



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

September 18, 2022 A.D.

15th 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 other parts of the service 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 119

Your testimonies are righteous forever;
give me understanding that I may live.

Righteous are you, O LORD,
and right are your just decrees.

You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness
and in all faithfulness.

My zeal consumes me,
because my foes forget your words.

Your promise is well tried,
and your servant loves it.

Your righteousness is righteous forever,
and your law is true.

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 Nicene Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Luke 16:1-15)

¹[Jesus] also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. ²And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' ³And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.' ⁵So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and

sit down quickly and write fifty.’ ⁷Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ ⁸The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

¹⁰“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

¹⁴The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. ¹⁵And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

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

The Nicene’ Creed

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven
and earth and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of
God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,**



and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✠ of the world to come. 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

- Nicholas Williams - baptized today
- New members

Entrusting into God's Care

- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Trevor (son of Mike & Dawn) - hospitalization
- Kate (friend of Kroemers) - life issues
- Shauna (relative of Schmiths) - recovering after surgery
- Donna Birkicht - recovering after hospitalization
- Chuck (father of Jim Novitch) - hospitalization
- Sylvia (aunt of Patricia Hinrichs) - health issues
- Stephen Stepanek - recovering after surgery
- Rhonda (friend of Larsons) - health issues
- Fran (friend of Larsons) - cancer treatments
- Betty Hein - recovering at Terrace Glen, Marion
- Lorna Fischer - recovering after surgery
- Harold Schoen - recovering after surgery
- Faye Sieck - relief from pain
- Abi Clark - health issues
- Norm Rutz - cancer treatment
- Joyce Fritz - recovering at home after surgery
- Angela Yuza - recovering after surgery

- Doug Knutson - cancer treatment
- Lee Rathje - health issues
- Cindy Broadwater - relief of foot pain

Homebound

- Valerie Koelper - Grand Living, Marion

Mourning, friends and family of

- Deb (friend of Hedtkes) - died 9/6
- Josh (friend of Hedtkes) - died 9/5
- Dick (friend of Linda Patten) - died 9/5
- Andy (brother of Jeff Crow) - died 9/3
- Bill (father of Patrick, Justin and Lucas McCarley) - died 9/3

Serving Our Country

- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Rob & Faye Sieck) - US Army

Collect of the Day

O Lord, keep Your Church in Your perpetual mercy; and because without You we cannot but fall, preserve us from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our 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

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.



✠ *Shrewdness* ✠

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

In Matthew 10 Jesus tells his disciples that they are to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” C.S. Lewis, the Christian author famous for his works such as *Mere Christianity* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* wrote concerning this saying of Jesus, “When our Lord and Master said that we were to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, He did not mean for us to lay eggs. God does not like intellectual slackers any better than He likes any other kind of slacker.” The truth of C.S. Lewis’ statement is grounded in our Gospel lesson this morning.

Here Jesus shifts gears just a little bit. Previously he had been teaching how God seeks and finds the lost in the parable of the Lost Sheep and Coin. But now he turns to the disciples and teaches how those who have been found – those who have been saved, are to behave. Specifically, here in the parable of the Shrewd (or Dishonest) Manager, Jesus teaches us how Christians are to use their possessions and their money.

The parable is fairly straight forward, even if its’ meaning is somewhat tricky to discern. There is a rich man, and like many who have wealth back in Jesus’ time, and even today, he has someone who is managing his money for him. Word comes to the rich man that the manager is wasting his possessions. Asking for the books, so to speak, the rich man is effectively telling his manager that once he does this last task, he’ll be fired.

Now this is where things get a little interesting. The manager knows that he’s going to be out of a job and by his own admission, he doesn’t have a lot of options. He’s either too old or too soft to do any kind of physical labor, and he says that he is too proud to scratch out a living by begging. So, he gets an idea to make use of what resources he has. Part of his responsibilities as a manager would be to keep track of who owes what to his rich boss. So, since he’s out of favor with the rich man, he starts to build a reputation with all those who owe his master. Someone owes a hundred measures of oil, he makes it fifty. Another, one hundred measures of wheat, he makes it eighty. There were surely others that he did this for, all the while making the rich man’s debtors his own, so when he’s out on the street, he has some friends he can turn to.

Now, you would think that when the master found out about what the soon to be fired manager was doing, he’d be mad. But Jesus tells us the, “*The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness*” (v.8). Was the manager dishonest – probably, and dishonesty and lying and stealing are sin that God would never condone. But nevertheless, you have to admit the manager was rather clever.

But here is where this parable is somewhat different than many others told by Jesus. Because it’s not the actual deeds that the manager did that His disciples are to imitate, but rather the fact that he didn’t lay a mental egg when he ran into trouble. Jesus says, “*For the sons of this world (people like the manager) are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light*” (v. 8). Art Just, a Lutheran Professor, writes that Jesus does encourage His listeners to imitate the manager, but not by being dishonest. “The sons of this world” are more shrewd in dealing with this generation or the world, because they know how to play the game, they know how to bend the rules, manipulate the numbers, and beat the system – in order to accomplish their

goals. But Jesus doesn't want His disciples thinking like this. He doesn't want them to do whatever it takes to get ahead with the things of this world that are here today and gone tomorrow.

Because just think of all the material things that we work so hard for in life and then quickly become, either dissatisfied with them or want something better. Technology is a perfect example of this. The day I bought my first computer I received a flier in the mail saying that Intel announced the release of a new, faster microprocessor. While I enjoyed my new computer, there was always a part of me that wished I had waited so I could have a faster one.

Whether we are talking about fast computers, fast cars, or whatever, we need to ask ourselves are we working for the stuff of this generation – the stuff of the here and now, or are we working to reflect God's love? Are we using our gifts to serve money or the eternal God? Jesus tells us that it cannot be both. It's either the creator or the creation. Our Savior or the material world.

When we realize what God has done for us in our lives, whom we serve will come as naturally to us as an apple tree producing apples. For our service to God is the fruit of our faith. What God has done for us becomes apparent when we look at this parable Jesus tells us from a heavenly perspective and not our earthly one. For looking at it from the muck and mire of our own sin, we might think Jesus is simply telling us to do whatever we have to in order to get ahead in life. But looking at this parable from a heavenly perspective, we see that the rich man was merciful to his manager. He could have had him punished for effectively robbing him of the oil and wheat that was his due. But instead, the rich man commended his manager and as far as we know, has mercy on him.

What we do know is that God has had mercy on us through Jesus Christ. Whenever we use our time or talents or treasure in ways that run contrary to God's will, we are forgiven through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. But this should not give us an excuse to keep sinning! Rather God's love and mercy motivates us to be faithful with whatever it is that God has given us. To use the brains that God gave us, to use the time that God gave us, the resources of wealth and possessions that God gave us – not for ourselves – but for the Kingdom of God. To use our gifts to proclaim and defend His Word. To help those who are in need and support those who are hurting.

Because, while the Kingdom of God certainly comes without our help, we pray that it will come to us and to the rest of the world that so desperately needs it. And God comes to people when His Word is taught and proclaimed, but also when His people live like His people. When they are as wise as the serpents and innocent as doves, (not for themselves) but serving the One who has made them His saints with the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen.

