarded by Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

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