



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

March 10, 2024 A.D.

Fourth 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 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.

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 Sermons tab and then continue with the Apostles' Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Matthew 18:15-20)

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

Sermon

✠ Dilemma Resolved ✠ *(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

- Betty Happel - recovered after surgery
- Philip Hackbardt - recovered after surgery
- Luci Stoelting - recovered after hospitalization

Entrusting into God's Care

- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Erin Wilson - recovering after surgery
- Ken Cook - recovering after hospitalization
- Marvie Foreman - recovering after surgery
- Patrick McCarley - recovering after surgery
- Harold Schoen - recovering after surgery
- Aaron Moffett - recovering after eye surgery
- Ron Prescott - health issues
- Kris Dunn - recovering after surgery
- Kevin Hansen - recovering at home after hospitalization
- Kim Neuhaus - recovering after surgery
- Lora Raymon - recovering after surgery
- Carolyn Johnson - recovering after surgery
- Cindy Broadwater - recovering after hospitalization
- Kelly Johnson - healing
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment
- Deb Heitland - health issues

Homebound

- Dorothy Freese - Keystone Place

Mourning, friends and family of

- Ruth (aunt of Karl Hoech) - died 2/25
- Rodney Smith (relative of Betty Happel) - died 2/23
- Jim (relative of Brit Stepanek) - died 2/20

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
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - IA National Guard
- Devon (friend of Hedtkes and Chitticks) - deployed to Korea

Collect of the Day

Let us pray... O God, from whom all good proceeds, grant to us, Your humble servants, Your holy inspiration, that we may set our minds on the things that are right and, by Your merciful guiding, accomplish them; 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.



✠ Dilemma Resolved ✠

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

Our Gospel reading from Matthew 18 this evening presents Christians with somewhat of a dilemma that I think many of us have wrestled with. You see back in Matthew 7:1 (p.685) Jesus says, *“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.”* He goes on to say in 7:4-5, *“How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”*

Then, in the Parable of the Weeds in Matthew 13, (p.691), Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a man’s field that has weeds growing alongside the good wheat. His servants in v.28 want to go into the field and pull all the weeds out. But the owner will not let them. You can see beginning in v.29 he answered “No”, *“because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest...”* Jesus tells this parable to warn His disciples who believe they can tell the difference between the good and the bad in the Church today.

So then, after this warning about judging others; and a warning about excluding people from the church because of how you perceive their sin, we have our text. Again, Jesus says, *“If your brother [or sister] sins [against you], go and point out their fault, just between the two of you.”* If they listen to you, Jesus says that you have won them over, implying that before this they were actually lost. But if they don’t listen to you, or one or two others, or even the church, then Jesus says in v.17 *“...treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”* Here in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus tells us not to judge or to get the plank out of our own eye before we point out the speck of dust in our neighbor’s, but then says when our fellow disciple sins, we need to show them their faults! He tells us to leave the weeds in the fields because you might damage some of the wheat, that is let God worry about who does and does not belong to the church on Judgment Day; yet tells us to treat unrepentant sinner as Gentiles and Tax Collectors! What’s going on here? How do we bring together these texts?

Well, I think looking at the season of Lent can help us. During this penitential season, Christians not only pay greater attention on their own sin, but they also focus on what Jesus had to do in order to save us from that sin. During Lent, the Church specifically remembers Jesus’ suffering and death. We remember how in His Baptism, the Son of God who had left the joys of heaven, placed Himself among sinners. How after that Baptism, He was tempted in the wilderness by Satan for 40 days. During Lent, we remember how all of the prophecies of Jesus being rejected and scorned, not only by His enemies, but also by His own people, became true when He was betrayed, arrested, and crucified. And we also remember that all of these happened because Jesus wanted them to happen. And He and the Father wanted all of these things to happen, because of the God’s love for each one of us.

Knowing full well the nature and extent of our sin and the sin of the world, God did not leave us to perish in that sin. He did not tell us that we have to atone for our sin or figure out a way to live so that our good works will outweigh the bad. If God did any of those things we would all be lost forever. Rather, God sent His Son Jesus to do all of those things we remember during Lent so that He could take care of our sin because He loves us. And there is the key to understanding our text this evening.

Christ suffered and died for us because He loves us. And now we, as God's beloved and redeemed children love God and all those around us. Jesus is teaching all who would be His disciples that we are to always seek the good of our fellow disciples. And so we do not judge our brothers and sisters in ways that can bring harm to them. We do so in a way that helpful and beneficial, because as Jesus teaches in 7:6, those disciples are as precious as pearls. And we don't try to fix the field with the weeds and the wheat, because the owner loves the wheat so much that He doesn't want to lose one kernel! And because Christ has loved, we love one another as well.

The message and the motivation of our text this evening is precisely the same. It isn't a guidebook for Church Discipline, (although Church Discipline has its place and is supported elsewhere in the New Testament). Nor should Christians look at Matthew 18 as a simple checklist of things to do when conflict arises. Instead, our text for this evening is about one thing and one thing only: caring for a sinning brother and sister because we love them as fellow disciples.

Since Christians love one another as Christ has loved us all, we look out for one another. When we see a fellow believer in a situation that may cause them to lose their faith we go to that person and privately express our concern. We do this not to make us feel good about our piety or holiness, but because we love and care for them. And when this happens, then our text begins to come alive in the life of the church. And if the person listens, we have gained a brother who was lost. And if not, they may be excluded from the communion of saints. But regardless of the outcome, we will have done what the Lord asks us to do: We will have reached out to, and with love for, our fellow disciples in Christ. Amen.

