



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

Adopted from *The Lutheran Service Book* (p. 294)

January 31, 2020 A.D. – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

This brief service is intended as a simple form of daily prayer for individuals and families. When more than one person is present, the psalm and responses may be spoken responsively, with one person reading the words in regular type and the others responding with the words in bold type. The Creed and Prayers that are in bold type are to be said by all.

The sign of the cross ✝ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Psalm

From Psalm 32

Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

Blessèd is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

Blessèd is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

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.

Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

For those with access to the internet, you may now play today’s worship video, located on Bethany’s website (www.bethanycr.org) under the Worship Resources tab and then continue with the Apostles’ Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Mark 1:21-28)

^{1:21}They went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath [Jesus] entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²²And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying

out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Sermon – † *Stop the Wrecks* † (A copy is included at the end of this service.)

Athanasian Creed

Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic¹ faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally. And the catholic faith is this, **that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance. For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another. But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.**

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit: the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated; the Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal.

And yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal, just as there are not three Uncreated or three Infinites, but one Uncreated and one Infinite.

In the same way, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; and yet there are not three Almightyies, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God.

So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord; and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so also are we prohibited by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords.

The Father is not made nor created nor begotten by anyone. The Son is neither made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone.

The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.

Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal, so that in all things, as has been stated above, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.

Therefore, whoever desires to be saved must think thus about the Trinity.

But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.

¹ In the Athanasian Creed “catholic” refers to the universal faith or the faith that one need to believe to be considered a Christian, not the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age: perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity.

Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ: one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.

And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire.²

This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

The Lord's Prayer



**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and
ever. Amen.**

Bethany's Prayer List

Thanksgiving

- Owen (son of Clark and Maggie Anderson) - born 1/22

Entrusting into God's Care

- Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
- The homeless & the unemployed
- Dee Rose - hospice care at Meth-Wick nursing facility
- Workers in the Church, here at Bethany and throughout the world

² This statement does not teach justification by works. Rather, remembering John 6:28-29, (*Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."*), we see that "to do good" is to believe in Jesus.

Healing

- Linda Patten - hip replacement on 2/4
- Brenda Heims - surgery on 2/4
- Elaine Cook - surgery on 2/10
- Jill (sister of Bridget Rinderknecht) - health issues
- Faye Sieck - health issues
- Gerard - COVID-19
- Ron, Linda, Amanda (relatives of Heitlands) - COVID-19
- Dan (nephew of Bonnie Bubke) - recovering after surgery
- Karen (relative of Carol Grimminger) - cancer
- Cindy (mother of Amy Diers) - recovering after surgery
- Jim (uncle of Nate Ackermann) - hospitalization
- Kent Zenor - recovering after eye surgery
- Dave Johnson - healing
- Pat Krekeler - recovering after hospitalization
- Aaron Moffett - recovering after eye surgery
- Dave Christian - recovering after surgery
- Kris Dunn - health issues

Shut-Ins

- Del Block

Mourning

- Loved ones of Ann Meyer - mourning her death on 1/23
- Rick Heller - mourning the death of mother, Ramona on 1/14
- Leisa Knudson - mourning the death of father, Bud, on 12/17
- Del Block - mourning the death of wife, Dee, on 12/16

Serving Our Country

- Tailor & Charlie (grandsons of Kim Neuhaus) - serving in U.S. Armed Forces
- Harrison (son of Rob & Faye Sieck)- serving in U.S. Armed Forces

Collect of the Day

Let us pray... Almighty God, You know we live in the midst of so many dangers that in our frailty we cannot stand upright. Grant strength and protection to support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Together we pray... **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



✠ *Stop the Wrecks* ✠

About a year ago, my family was driving down Mt. Vernon Rd. on our way to Newbo to do some shopping. As my wife slowed down to make the turn on to 3rd St, we all heard a loud crash as our car suddenly lurched forward. Someone had just “rear ended” us. Getting out of the car to check on things, we also called the police to report the accident. And while don’t remember exactly what the other driver told the police officer, it was something like, “I just wasn’t paying attention.”

Now thankfully, no one was hurt. And I mean that in the most literal way because according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, also known as NHTSA, 1,730 drivers, 605 passengers, 400 pedestrians, and 77 cyclists were killed by distracted drivers in 2018. NHTSA says that distracted driving is anything that takes your focus away from driving, but by far the most dangerous form of this is texting on your phone while driving. They report that on average, a single text while driving is like driving blindfolded for 5 seconds. You simply cannot drive distracted without putting yourself and others at serious risk. However, as dangerous as it is to drive distracted, a different kind of text – the text from our Gospel reading today – helps show us that it is even more dangerous to be distracted away from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For when this happens, we risk so much more than just this physical life here and now.

Looking at the Gospel lesson from Mark, we’re early into Jesus’ ministry when we read of Him going to Capernaum. Capernaum, or the “Village of Nahum”, was a fishing village located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee and was likely the home of Peter, Andrew, James and John. And there in the town of Capernaum, Jesus goes into the local synagogue where the Jews would worship, and begins to teach the people God’s Word.

Not surprising, the people are amazed by what Jesus is saying. What is surprising however, is that in the synagogue there is a man who is under the power of an unclean spirit. Now, when we come across demons and evil spirits in the Bible, it usually causes a little bit of concern. First, those who might deny the existence of a spiritual world may wonder if this was just some sort of misunderstanding. One that could have been cleared up with modern day science or psychology. (Maybe the man was having seizures or had some sort of identity disorder). Or those who do believe in the presence of angels and demons, as the Bible tells us we should, may wonder why God would allow something like this to happen in the first place, or be worried if they or their loved ones are in danger of the same fate.

Regardless of the concern, Mark tells us our Lord wins this battle. The devil and the demons are to be taken seriously, but they have defeated and must submit to our Lord and Savior.

Jesus tells the unclean spirit to, “*Be silent and come out of him!*” and there is no arguing – the spirit came out of the man.

Christians have looked at these events that took place in the Capernaum synagogue for centuries and found great comfort in the power of our Lord Jesus. It’s wonderful to know that the wind and the waves will listen to Jesus, but to see that even our spiritual enemies must submit to the One who loves and cares for us so much is a source of immense comfort in difficult times. And yet, I can’t help but to feel that if we read our Gospel lesson this morning and only pay attention to the miracle of Jesus driving out this spirit, then we may be getting a little distracted. Taking our eyes off the road, if you will, as we fly down the highway.

Because remember, when Jesus tells the unclean spirit to come out of the man he is tormenting, Jesus also tells the spirit to be silent. He tells the spirit not to say anything about what is happening. Jesus does this quite often in the Gospels. He’ll perform a miracle and tell people not to say anything about it. We call this the *Messianic Secret* – the idea that Jesus acts as the Son of God or does a miracle and then tells those who benefit from it, to be quiet! We see this when Jesus raises Jairus’ (Jā - ī’ - rəs) daughter from the dead in Mark 5, as well as when Jesus heals the deaf man in Mark 7. People often wonder why Jesus did this. But if we look at Jesus feeding the 5000 in John 6, we begin to see that just looking at the miracles of Jesus might cause us to lose our focus on what’s really important.

You see, after Jesus feeds the 5000, we read in John 6 that the crowd was ready to take Jesus by force and make Him their king! Being made a king sounds pretty good, but remember, Jesus did not come to be made an earthly king. He came to suffer and die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. That was His purpose. But when people saw Jesus performing miracles, and very often when people hear about them today, they don’t want Jesus on the cross - they want Him healing people, feeding people, driving out demons and turning water into wine. And so there is always a danger that the miracles of Jesus can cause us to lose our focus on what is really important about Jesus. Just looking at the miracles can distract us from the road to our salvation through faith in Christ.

Just go back to our text, and see if you can think of the first thing that Jesus did when he entered the synagogue. So often when we hear about Jesus healing the man with unclean spirit, we forget that Jesus went there in the first place to teach people God’s Word! Jesus doesn’t focus on the miracles, He focuses on proclaiming the Word of the Lord. We see this when He begins His ministry in Mark 1:14 – when He enters Galilee, Mark tells us that Jesus was “*proclaiming the Gospel of God*”. Later in Mark 1:38, Jesus says, “*Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out*”! Jesus’ ministry wasn’t just to perform miracles. If that’s what we think, we’ve lost our focus. Rather His ministry was first and foremost about proclaiming the Good News that the Kingdom of God is here with Him and that salvation is through faith in Him alone.

Today, there are a lot of things that can distract us away from our Lord and the reason for His coming into this world, dying, and rising again. The devil, the world, and even our own sinful natures all try to distract us. And should they succeed in luring us away from our Savior, our lives and eternal salvation will most certainly be wrecked. But by the Spirit’s power, working through the Word and Sacraments, when we stay focused on Christ and His Word we will not only have life, but we will have it abundantly and forever. Amen.

