



# Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

**September 24, 2023 A.D. – 17<sup>th</sup> 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 116)*

I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving

**and call on the name of the LORD.**

What shall I render to the LORD

**for all his benefits to me?**

I will lift up the cup of salvation

**and call on the name of the LORD.**

Precious in the sight of the LORD

**is the death of his saints.**

O LORD, I am your servant;

**I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds.**

*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....*

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## Scripture Lessons

*(Matthew 20:1-16)*

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] "The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup>And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, <sup>4</sup>and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' <sup>5</sup>So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. <sup>6</sup>And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup>They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' <sup>8</sup>And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' <sup>9</sup>And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. <sup>10</sup>Now

when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. <sup>11</sup>And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, <sup>12</sup>saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ <sup>13</sup>But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ <sup>14</sup>Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. <sup>15</sup>Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ <sup>16</sup>So the last will be first, and the first last.”

## **Sermon**

### **✠ *Grace in a Vineyard* ✠**

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## **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;  
ive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
; the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

## **Bethany's Prayer List**

### **Thanksgiving**

- Stephen Ministry 20 years at Bethany Lutheran
- Michelle Hedtke - employment found

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

- Tom Stock - hospice care
- Andrea - (relative of Steggalls) teaching in Bulgaria
- David - (friend of Angela Yuza) cancer
- Rachel - (Bethany neighbor) cancer
- Those in nursing homes/care centers
- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

### **Healing**

- Rick Foreman - recovering after surgery
- Craig (relative of Dawn Thomas) - cancer
- Cherie Miller - recovering after surgery
- Donna Stranathan - recovering after surgery
- Philip Hackbardt - recovering after surgery
- Dale Stonewall - recovering after fall
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment
- Doug Knutson - immunotherapy treatment
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Abi Clark - health issues

### **Homebound**

- Nadine Wax - at home

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

- Wendell (friend of Larsons) - died 9/11

### **Serving Our Country**

- Ben (son of Kroemers) - IA National Guard
- Devin (friend of Kroemers) - IA Army National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Siecks) - US Army, stationed in TX

## **Collect of the Day**

**℟** Let us pray... Lord God, heavenly Father, since we cannot stand before You relying on anything we have done, help us trust in Your abiding grace and live according to Your Word; 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

O God, You resist the proud and give grace to the humble. Grant us true humility after the likeness of Your only Son that we may never be arrogant or prideful and thus provoke Your wrath but in all lowliness be made partakers of the gifts of Your grace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

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.**



✠ *Grace in a Vineyard* ✠

In the few verses before our Gospel lesson for this weekend, Peter asks Jesus, “*See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?*” (Matthew 19:27). Apparently, Peter thought that he and the rest of the apostles were rather special in the Kingdom of God for having given us so much to follow Jesus. Now truth be told, the apostles are rather unique because Jesus Himself said that in the age to come they will sit on thrones judging Israel. However, Jesus also warns them that while they may be unique, they aren’t particularly special. After all, everyone gives up something to follow Jesus. Some may lose treasured relationships with family or friends who don’t want to be associated with Christians. For others it may be the loss of opportunities or finances as they are not willing to go along with the crowd or do what everybody else is doing. For all Christians, there is at least the loss of giving into our sinful desires. Therefore, every disciple of Christ has given up something. And if Peter, or if you, think that you deserve something more than other Christians because of what you have done, you run the very real risk of falling into sin. When you think you’re special or deserve something extra, you may be surprised with how you end up, or what you end up with, in God’s Kingdom. Jesus says that many who are first shall be last and the last shall be first (Matthew 19:30).

As Jesus explains what this mean, it comes across as quite shocking! He tells the parable of a master of the house who hires workers all throughout the day to work in his vineyard. At the end of the day, those who were hired late and were able only to work an hour received a denarius or a whole day’s wage. As you can imagine those who had been working all day long and saw that those who only worked for an hour received a denarius, were shocked that they received the same pay.

Now Jesus does not tell us this parable to show us how to run a vineyard, or any other business for that matter. Rather He tells us this parable to show us how God runs His kingdom. With God, no one receives less than what they deserve, but by His Grace, we all receive much

more. For as much as we would like to think that we are good workers in His vineyard, or His farm, or office, or wherever God has us working, the fact is that we are not always good workers deserving an honest wage. We sort of steal the paperclips from God when we lie and steal to save a few bucks, when He is the one who gives us our friends, family, our homes, and our health. We show up late and leave early for work, when we fail to help and love our neighbor as God wants us to. We grumble about the pay and benefits that He gives to us even if we don't deserve them. We believe Christians will spend eternity in paradise but tell God that it's not fair that mom or dad are sick. In short, we all sin against God. And so, if God were to give to us what we deserve - if He were just according to our standards - our wage would be physical and eternal death.

But God's justice is not our own. He is merciful and gracious, and like the master of the house who gives the workers who deserve little, much, God gives us more than we can rightfully expect as well. Where we deserve death, He gives us life through Jesus. When it should be us who are dying and suffering, God made Jesus suffer and die in our place, so that He could give us life. Because Jesus died on the cross, our relationship with God does not depend on the work that we do for Him, it depends on the work of Jesus and our Faith in Him. So whether we live great lives, or not so great lives, whether we sin a lot or a little, whether we have been Christians from the time of conception or came to faith on our death bed, we are all forgiven in Jesus' name.

The whole world should rejoice that this is how God runs His vineyard. But they don't. Even here in the church there are those who have been working all day long who grumble at God's mercy and grace. They complain that those who are new to the faith receive just as much of God's blessings as they do. And so they leave God's mercy, and go back to their old ways of works righteousness. Because it is so hard and so insulting to think that scoundrel who comes to Christ on their death bed can enter the same heaven as one who has worked all their life to serve God, many reject God's generosity and go back to rely on themselves for their salvation. Thus Jesus says, "The last, (who rely solely upon God's grace), will be first. And the first, (who think they have earned something special), will be last.

There once was an elementary school teacher who would give spelling tests each Thursday. If a student received a perfect score on his or her test, the teacher would take the student down to the teachers' lounge on Friday afternoon and buy them a soda from the vending machine. Every Thursday the student tried extra hard to earn their soda. But one Friday, when it came time for the perfect students to go to the teachers lounge, the teacher told all of the students to come, even those who failed their spelling test the day before. When the students asked why he was doing this, the teacher said he wanted to show them what a wonderful gift grace truly is.

Let us rejoice that we God who is like the teacher that shows us His graciousness, actually giving us more than we deserve. And let rejoice that He treats all people this way as well. Put aside your pride thinking that you are better than others and therefore deserve more of God's blessings. For our Master, the one who truly deserves all glory and honor, Jesus Christ, humbled Himself so that we could have forgiveness and life. Being that this is how our Lord and Savior acts, let us pray to Him for the strength to follow as His disciples. Amen.

