



# Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

March 19, 2023 A.D.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

*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 *Psalms 25 and 27*

My eyes are ever toward the LORD,

**for he will pluck my feet out of the net.**

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

**that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.**

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;

**he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;**

**he will lift me high upon a rock.**

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me,

and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;

**I will sing and make melody to 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](http://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

(John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39)

<sup>1</sup>As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup>Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup>and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing...

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” <sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup>So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”...

...<sup>34</sup>They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

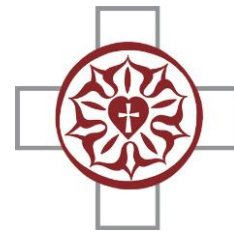
<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup>He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” <sup>38</sup>He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

**Sermon** – † *Who Sinned?* † *(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**

- Philip Hackbardt - improved health

#### **Entrusting into God's Care**

- Glen (brother of Rob Sieck) - hospice care
- 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**

- Donna Birkicht - upcoming surgery 3/21
- Lysander (friend of Emily Kroemer) - hospitalization
- Angie (friend of Deb Heitland) - cancer diagnoses
- Shari Mehlhoff - recovering after surgery
- Karen Swalley - recovering after surgery
- Lora Raymon - recovering after surgery
- Doug Knutson - immunotherapy treatment
- Bonnie Bubke - personal issues
- Mary Jean (mother of Greg Dunn) - recovering after surgery
- Jill (cousin of Karen Pfeffer) - recovering after heart transplant
- Elaine Cook - recovering after hospitalization
- Kathy (sister of Mark Holt) - recovering after lung transplant
- Del Block - recovering after mild stroke
- Chuck Stoelting - recovering at Cottage Grove after fall
- Kim Neuhaus - recovering at home after surgery
- Rick Foreman - recovering at home after fall
- Pat Krekeler - recovering at home after hospitalization

- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Ethel Dohrmann - cancer treatment
- Stephen Stepanek - brain cancer treatment
- Abi Clark - health issues

### **Homebound**

- Wayne Schilling - Linn Manor Care, Marion

### **Mourning, friends and family of**

- Clarence (brother of Luci Stoelting) - died 3/8
- Melba Davison - died 2/28

### **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**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; 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.**

**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.**



✠ *Who Sinned?* ✠

Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

It seems like a strange question in our Scripture reading. *“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”* The disciples, coming across this man who could not see, were trying to make sense of this man’s situation. The problem with their question however, is that neither answer makes very much sense. Does this man have to pay for the sins of somebody else? Or while in the womb did he sin more than the average person born with their sight? Neither answer to this question seems to be very satisfying.

So, what does Jesus say? In v.3 Jesus answers, *“It was not that this man sinned, or his parents”*. Jesus does not say that they were not sinners. He just says that the man’s blindness is not a punishment for anyone’s sin. Rather, the blindness will be used by God to show the world His work. It’s not that they were sinners, *“...but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”* How ironic that God would use this man who was blind, as a lens, through which others may see their Savior. God is in essence having the blind lead the blind – the physically blind bringing the spiritually blind to see God.

Now there are times when people suffer because of their own sin or that of someone else. When leaders of nations sin, the people in their lands often pay the price in having to deal with economic trouble or even war. But lest we be too quick to judge our leaders, remember that it is also true that when the leaders of a home sin, the entire family suffers as well. And if our sins affect others, they most certainly can affect us as well. If you sleep around with people you are not married to, there is a good chance there will be some unpleasant consequences. If you don’t raise your children as Christians, don’t expect them to act like ones when they grow up. If you just teach your children to do the right thing, don’t be surprised when we have a generation who will do the right thing for themselves at the expense of others. The Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the destruction of Jerusalem remind us that sometimes we are punished for sin.

But sometimes our suffering has a greater purpose. When the blind man was healed he was taken to the Pharisees – the religious big-wigs. They wanted to know what was going on because giving sight to the blind back in their time was more than just a physical healing. This was something that God did. God gives sight and makes the blind see. So they were interested that this blind man could see now, but there was a problem. When Jesus had healed this man, He made mud with His spit, and Jesus did this on the Sabbath – the day of rest. Now God wants us to keep the Sabbath, having a day to rest from our normal work and spend some time in worship, but the Pharisees went a little too far with this. They became so wrapped up with not working that they actually said that Jesus couldn’t be from God because He made mud. And that was work.

And so they ask the man who was blind, “What do you think”. Now if you had been blind all your life, and every doctor you visited said your eyes will never be able to see, but someone came and put mud on them and then you could. What would you say? The man says Jesus is a prophet – He is from God. The man knows what he has seen and he’ll tell anyone who wants to listen. But the Pharisees don’t want to. They fall back into that old way of thinking that if something bad happens to you, you must have done something wrong. They want to know how

someone so sinful could teach them anything about God. And in doing so they show that though they think they see things clearly, they are truly blind.

So, the Pharisees kick this man out of their presence. Interestingly enough, some have said that this man may be the first person persecuted for his faith in Jesus. And accordingly, Jesus does not leave him alone to suffer exile from the community. Jesus comes to the one who is suffering and comforts him. Jesus tells the man that He is the Son of Man – He is the messiah from God. And realizing his salvation, the one who was once blind, clearly sees his Savior and worships Him.

God used the terrible affliction of the blind man and his healing so that others may see Jesus Christ as the Savior from their sin – the sin that we are sometimes punished for and for the sin that many times we are not. But despite God using this man to show people Jesus, we see that some, like the Pharisees, choose to keep their eyes closed. These are the ones Jesus had in mind when He said, *“those who see may become blind”* (v.39). But for those who let God open their eyes, though they were once blind in sin, God forgives that sin, takes it away, so that they can see. How many people this man went and talked to about Christ we’ll know. But here we are 2000 years later, with God speaking to us through His Word, as He tells us about this man who born blind and then saw Jesus as His Savior. When the blindness of our sin is removed, we see God, we see Jesus – not as cruel judge always punishing us for our sin, but as a brother wanting to forgive us. A desire to forgive that drove Him to the cross where He suffered and died for sins of the world.

We started today with a tough question, *“Who sinned that this man was born blind”*. Jesus tells us no one, but that His blindness was used by God so that others may come to faith. This is cause for great comfort to everyone who sins, knowing that God is actively working to save us through our faith in Him. But even more than that, God tells us in our text that regardless of whether or not our suffering is God’s punishment against us, He will use it for His purpose. It may be to lead others to repentance and faith. It may be to lead ourselves there.

And you don’t have to have your story told in the Bible for this to happen. You simply have to let God use you wherever you are. You have to serve God where you are. And just imagine how wonderful it will be if one day you’ll be able to look back on the suffering that you have endured and see that not only was God with you and in control, but that He used you to build His Kingdom. If you don’t believe He can do this, open your eyes and see those who labor in the church. Do they suffer less? If you don’t believe that God can use you in His kingdom, open your eyes and see your Savior who died so that you might have not just sight, but eternal life and salvation in His name as well. Amen.

And now may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds forever in Christ Jesus. Amen.

