



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

September 26, 2021 A.D. – 18th 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.

Psalm

(Psalm 104:27-35)

These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.

When you give it to them, they gather it up;

when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

When you hide your face, they are dismayed;

when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

**May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works,
who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke!**

I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more!

Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!

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 9:38-50)

³⁸John said to [Jesus], "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." ³⁹But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For the one who is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

⁴²"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. ⁴³And if your

hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ ⁴⁹For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Sermon † *Serious Sin* † (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

Thanksgiving

- Spencer (son of Miranda Kress) - baptized today
- Bonnie Bubke - recovering after oral surgery
- Kim Neuhaus - recovering after surgery

Entrusting into God’s Care

- Richard (relative of Carol Grimminger) - leukemia
- 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

- Carol Edwards - recovering after hospitalization
- Oliver (nephew of Elms) - NICU
- Austin (grandson of Fran Struck) - terminal cancer
- Dipak (friend of Greg Dunn) - hospitalization
- Ed Schumacher - shoulder injury
- Dale Stonewall - recovering at home after surgery
- Faye Sieck - health issues

Shut-Ins

- Melba Davison - Terrace Glen Village, Marion

Mourning

- Ray (father of Deb Mills) - died 9/4
- Erma (mother of Rita Tiedt) - died 8/30

Serving Our Country

- Ben - serving in the Iowa National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Amy Smith)- serving in the U.S. Navy
- 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... Everlasting Father, source of every blessing, mercifully direct and govern us by Your Holy Spirit that we may complete the works You have prepared for us to do; 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.



✠ *Serious Sin* ✠

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

It seems to me that we don't take sin very seriously these days. As a society, and sometimes even as a church, we tend to look at the idea of sin as somewhat of a relic that we have gotten past. In fact, recently I bought a book (notice I didn't say, "I read a book" because I don't know if I'll actually get around to reading all of it), but I at least bought a book that said in its' opening pages, "*Sin is dead...not the state of sin or our sinful acts. But the word itself and the impact of the word.*" It went on to state that in America, "*A state of sin was replaced with a simpler definition...sin as little vices, easily trivialized...*" As just a real quick and simple example of this, the author (Heather Choate Davis) points to reality television, and I would add social media, where we see so many people running the risk of trading eternal life for 15 minutes of fame by engaging in and glorifying sin.

Jesus however, our Lord and Savior, does not trivialize sin. In fact, He takes it very seriously because He knows the consequences and the damage of sin in our lives and into eternity. This is why Jesus says, "*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea*" (Mark 9:42). Almost every family in biblical times would have a small hand mill to help feed their families. But towns would often have a community mill with huge stones to grind the grain, stones that could only be moved by the strongest of animals. And Jesus says that it would be better to have one of these giant stones, (that would weigh hundreds, if not thousands of pounds) hung around your neck as you were thrown into the sea, than to cause a new believer to sin. That's how seriously Jesus doesn't want you to cause others to sin.

But Jesus also doesn't want you sin yourself. He takes your sin very seriously. He says in our text, "*And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'*" (Mark 9:43-48).

Now to be clear, Jesus is not promoting self-harm or mutilation in any way. Doing so would contradict numerous other Bible passages. Rather, Jesus is calling for His disciples, He is calling for us, to cut out the sinful behavior from our lives. The hand, the foot, and the eye seem

to represent every aspect of our lives. The hand can symbolize what we do, the foot where we go, and the eye what we see. And these gory metaphors that Jesus uses tell us that any half-measures of getting rid of our sin just won't do it.

This forces us to ask some tough questions. Are there things that we do in life that we would be ashamed of if others found out about them? Are there places that our feet take us or that we go where we have a pretty good idea that we will not be able to resist the temptation that awaits us there? Or are there things that we gaze upon or look at that cause us to covet, to be jealous, to feed the greed or the lust in our hearts? These can be uncomfortable questions, but Jesus' teachings tell us that it is better to be uncomfortable in this life, even to be maimed and crippled in this life, than to enter into that place where the worm and the fire never dies in the next.

Of course, when we are confronted with our own sin by these questions, we might think of the rich, young man who knelt before Jesus and asked Him, "*Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?*" (Mark 10:17). After Jesus told him to sell everything he had and give it to the poor, the man went away sad because he had great wealth. He knew, like we all do when we are honest about our sin, how difficult it is to keep God's Law. In fact, after this Jesus said, "*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God*" (Mark 10:25). This caused the disciples to ask the question we all ask when confronted with the Law of God, "*Then who can be saved?*" (Mark 10:26). Even if God wanted us to, who can go to the extreme to sell everything they have? Who can gouge out their eye or cut off their hand to keep from sinning?

Thankfully, God does not leave our salvation depending upon us. He doesn't leave us to deal with our sin ourselves. Out of His great love for each and every one of us, He sent His Son to keep the Law perfectly and yet pay the price for us breaking it all of the time. Jesus gave up everything that He had as the Son of God ruling in Heaven, to come to this earth born in a manger to His humble mother, Mary. And more than losing just an eye, or a hand, or a foot, He gave His life on the cross to pay, not for His own sin (He had none), but to pay for our sin. Yes indeed, God takes sin seriously. So seriously, that He gave His only begotten Son Jesus Christ over into death as a sacrifice for it so that all who trust in Him will be saved. This sacrifice wasn't any half-measure taken by God, but it was Him giving His life for us.

In the book that I mentioned earlier, "Man Turned In on Himself" Choate Davis writes, "With no grasp of sin, what is it people are supposed to think they're being saved from? And how, in our pluralistic society, can we find language that is not divisive, but rather helps create a universal understanding of our common brokenness and the price we all pay for the denial of sin and its consequences."

While we all may wish to move past the idea of sin, we talk about sin in God's church. And this is not so that we can argue about what is right or wrong in God's eyes. It is not some great conspiracy to control people's actions or gain power and influence. And it is certainly not so that we may point out the sin of others and pretend that we are any better. Rather we talk about sin so that we and all people might know and believe what St. Paul says in his letter to the Christians in Rome, "...*there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...*" Amen.

