



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

February 12th, 2023 A.D. 6th 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 98)

The LORD has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

the world and those who dwell in it!

Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

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

(Matthew 5:21-37)

²¹[Jesus said:] "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' ²²But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. ²⁶Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

²⁷"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his

heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

³¹“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³²But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

³³“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ ³⁴But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”

Sermon † *Because of Him* † (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

- Elizabeth (infant daughter of Chris & Kelly Frampton)- born 2/6

- Bonnie Bubke - recovered after hospitalization
- Jill (relative of Karen Pfeffer)- received heart transplant
- Dave Dohrmann - recovered after surgery

Entrusting into God's Care

- Sheila Willms– safe travels for Guatemala mission trip
- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Those suffering after storms and during the pandemic
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Chuck Stoelting– recovering after fall
- Kim Neuhaus– recovering after surgery
- Rick Foreman– recovering after fall
- Pat Krekeler– hospitalization
- Mike Raymon– upcoming cataract surgery
- Lora Raymon– positive outcome for health issues
- Deb Heitland– health issues
- Don (friend of Mary Vezina)- recovering after surgery
- Ann (relative of Elaine Behrens)- recovering after surgery
- Carol Grimminger - recovering at Cottage Grove after surgery
- Ethel Dohrmann - cancer treatment
- Candi Engel - recovering at Heritage Care Center
- James Ball - health issues
- Don Hein - recovering after surgery
- Stephen Stepanek - brain cancer treatment
- Abi Clark - health issues

Homebound

- Larry & Sharon Easler– Summit Pointe, Marion

Mourning, friends and family of

- Mike (brother-in-law of Rick Foreman)- died 2/1
- John (brother of Pat Krekeler)- died 1/27
- Helen (mother of Angela Sturtz)- died 1/19

Serving Our Country

- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Siecks) - US Army, deployed to Poland
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - National Guard, deployed

Collect of the Day

O Lord, graciously hear the prayers of Your people that we who justly suffer the consequence of our sin may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness to the glory of Your name; 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

Almighty God, You have called Your Church to witness that in Christ You have reconciled us to Yourself. Grant that by Your Holy Spirit we may proclaim the good news of Your salvation so that all who hear it may receive the gift of salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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.



✠ *Because of Him* ✠

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

From our Scripture Lesson, beginning at verse 23 we read:

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

This raises an interesting dilemma for Christians today. Does God really want us stop worshipping Him, if someone is angry with us? It would be easier if we were just talking about controlling our own anger. But how much control do we have over the anger of others and how should that impact what we do? If someone else is unjustly angry with us and sinning themselves, should that keep us from doing what God wants us to do? In fact, sometimes when I read this I think that I'll never be able to worship God, if we are to stop doing this when someone is angry with us. And so what we are really asking is, "How literally do we take these verses?" Well as it turns out, we need to take them seriously, (they are the inspired and inerrant Word of God) but in this case, not as literally as we might think, at least not without some qualification. After all, look at the end of verse 22. Jesus says, "*and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.*" On the surface, it seems that Jesus is telling us if we ever call someone a "fool"

we are sinning, but He's not. After all Jesus does it Himself in 23:17 when He calls the Scribes and Pharisees "fools and blind men". Also Paul calls someone in Corinth a "fool" when they ask a hypothetical question about the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:36).

Likewise it seems in verse 28 of our text that a man is never to look at a woman lustfully when Jesus says, "*I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" But Jesus must not be forbidding a man to look at a woman with desire when that woman is his own wife, even though Jesus doesn't explicitly clarify that here.

Also, few of us would think that cutting off our hands or gouging out our eyes is a good remedy to avoid temptation. After all, if we all followed verses 29-30 literally the entire Christian Church throughout the world would be blind, lame, and mute!

Jesus also says in verse 32, "*Whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery*". Literally this says a divorced woman may never remarry, but very few would say this cannot happen if a woman's ex-husband has died. Jesus doesn't say this here, but Paul says in I Corinthians 7:9, "*A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.*"

And finally in verse 34 Jesus says, "*But I say to you, do not take an oath at all...*" But again Paul takes an oath by God in Galatians 1:20 when He writes, "*I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.*" And many say that even Jesus takes an oath Himself in Matthew 26:63-64, where we read, "*...the high priest said to him, 'I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.'* 'Yes, it is as you say,' Jesus replied."

The point behind all of this is that this passage of Scripture from our reading cannot simply be read as literal and comprehensive. It is not written as legal, case law material! Rather we must read it as Jesus intended, according to the spirit of His words and interpret it and apply it to our lives in that way. This leaves open all sorts of dangers, including diluting the force of Jesus' teachings, even to the point of ignoring them. Some may look at Jesus' teachings and think, "God can't expect me to do or believe something as unreasonable as that!" But to be a Christian and to trust in God's Word is a dangerous thing, and we need to acknowledge the dangers of abusing God's Word even as we try to be faithful to it.

And so going back to offering our gifts and our brother who has something against us, we remember that for the Jews who were listening to Jesus at that time, this was a big deal. This gift would be an animal sacrifice that they would bring into the Temple Court where the altar was located. This was part of worshipping God and would be seen as something pleasing to Him. But Jesus tells them that if you are bringing that gift into the Temple Court and then remember that your brother has something against you, you are to leave that gift right there and go and be reconciled. Jesus is telling the worshipper in the Temple, it's not just if he has something against his brother, but if the brother and has something against you, stop what you're doing to go and work it out!

Now obviously God wanted the people in Jesus' day to worship Him. Obviously He wants people to worship Him today. But if your heart is darkened and diseased with hatred, which can be just as sinful as murder, or if you are causing someone else to suffer the same condition, Jesus tells us we have an urgent task to accomplish. And that's go and make things right with your brother or sister, with your neighbors, with anyone whom God has brought into our lives. Jesus is not telling us to ignore our worship of God, but showing us that God places an enormous value on our horizontal relationships with one another. So much value that it will affect our vertical relationship with Him.

After all, Jesus Himself, the Son of God, has placed an enormous value on His relationship with your brothers and sisters, and your neighbors, and you yourself. So much value that He left the dwelling place of God in Heaven to come to this earth so that all of us might be reconciled to God. He did this not with an apology, or by loosening the requirements of the Law which we have all broken. But rather He reconciled us to Himself with the shedding of His blood on the cross. It is only through Jesus's death and resurrection that we have the forgiveness of all our sins and eternal life.

And so, because God has reconciled Himself to us through Christ when we were still sinners, reconciling ourselves to others becomes of the utmost importance. Because Christ gives us life, we protect the lives of others and guard against the malice in our hearts that can easily give birth to sin. Because Christ has been faithful, we are faithful in our marriages and other relationships in what we say, do, and think.

Jesus was serious when He taught these things to the Jews the first time, and He is serious when He tells us them today through His Word. His Word that we can not always take literally, but that we always know is true and working faith and forgiveness in all of us. Amen.

