

THE
LORD'S PASSION
& THE LORD'S PRAYER



A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

The Lord's Passion and the Lord's Prayer
A Lenten Devotional

The Lord's Passion and the Lord's Prayer
A Lenten Devotional

We acknowledge the original 2018 devotion authors with thanksgiving:

Marcus J. Baikie, Travis Berg, Wes Odom, Andrew Packer,
Andrew Richard, Joshua V. Scheer, and Sam Wirgau

Editor: Paul J Cain

Proofreader: R. James Willis, of
Let Me Proof It To You Proofreading Services, in San Antonio, TX.
rjwProofing52@yahoo.com

Printer: Nathaniel Brown

Cover Art: Roberto E. Rojas, Jr.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (“The Holy Bible,” English Standard Version®), copyright ® 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

“*Lutheran Service Book*” (“*LSB*”) is copyright © 2006 by Concordia Publishing House. www.cph.org

“Our Father, Who from Heaven Above” (*LSB* 766) is a catechism hymn by Martin Luther. The text in stanzas 2–5 and 7 are copyright © 1980 by Concordia Publishing House. The music and text in stanzas 1, 6, and 8–9 are public domain.

Digital images of “Martin Luther’s 1545 *Small Catechism*” are provided courtesy of Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

This is a free resource designed by Steadfast Lutherans, Inc., for use within Lutheran churches. Pastors are encouraged to share, download, print, and use these publications within their congregations.

Copyright © 2018, 2026 by Steadfast Lutherans, Inc. www.steadfastlutherans.org



For the
Evangelical Lutheran Church
wherever she may be found
And for the Glory of God

Introduction

Over the course of my twenty-five years in the Office of the Holy Ministry, I have found it to be very edifying to add a complete read-through of the Lutheran Confessions to the season of Lent, especially using the edition from Concordia Publishing House, *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*. In addition, most of my Lenten Midweek service and sermon series have been on parts of Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*, and series on the Lord's Prayer have been particularly memorable to my laypeople.

In the Holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ gives us His own prayer, the Lord's Prayer, the Our Father. In Luke 11, He said to them, "When you pray, say..." and in Matthew 6 He says, "Pray then like this..." giving us a prayer to pray word-by-word and also giving us Christians a pattern for prayer.

It follows that during Lent, a time for special devotion to, and meditation on, the Passion of our Lord, that we focus on the prayer and pattern of prayer Our Lord gives to us.

This devotion is set up to lead you through various texts to learn more about prayer and about our Lord's Passion. Fathers should especially take the opportunity to lead their families in their sacred task of being the head of their household. Congregations can also take advantage of the Lenten Service Plan that can be found online at SteadfastLutherans.org.

The Lord bless your devotions this Lenten season and our celebration of the Easter Sunday Resurrection of Our Lord, crucified for us on Good Friday.

Rev. Paul J Cain, Editor

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:7-11)

Our Father Who art in heaven



Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray the Lord's Prayer. The artist of this engraving is the Monogrammist HA. The image is from a 1545 edition of Valentin Babst's publication of Luther's *Small Catechism*.

Ash Wednesday

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:16–21)

It's very appropriate during Lent, a season of repentance and increased focus on God's work for us in Christ Jesus, to be reminded that God is our Father. How is God our Father? Sometimes people talk about God being our Father by the Creation. This is true that God created us. We are creatures. But that's not quite fully revealing about our Father. Creation is sometimes a scary place. Things in creation die. There is so much out of our control in creation. It can be frightening. Even worse, our many sins tear into our thinking about how our Father looks at us.

There is another way to think of God as our Father. Yes, He created us. He has done so much more than that, however. God is our Father because Jesus is our brother. The Son of God was sent by the Father to redeem His creatures. Now instead of just seeing the raw power of creation or the wrath we deserve for our sins and offenses, a new way to see God as our Father emerges. God is our loving Father. He showed this in sending His only-begotten Son. The power of Creation is under the same Son who suffered all punishment for us. This Father is our Father. Because of Christ we know Him to be a loving Father.

Let us pray. Dear Father in heaven, help us trust you as our loving Father who gave us Jesus to redeem us. Help us to call upon you during this Lenten season with all boldness and confidence. Amen.

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” (John 14:6–7)

Christ Jesus is the Son of God. God is His Father. He is also true God in the mystery of the Trinity. These words were spoken by Jesus to His disciples on the first Maundy Thursday, the night when He was betrayed. Here He gladly teaches His disciples the way to the Father.

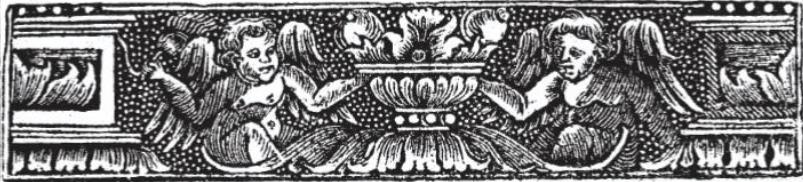
Christ Jesus is the way. In fact, the whole Gospel of John lays out this fact, that to know or see the Father you need only look at the Son. Through the Son we have such access to the Father. This is very important in our prayers. This access of course came at a price – the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus has made it possible for you to come to the Father. He has made it possible to know the Father. He has made it possible to see the Father. This is because knowing and seeing Jesus is knowing and seeing the Father.

Throughout this devotional book we are going to see examples of prayer from our Lord’s Passion accounts. This is the first account, where our Lord Jesus Christ is teaching the introduction of the Lord’s Prayer to the disciples. He says plainly to them: “you do know him and have seen him.” This is a sure statement and promise from our Lord. This fact can encourage you in your prayers. Jesus says the Father is your Father. When you pray to the Father, it is as certain as Jesus Christ says. He has bled and died to give you access and provides you His Word to encourage your prayers. All while He Himself was approaching His own crucifixion. Such is the love of Jesus for you.

Let us pray. Dear Father in heaven, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus so that we may not only pray to You but also that we may know you. Amen.

OUR FATHER,
WHO FROM HEAV'N ABOVE
BIDS ALL OF US
TO LIVE IN LOVE
AS MEMBERS
OF ONE FAMILY
AND PRAY TO YOU
IN UNITY,
TEACH US
NO THOUGHTLESS
WORDS TO SAY
BUT FROM OUR INMOST
HEARTS TO PRAY.

LSB 766:1



Friday after Ash Wednesday

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.” (Matthew 6:9)

Jesus taught His disciples to pray the Lord’s Prayer. Since then, pastors and parents have used the Lord’s Prayer to teach children not only how to pray but what to pray. Luther’s catechism hymn on the Lord’s Prayer is a beautiful tool to teach this; a stanza of this hymn is included each week.

Why do we pray? There are ultimately two reasons. First, God commands us to pray. The Second Commandment (You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God) commands prayer, or the right use of God’s name. It is not an option for the Christian. It is commanded. It is a sacred thing that God demands and will punish our lack of prayer. Let this then encourage you and also reveal your sins against this Commandment.

The second reason why we pray is that our Father has promised to hear and answer our prayers. Jesus Himself promises that what we ask will be given. This should encourage us to realize the great joy and pleasure it is to pray. Our Father has put His own reputation on the line by promising to hear and answer our prayers. His Word is certain.

Our prayers take on a serious nature. They are both in response to God’s command and promise. Our Father provides the motivation and words to pray for the Christian. Our prayers shouldn’t be thoughtless. They should be serious and faithful. This doesn’t mean that we avoid repeating prayers like the Lord’s Prayer. In fact, when Jesus teaches the Lord’s Prayer, He commands it to be prayed. Our thoughtlessness is never the problem with the words but with our hearts, which fail to keep the Second Commandment or properly believe the promise of God concerning our prayers. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Let us pray. Dear Father, help us to pray as we ought, obeying Your Word and trusting Your promise. Amen.

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:15–17)

Scripture teaches that we are by nature born dead in our sins and trespasses. Not only dead, but enemies of God. It is only the work of Christ that changes that. Here St. Paul teaches us why we can with all boldness and confidence call upon God our Father as His dear children. We have been adopted. We are children of God. The Spirit Himself bears witness to this in us.

When we pray “Our Father,” we are saying that we are His children. We are confessing that Christ Jesus has shed His own blood to atone for our sins and that the Holy Spirit has given new life where there was only death. The Spirit makes us heirs by giving us faith in Christ’s Word and work. This is the work done in the water of Holy Baptism. Baptism is our testimony of the Spirit that we are indeed children and fellow heirs with Christ. Praying the Lord’s Prayer then is an exercise of the baptized life of the Christian.

The last part of this verse sheds some light on what our baptized lives will encounter in this temporal existence. In this world we will suffer. Just like Christ. Baptism puts us into Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. Where He has gone, we will go, too. This means that as He was no stranger to suffering, especially in the Passion accounts, we too will have to suffer in this life. But the promise is that we are fellow heirs. Our suffering now serves to point us to glory that is coming. This is true for the baptized and the believing both now and forever.

Let us pray. Dear Father, grant me confidence in my prayers as the Spirit has made me trust in Your Son Jesus. Amen.



“Jesus Teaches Forgiveness.” This image illustrates the petition, “Hallowed be thy name,” from the Lord’s Prayer. The artist of this engraving is the Monogrammist HA. The image is from a 1545 edition of Valentin Babst’s publication of Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

First Sunday in Lent

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, “‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:1–4)

God's name is certainly holy in itself, because God is certainly holy in Himself. We may profane the name of God among us by cursing, swearing, using satanic arts, lying, or deceiving by His name, but we cannot desecrate God's name in itself, no matter how profane our words and deeds may be. For God is perfect, and His perfection cannot be sullied by sin.

Satan learned that lesson long ago in the wilderness. There he arrogantly attempted to tempt the very Son of God to profane His Father's name by turning stones into loaves of bread to satisfy His hunger, putting the Lord His God to the test by throwing Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and gaining all the kingdoms of the world and their glory by falling down and worshiping Satan. But Jesus would not be deceived or misled. He answered each temptation with nothing but the true and pure Word of God. In word and deed, Jesus kept God's name holy, in order that He would go to the cross as the holy, perfect sacrificial offering for the world's sin.

Indeed, God's name is certainly holy in itself. Neither the devil, nor the world, nor the sinful flesh can change that. Jesus proved it in His temptation in the wilderness. But by the Word of God, God's name may be kept holy on earth among men also. When we follow the example of our Lord in teaching and learning God's Word in truth and purity and in living holy lives according to what is commanded in the Scriptures, God's name is kept holy among us. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven!

Let us pray. Protect us from the devil's temptations, who would lead us to teach or live contrary to Your Word, heavenly Father! Amen.

Monday of Lent 1

[Jesus said,] “Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.’” (Matthew 6:9)

God’s name is holy in itself, yet God does not will for His name to remain holy by itself. He wills that His name be kept holy among us also. Thus, the First Petition of the Lord’s Prayer is a petition for the spread of the Gospel to all nations, as we sing in the second stanza in Martin Luther’s Lord’s Prayer hymn: “All poor deluded souls convert.”

The conversion of poor deluded souls from sin, death, and hell to forgiveness, life, and salvation does not happen by appealing to the desires of the flesh through entertainment, needs, or reasonable teachings. It happens only through the true and pure Word of God, as St. Paul writes in Romans 10:17: “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

This is why doctrine matters. The Gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). True and pure doctrine has the power to forgive the most wretched sinner, to raise the dead, to give eternal salvation to souls trapped by the snares of the devil. It has the power to create clean hearts and renew right spirits in those who believe, hearts that delight in the Lord’s Law and seek to do His will. False and corrupted doctrine threatens all that. It misleads sinners to trust in their own works to earn salvation; it also leads believers to misunderstand and misuse the Law or even abolish its use for Christians.

Let us therefore abide in the truth and purity of God’s Word and lead holy lives according to it. May God continue to send forth those who teach His Word, so poor deluded souls would be converted and be saved.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, bless the preaching of Your Word, that by its truth and purity sinners would be converted and inherit eternal life. Amen.

YOUR NAME
BE HALLOWED.
HELP US, LORD,
IN PURITY
TO KEEP YOUR WORD,
THAT TO THE GLORY
OF YOUR NAME
WE WALK BEFORE YOU
FREE FROM BLAME.
LET NO FALSE TEACHING
US PERVERT;
ALL POOR DELUDED
SOULS CONVERT.

LSB 766:2

Tuesday of Lent 1 — St. Matthias, Apostle, February 24

And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:23–26)

“God’s name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it” (*Small Catechism*, Lord’s Prayer, First Petition). Therefore, to pray, “Hallowed be Thy name,” is to pray that God would continue to send ministers to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Thanks be to God! He has heard and answered that prayer. He continues to raise up faithful men to preach His Word in its truth and purity. This we remember today as we remember and give thanks to God for Matthias, the apostle chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. By His grace alone God provided another to take the Office and preach the Gospel. He continues to do so to this very day by His grace as well. Though pastors may take calls, retire, or die, God raises up new pastors to take their place in the ministry. For by the Word of God that they preach, His name is kept holy among us also. Our sins are forgiven, our faith is strengthened, and we are moved to live new and holy lives according to it.

Therefore, we pray on this St. Matthias’s Day, and every day, “Hallowed be Thy name.” And whenever we may attend the Divine Service and hear His called and ordained minister proclaim the forgiveness won by Jesus Christ for us, God is answering that prayer. May God preserve to us His true and pure Word, and may we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, also lead holy lives according to it.

Let us pray. Help us to hear Your Word in faith and live holy lives of love as You command, dear Father in heaven! Amen.

Wednesday of Lent 1

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. (Psalm 145:1–3)

God wills for His holy name to be used by His people. He has revealed His name through His prophets and apostles in order that Christians would “call upon his name” (1 Chronicles 16:8) and “sing praises to his name” (Psalm 68:4).

However, what God gives as good is soon corrupted by sinners. The name of God, which is given for our use to call upon in times of trouble, to thank in times of joy, and to teach to all generations, is misused as a thoughtless exclamation in moments of fear, anger, or surprise, or, all the worse, to promote falsehood that glorifies men rather than God. It is a terrible violation of God’s gift of His name to use it in vain.

Indeed, the misuse of God’s name is so vile that we can almost understand why certain Jews forbade its use altogether. However, good intentions should not overrule what God Himself has instituted. God does not will for His name to be marked and avoided, as if one could preserve himself from sin by refraining from uttering those syllables. It is just as sinful to refuse God’s command to pray and call upon his name!

What then shall we do? We shall pray as Jesus taught: “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.” We ask that God would guard and keep us so that, by His Word, we would use His name as He wills: to call upon it in every trouble, to pray, praise, and give thanks. God earnestly desires for His name to be used so, for “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Joel 2:32).

Let us pray. Dear Father, we give thanks for Your holy name, which You have given to us in Your Word. Grant that we would ever use Your Name as You will, to Your glory. Amen.

Thursday of Lent 1

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.” (Ezekiel 36:22–23)

Prayer is an act of humility. To pray is to acknowledge your own inability and thus need for God to act. When we pray, “Hallowed be Thy name” therefore, we are confessing that we are incapable of hallowing it with our own reason or strength. God’s name is certainly holy in itself, but we cannot keep it holy by ourselves. So, we pray in this petition that it would be kept holy among us also.

God is almighty, and so He has the power to keep His name holy among us. But God is also gracious and merciful, and so He is willing to keep His name holy among us as well. For the sake of His holy name, God was moved to act for his people Israel, as He spoke through His prophet Ezekiel. He vowed that He would gather His people, that He would cleanse them from all their uncleanness, and that He would give them a new heart and a new spirit.

By the death and resurrection of His only-begotten Son Jesus, God has kept this vow. Through the Word and Sacraments, He gathers His people into the Body of Christ, the Church, cleansing them and giving them a new heart and spirit. All this He does not because we have earned it or deserved it, but for the sake of His holy name. We pray that God’s Name would be hallowed, and because of His grace alone, He hallows it among us also.

Let us pray. Father, we confess that we cannot hallow Your name by our own reason or strength. For the sake of Your Son Jesus, hallow Your name among us also. Amen.

Friday of Lent 1

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:8–11)

The hallowing of God’s name is inseparable from the hearing of God’s Word. Only by gladly hearing and learning God’s Word do we know whom we should call upon in every trouble, to whom we should pray, praise, and give thanks. Therefore, Christians who want to grow in their piety and devotion to the one true God should not retreat to some private, inward meditative exercise, but rather go to church, to the Divine Service, to hear preaching and God’s Word.

These are the means by which God strengthens us in faith toward Him. When we despise preaching and God’s Word, it is only a matter of time before our faith withers and decays and finally dies. But a faith that regularly hears the Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and is often fed and nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ will be bold and confident to ask God the Father for all things. Then having been strengthened in faith toward God by His Word, we are likewise strengthened in love for one another. As the Commandments move from God’s name and Word to love for the neighbor, so God’s name is hallowed in the lives of His Christians through teaching the true and pure Word of God and through living holy lives according to that Word.

Would you have God’s name hallowed in your life? Hear God’s Word and love the neighbors whom God has given you: in your home, your congregation, your community, as God’s Word instructs you.

Let us pray. Almighty God, by Your Word strengthen my faith toward You and my love toward others, that Your name would be hallowed in my life. Amen.

Saturday of Lent 1

[Jesus said,] “I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” (John 17:9-11)

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ brings glory to God's holy name. During Holy Week, Jesus prayed, "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose, I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name" (John 12:27-28a). For this reason, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit; for this reason, Jesus was born of the virgin Mary: to suffer and die on the cross at the hour appointed by the Father. By going to that hour humbly and willingly, Jesus glorified the name of God. And so a voice from heaven thundered in response to Jesus' prayer, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" (John 12:28b).

By the Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified, we are kept in that same name. That name is graciously given to us in Holy Baptism, in which we are washed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. That name absolves us, pronouncing us forgiven of all our trespasses, through the mouths of our pastors. By that name Jesus' prayer for his Christians is answered: we are one holy Christian and apostolic Church through faith in Christ Jesus.

In this Christian Church, God's name continues to be glorified when we confess Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Wherever this Gospel is taught in its truth and purity, and the Sacraments administered according to it, there God's name is glorified, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Let us pray. Father, glorify Your name in the preaching and teaching of Jesus Christ crucified, for in Him alone we have life and salvation. Amen.



Jesus teaches about the coming Holy Spirit, who appears in the form of a dove. God the Father is also depicted above. The artist of this engraving is the Monogrammist HA. The image is from a 1545 edition of Valentin Babst's publication of Luther's *Small Catechism*.

Second Sunday in Lent

“Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.” (Matthew 15:21–28)

Faith receives what is promised from God. Faith prays based on those same promises of God. The Canaanite woman’s persistent pleas to Jesus to heal her daughter were based on what God had promised to do for all people. Though she was in no way worthy of such a gift of healing, not even being part of house of Israel, nonetheless she trusted God’s promises in Christ Jesus. Jesus commends her faith. Her faith is great not because of some quality or quantity, but because of its object: Christ and what He came to bring.

Likewise, we pray, “Thy Kingdom come,” trusting the promises that God has given us concerning His kingdom, namely, His righteous reign over our hearts and lives by faith. We in no way deserve or have merited that kingdom, not even by our prayers. But it comes all the same by His grace as a gift, “when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity” (*Small Catechism*, Lord’s Prayer, Second Petition). Therefore, we can pray with the faith of the Canaanite woman, having the same object of our faith, the same Christ who came for her and comes for us. We look not to our strength to usher in the kingdom of God. By His grace we trust in the promises of His holy Word and by that same grace we live godly lives of faith both now and forevermore.

Let us pray. O God, You see that of ourselves, we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversity that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Monday of Lent 2

And [Jesus] said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.’” (Luke 11:2)

When we pray, we follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ; when we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we pray the very words that He has given us to pray. Included in those words is the petition “Thy kingdom come.” That is what Jesus prayed even as He Himself brought that very reign of God through His life, death, and resurrection. Now the Church continues to pray that God would guard that kingdom against those who would stand against it, namely the devil, the world, and even our own sinful nature.

Their goal is the same, that is, they do not want God’s kingdom to come; they do not want the Gospel to spread or godly living to advance. They also do not want you to believe the Gospel or lead a godly life. They would rather that despair and ungodly living would prosper. Even now we see it in the world and in our own lives. It appears that the devil’s kingdom flourishes while the Church suffers turmoil and defeat both inside and out.

Still the Church prays, “Thy kingdom come.” And it is not a shot in the dark or a vain appeal. It is the voice of faith, trusting in the promises God has given to us concerning His kingdom. Though hell itself rages against God’s kingdom, it shall not prevail against it. The Lord preserves His Church from one age to the next. Likewise, He gives to you, as He has promised, His Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, since you have given us your kingdom through your Son, we pray that you would guard your kingdom against all the assaults of the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature. Preserve your Church, O Lord, and grant to us your Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Gospel, that all the more we may trust in your goodness, depend on your grace, and live lives pleasing to you, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

YOUR KINGDOM COME,
GUARD YOUR DOMAIN
AND YOUR ETERNAL
RIGHTEOUS REIGN.
THE HOLY GHOST
ENRICH OUR DAY
WITH GIFTS ATTENDANT
ON OUR WAY.
BREAK SATAN'S POW'R,
DEFEAT HIS RAGE;
PRESERVE YOUR CHURCH
FROM AGE TO AGE.

LSB 766:3

Tuesday of Lent 2

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this world.” Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world — to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” (John 18:36–37)

The kingdoms of this world must always fight to stay in power. Pilate's Rome could only remain powerful, and Caesar could only remain Emperor, by being more powerful than their enemies. In this way, every kingdom of this world is won, ruled, and continued through violence and power. In this way also, every kingdom of this world that has risen to power has or will fall. There will always be another, more powerful king and kingdom to come.

Jesus' kingdom is different and He is a different king. He does not win His kingdom by violence but by suffering violence. He wins His kingdom by being delivered over to the Jews and to Pilate, by being delivered to the cross for us. And there, by His death and resurrection, He indeed won the victory, for He opened the kingdom of heaven to all who believe. And such a kingdom cannot fall, cannot be overthrown by force or violence. And so, we pray that this kingdom may come to us as the Father gives us the Holy Spirit, that we believe the testimony of the truth from Jesus and the apostolic witness, and that as we believe so we live, both now and forevermore.

Let us pray. Lord God, the kingdoms of this world rise and fall, but You have promised that your kingdom is not of this world and that it is eternal. Keep us, dear Lord, in that kingdom by your grace, that we may all the more believe the truth of your Holy Word, be strengthened in our faith, and love and serve our neighbor, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday of Lent 2

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:18)

Paul wrote to Timothy in the midst of personal struggle and conflict. He was abandoned and harmed even by those he thought would stand beside him. Yet Paul trusts in the Lord and rightly confesses that trust when he says that the Lord would deliver him from every evil and would preserve him. The evil deeds to which Paul refers are those things that would seek to take away Paul's faith in Christ. Paul's desire is that he would remain faithful unto death, always trusting in the righteousness that Christ brings.

So too for us. When we are assaulted by the evils of this world that would seek to rob us of our faith in Christ, we pray, "Thy kingdom come," always praying for more faith in the face of evil assaults and diabolic deeds. And as God gives us His Holy Spirit so that by His grace we believe His word, He preserves us both here in time and forevermore in eternity. Even as God reigns in our hearts by faith do we also eagerly yearn for the heavenly kingdom to come.

When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we pray for both. Here and now, we pray that we be kept in the one true faith, in the kingdom of God. We also pray that we would be kept in that faith unto life everlasting, where the evils of this world will be no more, and we shall be with the Lord and see Him face to face. And God is faithful to both promises, that by grace He would rule in our hearts now by faith and that He will bring us to His heavenly kingdom where we shall live godly lives with Him forever.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, as you have so graciously promised to rescue and preserve us from all evil, so we pray that your kingdom would come to us now and that you would safely bring us to that heavenly kingdom where you live and reign with the Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Thursday of Lent 2

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)

For what do we pray when we pray, “Thy kingdom come?” There are many false ways of seeing or wanting that kingdom. Matters of eating and drinking can be extended to all sorts of issues, goals, and priorities that distract us from the true meaning of the kingdom of God. What matters is not what we think or feel is right, nor our preferences or our ideals. All those things pass away. But the kingdom remains, and it is ours. It is a righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is to say, the essence of God’s kingdom is having Christ’s righteousness that covers all our sins, having the peace that comes from sins forgiven, and having the true joy of knowing that we are justified and saved on account of the work of Christ.

That is God’s kingdom, and it is what it is even without our prayers. Whether we would pray for it or not, the kingdom of God, the righteousness of Christ, is a reality, and is the only reality that will stand at the last. But we pray that it may be ours, that this kingdom might come to us. And so, God gives us His Holy Spirit, so that we believe the Gospel, that the righteousness of Christ becomes our righteousness, that the peace and joy that comes from the Gospel might be applied to us, and that we might live, by His grace, in that righteousness, peace, and joy all our days.

Let us pray. God our heavenly Father, who in love sent your only-begotten Son to be our righteousness, peace, and joy, grant that by your grace we may be strengthened in this hope all our days. May your kingdom come to us and expand to the ends of the world, that we and all may believe the good news that the righteousness of your Son covers all our sins, and that we would have the peace and joy that surpasses all understanding. Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Friday of Lent 2

[Jesus said,] “Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ‘Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’” (Luke 12:31–32)

The kingdom of heaven, God’s reign of faith in our hearts, comes to us as a gift of God’s grace. In that way it is not earned or deserved. It is not given to us by our works or merits, but out of the good pleasure of God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, and for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ. It is ours and we can know it is.

Why then do we fear? Why do we fear what the kingdoms of this world can do to us? Why do we worry about what we will eat or what we will put on? Why do we let the temporary wants or the needs of this earthly life overshadow God’s eternal kingdom? Your Father knows what you need before you even ask, and He bids you to ask in faith.

What you need in life is more than food and clothing. You need the kingdom of God to come to you also. To seek His kingdom then is to pray that it comes to you, that the Father gives you His Holy Spirit that by His grace you believe His word and lead godly lives. That is what you, in faith, desire, and that is what is the Father’s good pleasure to give to you.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, our Good Shepherd, as you bid your flock not to fear but to trust in the good pleasure of the heavenly Father in giving to us the kingdom, so we pray that His kingdom would come among us through the preaching of your Word and the giving of your Sacraments. May we continue to seek that kingdom in faith, trusting in your grace, and giving thanks for your mercies which are new every morning, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Saturday of Lent 2

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15)

For now, the kingdom of heaven remains hidden. This kingdom exists and grows under the cross and in lowly ways. By all appearances, the kingdoms of this world seem more powerful. The Church suffers; the world rejoices.

And yet, what we know by faith now will one day be made known to all. The Lord is faithful to His promise both here in time and there in eternity. When we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” it is indeed a prayer for God to rule in our hearts now in the righteousness that comes by faith. But it is also a prayer for Christ’s Second Coming. As He has promised to come again, and as we confess our faith in the promise in the Creed: “He shall come again in glory to judge both the living and the dead,” even so we pray for Him to come soon.

We pray that, even as He comes now and rescues us from our sins through the Gospel, so too that He would rescue us from this wicked world. We pray that the kingdom of the world might become His kingdom and that it might be forever. This is what He has promised. Even now He continues to strengthen us in our faith here in time as we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Let us pray. Eternal God, merciful Father, You have appointed Your Son as Judge of the living and the dead. Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the kingdom prepared for Your own from the foundation of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Jesus falls to the ground under the weight of the cross. This image illustrates the petition “Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven” from the Lord’s Prayer. The artist of this engraving is the Monogrammist HA. The image is from a 1545 edition of Valentin Babst’s publication of Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

Third Sunday in Lent

Some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,” while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me, scatters. — Luke 11:15–20, 23

There is perhaps no time more profound in the Christian year of grace in which to meditate on the clearly revealed will of God than the season of Lent. During this long, holy season, the church takes special care to contemplate the depths of her sinfulness and the unfathomable lengths that Christ went to in becoming sin for us and taking our place under the righteous wrath of God so that we might live in perfect righteousness, innocence, and blessedness under Him in His kingdom forever. This is the good and gracious will of God.

The will of God necessitates the destruction of all other wills which are opposed to it, as is seen in part in the reading above wherein Jesus is foolishly accused of casting out a demon according to the will of Beelzebul. He asks His accusers how this can be since the will of God, not Beelzebul, is to destroy all demons. What Jesus does is the finger of God at work according to His good will. Whoever is opposed to this, as some of them were in their hearts, is opposed to the will of God to save mankind from their sin.

Let us pray. Dear Father in Heaven, we thank and praise You that it is Your good and gracious will to break and hinder the evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. Grant that we be kept steadfast and believing until You send Your Son to judge the living and the dead. Amen.

Monday of Lent 3

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

The fourth stanza of Martin Luther’s catechetical hymn for the Lord’s Prayer, “Our Father, Who from Heaven Above,” is more helpfully and comfortingly rendered in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (458). There, the end of the first line prays that God, “Obedience in our weal and woe and patience in all grief bestow.” A stark line is drawn here between the theology of glory and the theology of the cross. The theology of glory teaches its followers, in part, to tease out God’s will for their lives through perceived blessings of material wealth, physical health, so-called inner peace, and a variety of earthly means. The biblical theology of the cross, however, teaches that, regardless of the cares and worries of this life, in Christ’s Passion and death, all of the promises of God are “Yes!” and “Amen!” It is through the cross that we know God’s will for our lives and are granted hope for life everlasting.

We learn through the third petition of the Lord’s Prayer, and are reminded in the fourth stanza of “Our Father, Who from Heaven Above,” that God’s will for our lives in this world isn’t always for rainbows and roses. There are crosses to bear. Extraordinary patience from the Lord Himself is required in times of grief, want, and plenty. The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh do not want the Word of the Lord to have free course, so we pray that the will of God be done among us that this may be so.

Let us pray. Dear Father in Heaven, throughout our days of pilgrimage in this life, grant us patience and peace through Your Word, and keep us in the true faith until we die. Amen.

YOUR GRACIOUS WILL
ON EARTH BE DONE
AS IT IS DONE
BEFORE YOUR THRONE,
THAT PATIENTLY
WE MAY OBEY
THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES
ALL THAT YOU SAY.
CURB FLESH AND BLOOD
AND EVERY ILL
THAT SETS ITSELF
AGAINST YOUR WILL.

LSB 766:4

Tuesday of Lent 3

And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. (Luke 22:39–43)

In all its parts, the Lord’s Prayer is the pattern of the prayers of all Christians. Here in Jesus’ prayer on the Mount of Olives in the garden, we see the third petition prayed in the extreme. Christ, the Lamb of God, Who is bearing the sins of the world in His body to the altar of His cross, prays for the Father’s will to be done despite the immense pain and suffering that’s awaiting Him in the days ahead. The will of the Christ and the will of the Father are not at odds. Despite what some teachers say, the perfect Son of God does not sin in praying this. Both Father and Son desire the salvation of mankind. Jesus is true God and true man. He knows He will feel the piercing, the stripes, the blows, and the nails. No sane human hates his body so much that he longs for pain and suffering.

What Christ does here in Gethsemane is what He does throughout His earthly ministry, keeps the Law perfectly for us. He beautifully shows not only that His perfect love for us, His neighbor, is greater than His love for His own body, but also that His fear, love, and trust in the Father’s will is greater than His love for His own body. This is credited to us by faith and is a great comfort and peace for us sinners who don’t always desire the will of the Father to be done.

Let us pray. Dear Father, we thank You that in Your divine goodness and mercy, You have seen fit to give us the gift of faith, and through it, forgiveness, life, and salvation. Grant that we be kept from all that despises Your goodness and mercy. Amen.

Wednesday of Lent 3

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. — (Romans 12:2)

The will of the world is contrary to the will of God. God teaches this clearly many places in His Holy Word, such as 1 Corinthians where the wisdom and power of God for the salvation of mankind are contrasted with the wisdom and power of the world. To the world, which includes our fallen reason, the cross is foolish weakness, not the power and glory of God.

It is God's good and gracious will that our minds be transformed through the proclamation of the Law and Gospel so that we love what God loves and hate what God hates. Thankfully, He doesn't leave it up to us to determine what is good, acceptable, and perfect in His eyes or what His will is – praise be to God! His will is revealed in His Word. His will is that we love Him above all things and our neighbors as ourselves. This we fail to do, so God, out of His fatherly, divine goodness provides a Savior to take our place under the Law and keep it for our sake.

The resulting pattern of the Christian life is one of confession and forgiveness created and sustained by rightly distinguishing the Law and the Gospel. Through this, the dull mind of the Christian is sharpened and renewed. It is no great mystery how these things can be. God does not remain silent, and His Word cannot be broken. In this way, the testing and discerning which often lead to confusion and anger are undertaken in joy and freedom because our salvation is in no way tied to them.

Let us pray. Dear Father in Heaven, grant that Your Word renews our minds so that we love what is good, acceptable, and perfect according to Your holy will, and hate all that is contrary to it. Amen.

Thursday of Lent 3

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

In this beautifully comforting passage, the good and gracious will of God is revealed for all the world: God desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. During Lent, what God requires for His will to be accomplished comes into sharp focus. There must be perfection and blood. God is holy and holiness cannot dwell with imperfection. For us to dwell with Him forever, we must be perfect as He is perfect. Because of the wicked disease of sin, this is impossible for us. So, “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoptions as sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5), Christ’s perfection and perfect keeping of the Law wasn’t for His benefit, but for ours. Christ’s righteousness and perfection are credited to us through faith. Now holy for Christ’s sake, we have a future waiting for us in the heavenly kingdom with the Holy Trinity.

The salvation of mankind also requires the shedding of blood. The wrath of God against sin must be poured out. It is for this purpose that Christ is the Lamb of God, pure and holy, who takes away the sin of the world. In His passion and death, Christ drinks the cup of wrath that was ours to drink, and He drinks it dry. Now, the fruit of His sacrifice is given at our altar through His same blood. We have peace with God which surpasses understanding. It is only through the proclamation of this truth and trust in these words that man is saved. This is God’s good and gracious will.

Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to take our place under the law and receive the punishment for our sins. Grant that Your Word, which proclaims this Gospel, not be taken from us. Amen.

Friday of Lent 3

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Galatians 1:3–5)

The will of the Father that we be turned from error's ways and be saved so that we dwell with Him forever also means that we are to be delivered from this present evil age. In this, God teaches two things: First, that this world is not our home and is not where our true treasure and inheritance lie. We're sojourners here who refuse to assimilate and conform to the world.

Secondly, it teaches us that this present age is evil. The age God speaks of through the Apostle are last days we live in even now since the ascension of Christ. It is a great temptation to be swayed by "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches" (Galatians 4:4-5), and consider this world to still be very good as God declared it prior to sin. To succumb to this temptation would be to disbelieve the Word of God. No, it is as St. Paul says above and as the first stanza of the 12th century hymn, "The World is Very Evil," reminds us: "The world is very evil, The times are waxing late; Be sober and keep vigil, The Judge is at the gate; The Judge that comes in mercy, The Judge that comes with might, To terminate the evil, To diadem the right."

In the world to come, we will see clearly that the Lord was not holding back on us, but had provided the very best, most precious life for us through the forgiveness of our sins and in no other way.

Let us pray. Dear Father in heaven, protect us from the great shame and vice of false belief and despair, and grant that our hope and trust be in the deliverance won for us by the all-availing sacrifice of Your Son on the cross. Amen.

Saturday of Lent 3

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (1 Thessalonians 4:3–8)

Many Christians spend many hours pining over very specific details about God's will for their lives that God doesn't provide in His Holy Word. As the well-known hymn says, "Many spend their lives in fretting over trifles and in getting Things that have no solid ground" (LSB 732, stanza 3). This certainly isn't God's desire for His children. There is freedom in decisions such as whether to buy a certain house or not, which college to attend, or which pair of pants to wear. Of course, there is ample direction in the Bible for how Christians are to love their neighbors as themselves. There's even ample guidance in the Table of Duties in the *Small Catechism*, which provides points of meditation for pastors, laity, husbands, wives, children, employees, employers, and nearly every vocation imaginable.

God's word clearly reveals what is virtuous: Loving God and loving the neighbor. With this, mankind is given more than enough for a lifetime of prayer, repentance, struggle, and encouragement without having to delve into those things which are not revealed. It is man's unending game to create works hoped to be pleasing to God, but God is already pleased with us through faith in His Son. Christ is not only our justification and righteousness, He is also our sanctification. In Him, our consciences are freed to strive towards a life in this world lived in service towards those who need our mercy, as our hope is in the life of the world to come through the mercy shown towards us.

Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, grant us peace through the forgiveness of our sins and remind us of the freedom we have to serve our neighbor as You've commanded. Amen.



Jesus feeds the 5,000 as an illustration of the petition “Give us this day our daily bread” from the Lord’s Prayer. The artist of this engraving is the Monogrammist HA. The image is from a 1545 edition of Valentin Babst’s publication of Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. (John 6:14–15, NKJV)

The fourth petition reminds us that our Triune God is the Giver of all good gifts. Our God makes and gives all that is necessary for human life to all people, both to the righteous and to the unrighteous. Today's Gospel reading is an example of Christ's two natures. Our Lord does not imitate the miracle worked through Moses; He transcended Moses. While manna fell from the sky and needed to be baked, our Lord Jesus multiplied loaves and fish to feed thousands of men, women, and children. While the manna stank and bred maggots after only one day, the fragments of loaves were gathered and kept in twelve baskets. Jesus is the Prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18:15, speaking divine words among His brethren!

The people recognized the gifts Christ freely gives. They, like us, too often focused on the gift rather than the Giver. They wanted to make Jesus a king by force. They valued Christ for the temporal gifts which He gave. But they had no real understanding of Christ's true mission. They had no idea what it means for Christ to be King.

Christ is no bread king. While He provides for our physical needs, He came not just to feed the body, but to save both body and soul through His death and resurrection. He spoke of Himself as true Food and Drink, as Living Bread, which we consume by faith through His Holy Word, which is both spirit and life. The people Moses fed with manna died; but he who eats Christ by faith shall live forever.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we thank and praise You for providing our daily bread, just as You did for the five thousand. We ask that You would keep us from an obsession with earthly things, which pass away. Give us hunger and thirst for You, the Living Bread of Heaven, and for Your Word, which is Spirit and life. Amen.

Monday of Lent 4

“Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11)

We do not realize how precarious our lives are. The devil desires to destroy us through war, hardship, plague, and pestilence. The devil desires to burn our homes and destroy our food, so that there isn't even a crumb left. This liar also seeks to corrupt our hearts through the abundance of God's goodly gifts. And yet, our prayers are heard. God gives us daily bread. He gives us clothing. He feeds us. He gives us peace, not only spiritual peace, but also political peace.

Our God does all this for a number of reasons. First, Our God does this out of the same gratuitous goodness which secured our redemption. Second, God blesses us with physical gifts so that we might be open to spiritual mysteries. The Israelites could not believe Moses, because of Pharaoh's oppression (Exodus 6:9). Paul urges us to pray for the government so that we might dwell in peace and godliness (1 Timothy 2). Finally, Christ Jesus, the Prince of Peace, was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus, who ushered in a time of peace and prosperity in the Empire, so that Christ's Gospel might be spread to all nations.

We are men, both body and soul. Carnal peace is necessary for the Gospel to be spread. We require the necessities of this mortal life, so that we might better see the things of the world to come. Both fasting and feasting are important. The one reminds us that we do not live by bread alone. The other reminds us that all good gifts come from God, and that our feasting is a foreshadowing of the wedding feast of the Lamb. May God teach us to realize that He is the Giver of all good things, so that we may rejoice in these gifts with thanksgiving.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. We thank You for our daily bread, and we ask that You, through carnal peace, would spread that peace which surpasses all understanding. Amen.

GIVE US THIS DAY
OUR DAILY BREAD,
AND LET US ALL
BE CLOTHED AND FED.
SAVE US FROM HARDSHIP,
WAR, AND STRIFE;
IN PLAGUE AND FAMINE,
SPARE OUR LIFE,
THAT WE IN HONEST PEACE
MAY LIVE TO CARE
AND GREED
NO ENTRANCE GIVE.

LSB 766:5

Tuesday of Lent 4

“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!” (John 19:28 NKJV,)

The last suffering and indignity which our Lord Jesus endured was not spiritual, but physical. After Christ had quaffed the cup of God’s wrath down to the dregs, there remained one more prophecy to fulfill. Crucifixion is not an easy death. The blood loss from whipping and the strain on His heart and lungs would have taxed the body. This physical torment is less than the spiritual torture which our Lord endured. Because of this physical and spiritual pain, Christ, in His state of humiliation, thirsted. His parched body craved water. But the lack of daily bread was not the only reason for Christ to cry out.

The last prophecy concerning the crucifixion to be fulfilled was Psalm 69:21: “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” The Gospels speak of sour wine, rather than the vinegar of Psalm 69. This was cheap wine from faulty storage. Vinegar or bad wine was mixed with water and other herbs. This sour wine was popular among Romans soldiers and was a standard ration.

This was the sour wine which last passed Jesus’ lips. One of the soldiers took a sponge, dipped it into the vinegar, attached it to a reed of hyssop, and held it up to the mouth of the Savior. This sour wine was there for the soldiers’ refreshment, but it was cruel to offer our thirsty Lord such a drink. Luke also records that the soldiers mocked Him as they offered the sour wine. The Son of God patiently endured all the indignities, all the cruelties that were heaped upon Him. Enduring His physical thirst, Christ now gives to His people living water, which becomes a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4).

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, You thirsted for us to fulfill the Scriptures. Give us living water through Your Word and Sacraments. Let us profitably read Your Passion, so that we might know how this living water was won for us. Amen.

Wednesday of Lent 4

And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” — Matthew 8:20

The foxes have dens, where they may rest in safety. The birds have nests; most of them resorting to the same tree night after night for shelter. Animals in this way reflect humans. We want to have a permanent structure, for protection and warmth. This is part of our daily bread. For without shelter, who would survive the bitter cold of winter? Without a house, how much more difficult would it be to raise a family?

The Son of Man, Jesus, in His state of humiliation, does not have a home. He is burdened with poverty and homelessness. This homelessness plagued Christ throughout His life and even beyond it. He was driven from Bethlehem. He was almost murdered by His fellow Nazarenes. Christ is even buried in a borrowed grave. That is the level to which our Lord deigns to stoop. He, the Maker of all, goes without so that we might become rich. Here, Jesus reminds the scribe and us the cost of discipleship. The scribe boldly confessed that he will go wherever Jesus will go. Jesus soberly told the man that, just as the Master is hated by the devil and the world, so too are His servants. Under certain circumstances poverty, privations, persecutions may, by God's permission, be the lot of Christians.

Christians may, on account of their confession of Christ, be obliged to give up their daily bread. They may even have to give up their lives. But a crown of unfading glory awaits those who are faithful unto death. If we suffer here with Christ, we shall also be glorified with Him.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, the animals have dens and the birds have nests, but You had nowhere to lay Your head. You suffered homelessness here, so that You might prepare a place for us there in the Father's mansions. We thank and praise You for our home, for our warm hearth. We ask You, Lord Jesus, to defend this habitation from all harm. If, by Your gracious will, we lose this home through persecution or disaster, we ask that You would give us a new home wherein to dwell. Amen.

Thursday of Lent 4

Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.” (John 19:11, NKJV)

Thomas Paine said, “Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil.” He was wrong. While sin made civil government necessary (Genesis 9:5–6), government is not evil. In fact, Article 16 of the Augsburg Confession says that civil ordinances are good works of God and that Christians can and should serve in civil offices. In fact, we pray for good government when we say: “Give us this day our daily bread.” Why do we pray for this? Look at the countries where government is not good or non-existent. Think of the pain, hardship, and death caused by civil war, brigandage, and corruption. Our government is not perfect, but look at the wealth and commerce which occur despite its imperfections!

Once again, we see Jesus bereft of His daily bread. Pontius Pilate, the prefect of Judea, was a coward. He did not maintain justice and punish wickedness. Because of the mob, He publicly executed the only Innocent Man on earth and released a murderer. While others bear greater sin than Pilate, his hands were not clean, despite his ablutions.

Pilate’s cowardice and the chief priests’ envy were great sins, to be sure. But God brings forth good from evil, without diminishing the evil nor sulling the good. Pharaoh’s oppression led to the deliverance of Israel’s children. And Pilate’s failure led to the greatest good which the world has ever seen: the reconciliation of God with man.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, You suffered at the hands a cowardly and unjust government. We pray that You would give us better rulers than Pilate. We pray that You would bless and defend the President and Congress of these United States. We ask that You would endow our own governments with discernment, so that they might promote justice and restrain wickedness. We ask this so that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, and that Your Gospel might be spread throughout the world. Amen.

Friday of Lent 4

And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written ... Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. (Luke 4:17, 20, NKJV)

Up until now, we have meditated upon the lack which our Lord suffered in regard to daily bread. However, it behooves us to see how God the Father provided daily bread to Jesus in His time of humiliation so that He might accomplish our salvation.

We take literacy for granted. But scholars suggest that ancient literacy levels were about 10–15 percent, and much lower in rural areas. So, how then could Jesus read? Christ wasn't just literate because He was God. Scripture tells us our Lord's human nature actually learned. Christ's divine knowledge remained quiescent to the extent that His redemptive office made such quiescence necessary.

How did Christ learn? His family wasn't wealthy and couldn't send Him for normal rabbi studies (John 7:15). The Scriptures are silent on the technical points; we know that Mary and Joseph provided this education for Jesus.

Whether they scrimped and saved to pay a tutor or whether Mary's priestly relatives taught Jesus, we do not know. Whatever the case, He learned to read the Scriptures, which was necessary for His prophetic office. Christ preached with authority because He is God. But He learned His letters just like the rest of us. Education is daily bread. It gives us the tools to survive and to thrive in this world. But more importantly, education gives us the means to read the Sacred Scriptures, by which we are made wise unto salvation.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, You grew in knowledge, wisdom, and favor. Bless those who teach, especially those who teach us the Sacred Scriptures. Give our sons the ability to read Holy Writ, so that one day they may be called into Your service as pastors or as breadwinners for their families. Make our daughters wise, so that they might be good wives to their husbands. Above all, teach us contrition and faith through Your Word. Amen.

Saturday of Lent 4

And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance. — Luke 8:2–3

We have heard how our Lord Christ was bereft of daily bread during His humiliation. From His birth on, Christ's life is truly a Passion story. To satisfy His hunger, He ate. To quench His thirst, He drank. When He was weary, He slept. He was plagued with poverty. He was troubled by sorrow and abused with insults. While Christ's life was one of grief and pain, His intensified suffering would come during the last two days of His life, when He undertook His great Passion.

But Christ wasn't wholly bereft of comfort and of daily bread during His state of humiliation. While He dwelt in great poverty, our Heavenly Father provided Jesus with daily bread through the ministrations of women. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna were among the names immortalized in Sacred Scripture. Jesus, by the power of His Gospel, graciously and gratuitously cast out demons and healed sicknesses. While these women could never repay Christ, they showed their love and thanks to Him by supporting Him as He preached and taught. Not only that, but many of the Greek manuscripts point to the fact that the women ministered not only to Jesus, but also to the disciples.

Those who preach the Gospel ought to live from the Gospel. Christ received daily bread from faithful members of the church. The disciples, future preachers and teachers, were supported in the same way. When we financially support our pastors, who come to preach His Gospel, we are serving Christ Himself.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, You supported Your dear Son through the loving ministrations of faithful women. We beseech You, give us cheerful hearts to support the preaching of the Gospel and the faithful administration of the Sacraments with our prayers and with our money. Help us to love those preachers whom You have sent in Your Son's name, so that we might serve them as we would serve Christ. Amen.



“Parable of the Unmerciful Servant” This image illustrates the petition, “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us,” from the Lord’s Prayer. The artist of this engraving is the Monogrammist HA. The image is from a 1545 edition of Valentin Babst’s publication of Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” (John 8:48–51, NKJV)

Sin is our primary problem. All that we suffer at the hands of the world, the devil, and our sinful flesh is because of sin. Death is the very wages of sin. Yet, Jesus promises us that if we cling to His Word, we will never see death. Why? Because His Word of forgiveness cleanses us of the source of death – our sin.

Each and every day it is important for us to acknowledge our sin as we do in the Fifth Petition, so that we may receive the forgiveness that Christ promises us. Cyprian beautifully summarizes how important it is for us to confess our sin and live in this Word of promise daily: “How necessary, providential and expedient it is for us to be reminded that we are sinners and must ask pardon for our sins. And while we ask for God’s forgiveness, our minds retain an awareness of those sins! Lest anyone become complacent and suffer the fate of flattering himself, he is instructed and reminded that he sins daily, while he is ordered to ask pardon for his sins.”

Thus, John advises us in his epistle, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” In his epistle there is a two-fold connection. We must ask pardon for our sins and obtain forgiveness when we ask pardon. Moreover, he said that the Lord is faithful in pardoning sins and loyal to his promise, for he who taught us to ask forgiveness for our trespasses and sins promised paternal mercy and subsequent pardon” (Treatises, On the Lord’s Prayer, 22–23).

Let us pray. Dear Jesus, help us to cling to Your Word of forgiveness that we might never see death. Amen.

Monday of Lent 5

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)

This petition is given so that we might stand before God with a clean conscience. Luther puts this so eloquently in the *Large Catechism*:

“Therefore there is here again great need to call upon God and to pray: Dear Father, forgive us our trespasses. Not as though He did not forgive sin without and even before our prayer (for He has given us the Gospel, in which is pure forgiveness before we prayed or ever thought about it). But this is to the intent that we may recognize and accept such forgiveness. For since the flesh in which we daily live is of such a nature that it neither trusts nor believes God, and is ever active in evil lusts and devices, so that we sin daily in word and deed, by commission and omission, by which the conscience is thrown into unrest, so that it is afraid of the wrath and displeasure of God, and thus loses the comfort and confidence derived from the Gospel; therefore it is ceaselessly necessary that we run hither and obtain consolation to comfort the conscience again... And let no one think that as long as we live here he can reach such a position that he will not need such forgiveness. In short, if God does not forgive without ceasing, we are lost.

“It is therefore the intent of this petition that God would not regard our sins and hold up to us what we daily deserve, but would deal graciously with us, and forgive, as He has promised, and thus grant us a joyful and confident conscience to stand before Him in prayer.” (*Large Catechism*, Lord’s Prayer, 88–92)

Let us pray. Dear Jesus, forgive us our sins, we implore, that they may trouble us no more. Amen.

FORGIVE OUR SINS,
LORD, WE IMPLORE,
THAT THEY MAY
TROUBLE US NO MORE;
WE, TOO, WILL GLADLY
THOSE FORGIVE
WHO HURT US
BY THE WAY THEY LIVE.
HELP US
IN OUR COMMUNITY
TO SERVE
EACH OTHER WILLINGLY.

LSB 766:6

Tuesday of Lent 5

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments. ... There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” One of the criminals who were hanged reviled him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:32-34, 38-43)

If someone had never read a Bible, this may be one of the most shocking scenes that they would encounter. The sinless Son of God hangs between two criminals. He has been mocked, ridiculed, beaten, and nailed to a cross. And yet, even amid all of that, He speaks the words that are at the very heart of who He is and what He came to do: “Father, forgive them ...” and “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

These words summarize this event and the Fifth Petition magnificently: “Jesus, in your dying woes, Even while your life-blood flows, Craving pardon from your foes: Hear us, holy Jesus. Savior, for our pardon sue. When our sins your pangs renew, For we know not what we do: Hear us, holy Jesus. Oh, may we, who mercy need, Be like you in heart and deed, When with wrong our spirits bleed: Hear us, holy Jesus.” (LSB 447:1-3)

Let us pray. Dear Jesus, we ask that You would forgive us and cleanse us from our sins. Amen.

Wednesday of Lent 5—The Annunciation, March 25

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:1–5)

This passage teaches us the blessings of confessing our sin and the danger or consequences of not confessing it. Luther explains this danger of not confessing: First, for one who keeps silent (that is, who does not confess), his bones quickly grow old, that is, his powers in which he formerly stood in good things are always reduced more and more by sins. For sin which is not washed away by repentance soon draws to another sin by its own weight (AE 10:147).

How wretched is the man who does not confess his sin! And yet the man who does confess his sin receives the forgiveness of sins. In humility and faith, a Christian confesses his sin and receives from the Lord blessing – forgiveness, life, and salvation.

In the *Small Catechism*, we confess the meaning of the Fifth Petition with these words, which is the very thing the Psalmist is confessing: We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So, we, too, will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

Let us pray. Dear Jesus, thank You for the blessing of the forgiveness of sins! Thank You for not counting our iniquity against us and giving us faith to receive Your Word of promise. Amen.

Thursday of Lent 5

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. (Matthew 18:23–27)

This parable is long, so we are going to split it up over two days. Today, we are going to focus on the king’s forgiveness of the servant’s debts. The parable paints a grim picture of our sins. Our sins are more numerous than the sand on the seashore. Our reading today pictures our sins against God as a debt of money so large that we could never hope to repay it—no matter how many lifetimes we had to try and repay it. And then there is the shocking news: that debt which is far greater than anything we could imagine is paid in full by God so that we are now completely forgiven.

The *Small Catechism* explains how paying off our debts took place: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death ... There is no sin that is not paid for in full, because there was nothing lacking in the perfection of Christ who was crucified. Just as there is no end to His righteousness, so too there can be no end to the forgiveness that was won with the shedding of His blood.

Let us pray. Dear Jesus, thank You for paying all of our debts with Your holy, precious blood, and with Your innocent suffering and death. Amen.

Friday of Lent 5

But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.' " (Matthew 18:28–35)

This second half of the parable teaches us that if we refuse to forgive others, then we ourselves prove that we have rejected God's forgiveness. Those who have received the forgiveness of God by faith alone will forgive others. That doesn't mean that forgiving others will come easily – it just means that it will eventually come. Johann Michael Reu summarizes the implications of the 5th petition and this parable this way: "Because God forgives us all the sins we have committed against Him, we thankfully promise two things: 1. That we will heartily forgive those who have sinned against us; 2. That we will prove our forgiving spirit by doing good wherever we can to such as may sin against us. Therefore, if we are to pray this Fifth Petition right, we must have: 1. A humble heart that acknowledges its great debt of sin against God; 2. A believing heart that relies on God's grace; 3. A forgiving heart that is always ready to forgive others" (*An Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism*, 71).

Let us pray. Dear Jesus, help us to forgive others as You have forgiven us. Amen.

Saturday of Lent 5

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:11–15 NKJV)

As we prepare to enter Holy Week, let us take some time to meditate on the source of our forgiveness – the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because He bore our iniquity and the iniquity of the whole world that we can be forgiven. He took our sin, our guilt, our shame upon Himself, that we might be forgiven. The forgiveness that Christ won for us on the cross is given to us through His Word and Sacrament that we might receive that forgiveness here and now.

Let us pray. Dear Jesus, we thank You that through Your suffering and death You obtained our eternal redemption and that You give us that forgiveness through Your Word and Sacraments. Amen.

“What punishment so strange is suffered yonder!
The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander;
The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him,
Who would not know Him.

The sinless Son of God must die in sadness;
The sinful child of man may live in gladness;
Man forfeited his life and is acquitted;
God is committed” (*LSB* 439:4-5).



“Temptation of Jesus” Jesus is tempted by Satan in the wilderness. An illustration of the petition “Lead us not into temptation” from the Lord’s Prayer. The artist of this engraving is the Monogrammist HA. The image is from a 1545 edition of Valentin Babst’s publication of Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

Palm Sunday

*“Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden. ’”
(Matthew 21:5 quoting Zechariah 9:9)*

Today, two readings converge: Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1–9) and Jesus' Passion (Matthew 26:1–27:66). These make us think back to the Second Petition, “Thy kingdom come.” The Father’s kingdom, or reign, came to us when Jesus became flesh, when He came to Jerusalem, and to the cross.

The final two petitions of the Lord’s Prayer are inherent in the reign of Christ. Jesus came to put sins away. And yet He’s not just a king on the defense, who problem-solves after the fact. Jesus is proactive, and if He loves forgiving sins, He also loves preventing sins. He taught His Church to pray, “And lead us not into temptation.”

Inherent in Christ’s reign is also the defeat of a rival kingdom: the devil’s. As the sons of Israel slaved under Pharaoh, so also we slaved in the devil’s realm. But no more! Through Jesus, the Father, “has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13–14). The Father delivers us from the Evil One. We live in the world, whose prince is the devil, and thus Jesus taught his Church to pray continually, “But deliver us from evil.”

The Father answers these petitions now. At the last, “The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace … Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:41–43).

Let us pray. Father, You have delivered us from the devil’s authority and have brought us into the kingdom of Your Son. Within your kingdom, prevent us from sinning against You, and continually rescue us from the Evil One. Amen.

Monday in Holy Week

“And lead us not into temptation.” (Matthew 6:13)

What exactly are we asking in this petition? Is our heavenly Father the sort who would lead us into temptation? Perish the thought! The Apostle James writes, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one” (James 1:13). With these verses in mind, Luther begins his explanation of the Sixth Petition in the *Small Catechism*, “God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us ...” And yet Jesus could easily have taught us to pray, “Protect us from temptation.” Why say, “And do not lead us into temptation”?

The psalms are helpful in understanding this. In the psalms, the saints constantly beg the Lord not to do things that they know He would never do: “Do not deliver the soul of your dove to the wild beasts; do not forget the life of your poor forever” (Psalm 74:19). “Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation” (Psalm 27:9). “Let me not wander from your commandments” (Psalm 119:10).

The saints pray these things because even though we know who our God is, these things seem to happen. In view of our sins we must also acknowledge we deserve to be forgotten, forsaken, and led into temptation.

Yet in praying these things, we come to realize that no matter how things seem, God would never treat us this way. Our Father in heaven would not take up his dear children in His arms, carry them into temptation, and dump them there! In the Sixth Petition, Jesus teaches us to laugh at such a ridiculous image, and in so doing he strengthens our faith. He turns our attention away from how things seem toward who God is. Our God is a bulwark, a fortress, a refuge. Thus, we do find ourselves praying in this petition that God would guard and keep us. And we pray it in faith, knowing the truth about our Father: what he would do, and what he would never do.

Let us pray. O Lord, who for our great good gave us Your holy Law, do not lead us astray from Your commandments. Amen.

LEAD NOT INTO
TEMPTATION, LORD,
WHERE OUR GRIM FOE
AND ALL HIS HORDE
WOULD VEX OUR SOULS
ON EV'RY HAND.
HELP US RESIST,
HELP US TO STAND
FIRM IN THE FAITH,
A MIGHTY HOST,
THROUGH COMFORT
OF THE HOLY GHOST.

LSB 766:7

Tuesday in Holy Week

“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)

The words weak and sick are the same word in Greek. Context determines which English word to use in translation. Sometimes it's obvious: “Heal the sick” (Luke 10:9). Other times, as in the above, it could go either way, including both weakness and sickness. “Ours is a leprous flesh,” Luther writes in the *Large Catechism* (V,77), “which feels nothing although it rages with disease and gnaws away at itself.” He writes as St. Paul, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:24). We want to walk in God's commandments. Yet we know that our willpower is far from sufficient for accomplishing that. How shall we bear temptation? In Christ. Jesus is the one “who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). And, “because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).

Jesus does not tell us to try harder. He says watch, which starts with and flows from watching the Scriptures. In the Scriptures, we learn that we're weak, not strong, sick, not healthy, and thus we do not become overconfident about our abilities. We also learn common temptations and know what to guard against. “And pray.” Just as a sick man lying in bed doesn't have the strength to get up and help himself, but rather calls upon another to help him, so also, we in our weakness call upon Christ. He's the one who went head-to-head with the Tempter and conquered in the fight. He is able and willing to help the tempted, giving the way of escape so that you endure. He paved a way for Joseph to evade Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:12). The Father will likewise bear you through and out of temptation as certainly as Jesus taught us to pray the Sixth Petition.

Let us pray. Lead not into temptation, Lord, Where our grim foe and all his horde Would vex our souls on ev'ry hand. Help us resist, help us to stand Firm in the faith, a mighty host, Through comfort of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Wednesday in Holy Week

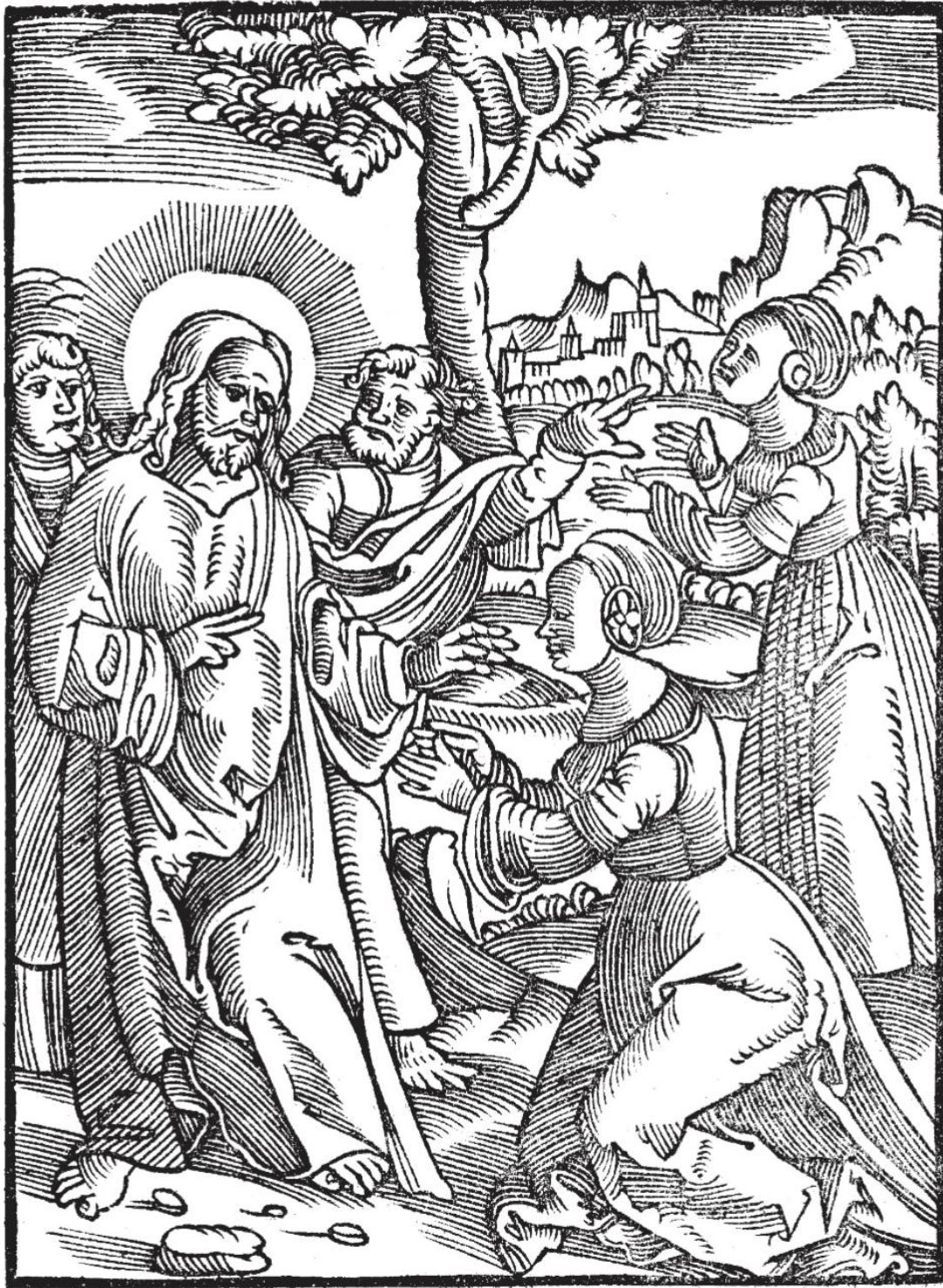
“But deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13)

Wednesday of Holy Week is traditionally the day the Church has understood to be when Judas went to the chief priests and asked, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” (Matthew 26:15). The serpent’s offspring paid thirty pieces of silver, and their father, the devil, got an inside man. The Seventh Petition is a prayer against the devil. The Greek says, “But deliver us from the Evil One,” as Luther notes in the *Large Catechism*. Evil is not an abstract concept, a philosophical lack of goodness, or a nebulous dark force. Evil is an angel, whom God had created good. He corrupted himself with his own sin, fell from heaven, and now prowls around the earth seeking someone to devour.

The Evil One is called “the Devil” (Matthew 4:1), which means “Slanderer,” because he tells you lies about God. The Evil One is called “the Tempter” (Matthew 4:3), because he constantly tries to make you sin. And the Evil One is called “Satan” (Matthew 4:10), which means “Accuser,” because he seeks your everlasting condemnation. There’s nothing abstract about that. There’s also nothing abstract about the deliverance. We have a concrete enemy, and our Father in heaven rescues us in a concrete way: he has sent his Son in the flesh.

The Evil One slandered Jesus, tempted him, accused him. The devil wrought all the harm he could against Christ. And Jesus bore it all. In the end, the devil’s slander proved false, his temptations powerless, his accusations unfounded. And we’ll hear in the coming days exactly how, through Christ, our Father delivered us from the Evil One.

Let us pray. From evil, Lord, deliver us; The times and days are perilous. Redeem us from eternal death, And, when we yield our dying breath, Console us, grant us calm release, And take our souls to You in peace. Amen.



Jesus heals the daughter of the Canaanite woman due to her faith. This image illustrates the petition “Deliver us from evil” from the Lord’s Prayer. The artist of this engraving is the Monogrammist HA. The image is from a 1545 edition of Valentin Babst’s publication of Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

Maundy Thursday

“Then after [Judas] had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, ‘What you are going to do, do quickly.’ ... So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. When he had gone out, Jesus said ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him’” (John 13:27, 30–31)

The Evil One thought his plot was going perfectly. He did not have any demons eavesdropping when Jesus said, not once, but three times, “The Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death” (Matthew 20:18, 16:21, 17:22–23). Jesus said, “I must die.” Did it not strike the devil that, in spite of his evil intentions, when he said, “Jesus must die” he was really confessing God’s will and not his own?

“But deliver us from the Evil One,” we pray. And with great regularity our heavenly Father begins answering that prayer by letting the devil go right on doing what he’s doing and telling him to do it quickly. We prayed, “Thy will be done” back in the Third Petition. We shouldn’t expect to see any other will being done when we get to the Seventh.

And what is Jesus doing while the Evil One stirs up the city, rouses the chief priests, marshals the mob? Jesus reclines at table with his disciples, promises the Holy Spirit (John 14:16), and says that He has overcome the world (John 16:33). He speaks not of His coming death, but of His coming glorification. He sings a hymn (Mark 14:26) and prays (John 17).

In short, Jesus shows us the repose of faith. We need not fear the Evil One. Jesus wasn’t afraid of him, and He hadn’t even defeated him yet. How much more can we rest secure, reclining at table, eating the Holy Supper, singing hymns, and praying, now that the Father has delivered us from the Evil One! So let the devil rave. He’ll soon find he’s only positioned his head more vulnerably on the crushing block.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, make us faithful recipients of Your Son’s Body and Blood. Give us peace and confidence as the devil schemes, and deliver us from the Evil One. Amen.

Good Friday

“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.” — John 17:15

Jesus prayed these words right before He went to the Garden of Gethsemane. That means it was immediately after He prayed these words He took part in the Father’s answer to this prayer. The Father and the Son let us stay in the world and yet remain protected from this world’s prince.

The Evil One was heedless of the long-standing curse against him as he unhinged his serpent jaws and struck at Jesus with fangs: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15). Jesus brought down his foot on the serpent’s open mouth, bearing the deadly venom and smashing the devil’s head. By His death He forgave our sins, lifted our curse by becoming a curse for us, and rescued us from the Evil One.

Let us pray. O Jesus, as You once ransomed us, thereby rescuing us from the devil, so continue to deliver us from all harm. Amen.



“God in pity saw man fallen,
Shamed and sunk in misery,
When he fell on death by tasting
Fruit of the forbidden tree;
Then another tree was chosen
Which the world from death should free.

Thus the scheme of our salvation
Was of old in order laid,
That the manifold deceiver’s
Art by art might be outweighed,
And the lure the foe put forward
Into means of healing made.

Therefore when the appointed fullness
Of the holy time was come,
He was sent, who maketh all things,
Forth from God’s eternal home;
Thus he came to earth, incarnate,
Offspring of a maiden’s womb.

Thou alone wast counted worthy
This world’s ransom to uphold;
For a shipwrecked race preparing
Harbour, like the Ark of old;
With the sacred Blood anointed
From the smitten Lamb that rolled.”

(*Good Friday Exeter Book*, “Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle”,
stanzas 2–4, 10)

FROM EVIL,
LORD, DELIVER US;
THE TIMES AND DAYS
ARE PERILOUS.
REDEEM US
FROM ETERNAL DEATH,
AND, WHEN WE YIELD
OUR DYING BREATH,
CONSOLE US,
GRANT US CALM RELEASE,
AND TAKE OUR SOULS
TO YOU IN PEACE.

LSB 766:8

The Vigil of the Resurrection of our Lord

“On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.” (Luke 23:56)

By His glorious death on the cross, Jesus delivered us from the Evil One. Even though sorrow and burial and mourning followed Jesus’ death, there also followed a blessed rest such as the world had not experienced after the fall. The devil has been overthrown, and the saints can rest in peace.

Jesus himself kept the Sabbath, resting from His labors like an exhausted champion returning victorious from combat against His enemy. “It is finished,” He said, bowed His head, and slept the sleep of death.

We know what happens tomorrow, and thus we can see today for what it is. It is the day on which our Savior let his weapons lie still, for there was no enemy to strike down. It is the day on which the watchman kept his eyes closed, for the dragon was slain, the gates of the city were open, and the people were free. When the knight can take a Sabbath, then all the people can rest securely.

The Evil One still prowls around, even on this Sabbath. We can see how concerned we ought to be about this when we see how concerned Jesus is. He lies wrapped in the sheets, sleeping in. The devil is stripped of his weapons and mortally wounded. He is in the throes of death. He can scowl and scream, but he’s powerless. There’s no need to get up and strike him a second blow. The first one is sufficient, and so we can rest with Jesus in His Sabbath.

Such Sabbath follows the answer to prayer. And because the Father will certainly grant the petitions which his Son has taught us to pray, this rest is ours as soon as the prayer is prayed, regardless of how much time passes before we see the answer. By his Passion, Jesus has taught us that the Father hears our prayers and keeps his promises. Thus, we can pray, “but deliver us from the Evil One,” say, “Amen,” pull the sheets over our heads, and rest in peace.

Heavenly Father, as Your Son rested on the Sabbath after defeating the devil, so make us partakers of His rest, that we would fear no evil. Amen.

The Resurrection of our Lord

“For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” (Mark 16:6–7)

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen. Today at church you may hear this or some other version of it. That word “amen” is the great word of faith. It is a word that confesses trust in what was just said. That’s why we end our prayers with it. That’s why we end the Lord’s Prayer with it.

Since Christ has been raised from the dead, He is now exalted over all things. The kingdom is His, the power is His, and the glory is His. At the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, we are confessing the truth that the Triune God reigns, and in particular this day we confess with great joys and Alleluias that Christ Jesus lives and reigns to all eternity.

In the Gospel lesson for today, St. Mark points out the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. He also points out how Jesus keeps His Word “just as He told you.” By bringing in Peter and the disciples he is also bringing in the gospel they will preach through which many will believe in Christ. This is the good news we hear in our churches and celebrate with family and friends today.

To all of this we say, “Amen”. That is to say “yes, yes, it shall be so”. Our Father has commanded us to pray in this way. He has promised to hear us. Our Father has been faithful in sending His only-begotten Son to redeem us and has raised Him from the dead. He is faithful. So, pray. Ask. Receive. The Father has given His Son. He will certainly answer your prayers.

Dear Father, thank You for the resurrection of Jesus. Help this good news bring greater trust in You as I pray in accord with Your command and promise. Amen.

AMEN, THAT IS,
SO SHALL IT BE.
MAKE STRONG
OUR FAITH IN YOU,
THAT WE MAY DOUBT NOT
BUT WITH TRUST BELIEVE
THAT WHAT WE ASK
WE SHALL RECEIVE.
THUS IN YOUR NAME
AND AT YOUR WORD
WE SAY,
“AMEN. O HEAR US, LORD.”

LSB 766:9



www.steadfastlutherans.org