



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

August 22, 2021 A.D. – 13th Sunday after Pentecost

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.

The Introit

From Psalm 102

O LORD, I love the habitation of your house
and the place where your glory dwells.

Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity,
and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

Prove me, O LORD, and try me;
test my heart and my mind.

I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O LORD,
proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

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 7:1-13

¹When the Pharisees gathered to [Jesus], with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ²they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) ⁵And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

“This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
⁷in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

⁸You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

⁹And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ ¹¹But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban’ (that is, given to God)— ¹²then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

Sermon – † *Wash Behind Your Ears* † (A copy is included at the end of this service.)

Apostles’ Creed

☩ I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body; And the life † everlasting. Amen.

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

Entrusting into God’s Care

- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
- The homeless & the unemployed
- Workers in the Church, at Bethany and throughout the World

Healing

- Bonnie Bubke - recovering after oral surgery
- Erma (mother of Rita Tiedt) - recovering at care center
- Velma Ziesemer - recovering after surgery
- Crysten (wife of Daniel Sanchez, Camp IODISECA) - recovering after accident
- Ed Schumacher - shoulder injury
- Kim Neuhaus - recovering after surgery
- Nancy Owens - recovery after surgery
- Dale Stonewall - recovering at home after surgery
- Faye Sieck - health issues

Shut-Ins

- Del Block - The Gardens

Mourning

- Carl (brother of Leonard Tiedt) - died 8/19
- Mavis (aunt of Duane Pfeffer) - died 8/3
- Barb (sister of Linda Patten) - died 7/16
- Tamara (aunt of Erin Heller & Matt Rinderknecht) - died 7/9

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 and merciful God, defend Your Church from all false teaching and error that Your faithful people may confess You to be the only true God and rejoice in Your good gifts of life and salvation; 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

Lord Jesus Christ, before whom all in heaven and earth shall bow, grant courage that Your children may confess Your saving name in the face of any opposition from a world hostile to the Gospel. Help them to remember Your faithful people who sacrificed much and even faced death rather than dishonor You when called upon to deny the faith. By Your Spirit, strengthen them to be faithful and to confess You boldly, knowing that You will confess Your own before the Father in heaven, with whom You and the Holy Spirit live and reign, 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.



✠ *Wash Behind Your Ears* ✠

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Ever since COVID-19 showed up on the scene in March of last year, it seems that many of us have paid a lot more attention to how clean things are. To keep us healthy and clean things have changed. Hand sanitizer and hand sanitizing stations seem to be everywhere. In some places things are wiped down not once a day, but multiple times a day. There are devices to open doors with our feet. And new technologies are being developed all of the time to keep us clean and healthy. All of this pales in importance, however, when we look at having a clean heart.

Some time ago, a Hollywood celebrity, had the chance to spend an afternoon with the president of Taiwan. Surprisingly, the topic this celebrity wanted to pursue was the treatment of dogs in Taiwan. Now the humane treatment of animals is certainly important, but if you had one chance to speak to the president of a country, would *that* be the issue you'd focus on?

The contrast between Jesus' reception at the end of Mark 6 and His encounter with the Pharisees and scribes in our passage to open chapter 7 is remarkable. The contagious excitement about a Jesus who heals all who come to Him is replaced with a concern about the ritual cleanness of His disciples' hands. "Now when the Pharisees gathered to Him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of His disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed... And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, 'Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?'" (vs. 1-2, 5).

If you had the opportunity for a private audience with Jesus, would you argue about the proper way to wash up before a meal? It may even be that this was not a matter of the disciples not washing their hands at all, but of not washing their hands thoroughly enough to meet the Pharisees' own standard. Jesus' opponents seem to have completely lost sight of what really matters before God. The way they ask their question suggests that the root of the problem is that they've begun to put human concerns before and above what's important in God's eyes. Our initial sympathy with the Pharisees' concern over clean hands at the table goes right down the drain when we begin to see the real problem in all its seriousness.

When I was a child, my parents would always ask me after bath time if I "washed behind my ears". I always thought this was a rather strange question – why is behind my ears more important than any other place you have to wash? But when I became a father and found myself asking, "did you wash behind your ears", I realized that this was to make sure a child didn't just

wash the easy-to-reach, obvious places like their hands or arm. If a child really wants to be declared “clean,” they have to make sure they “wash behind their ears”.

Our Lord reminds His questioners that they still need to learn this lesson. Centuries before, through His prophet Isaiah, the Lord had tried to teach Israel to check for true cleanliness by considering their hearts: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (vs. 6-7).

We may make the same mistake they were making if we miss the very important way Jesus introduces this quote from Isaiah. “*Well did the prophet Isaiah prophesy of you,*” Jesus says. Right after this, Jesus will speak of the Commandments God gave through Moses and how these ancient words of God should be shaping the lives and thoughts of His hearers. The Pharisees are more concerned about whether people's hands are clean than whether their bodies have been cleansed of disease by the words of Jesus and whether their hearts have been filled with the peace Jesus is proclaiming. That's exactly the sort of thing that happens when we stop asking what's important to God.

We've all heard the expression “lip service,” and you probably know what it means. But did you know that expression was inspired by this passage in the Gospels and by the passage from Isaiah that Jesus quotes here? No one is impressed by outward professions that are completely unsupported by attitude and action. The Lord's words, both in Isaiah and in Mark, may suggest another image, however, when He speaks of people's hearts. Here we might think of close lips and distant hearts. Have you ever had the uncomfortable or frustrating experience of someone whom you know inwardly opposes you, but nevertheless greets you warmly - even with a handshake or an embrace? We immediately think of the example of the kiss of Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane. Was there ever a case of greater separation between lips and a heart?

But we'd better not answer too quickly. If Isaiah's words are prophesied about us, and if Jesus' warnings speak to us, we had better examine our own lips and hearts and heads and hands to see how we're doing. How have we lost sight of what's really important? What traditions of men and women, what traditions of our own, have we let crowd out God's Word from its proper place, as the Word that demands our total obedience? In what ways have we ceased to care about the hearts of those around us and taken, instead, to examining the cleanliness of their hands?

The wrongness of the Pharisees approach is shown in the behavior that results in replacing God's Word with man's. They listened to human traditions that established themselves at the cost of God's Word, resulting in a life lived only for themselves.

Our Lord points to one of our most important relationships to make this clear: “*He said to them, You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban’ (that is, given to God) - then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do*” (vs. 9-13).

When our own voices and no others guide us, when our hearts are filled with love of self and are far from God, even those dearest to us will suffer the consequences. Instead of gratitude, honor, obedience, and love toward those who have sacrificed for us, we look for excuses and loopholes so that we can be free of the responsibility of caring for others. Though the exact details of this example may be hard for us to understand today, Jesus concluding by saying “and many such things” shows that this is merely one example among many of what life turned in upon itself looks like. The contrast between images and definitions of marriage in our world today and the

picture of marriage that Paul gives us in Ephesians 5 is just one more example. It's a long list. Our hands may be clean, but our hearts can be filthy.

Human traditions, and even healthy habits, may set standards for outward cleanliness, but they can never make us clean within. And Jesus points out the true source of the Pharisees' uncleanness because He wants to make them clean. This is clearly demonstrated in the casting out of the unclean spirit and the compassion Jesus shows the crowds in the accounts that follow in Mark 7. Jesus draws our attention away from human traditions, which cannot save us, to focus on God's Word, which can and does. God's Word, spoken to us and for us, exposes the "dirt behind our ears," the "dirt" we've been hiding in the hope no one would see, the "dirt" that gets in our eyes and blinds us to the needs of those around us, the "dirt" that clogs our hearts and shuts them down, the "dirt" that kills. But the point of all this is not so God can say, "Look, you're dirty!" Rather, our Lord calls us by Word to a saving faith and trust in Him. And with that faith, we hear Him declare us clean – declare us forgiven – through His suffering, death, and resurrection. Amen.

