



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

June 16, 2024 A.D.

The 4th 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.

Introit

From Psalm 92

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to your name, O Most High.

The righteous flourish like the palm tree
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

They are planted in the house of the LORD;
they flourish in the courts of our God.

They still bear fruit in old age;

they are ever full of sap and green,

to declare that the LORD is upright;

he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

*For those with access to the internet, you may now play today's worship video,
located at www.bethanycr.org/sermons and then continue with the Nicene Creed.
Everyone else may continue the service as printed....*

Scripture Lesson

(Mark 4:26-34)

²⁶[Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. ²⁷He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

³⁰And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. ³⁴He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

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

- Fathers
- Bethany Food Pantry 3rd anniversary 6/13

Entrusting into God's Care

- Charlotte (relative of Emily Kroemer) - hospice care
- Mickie Sjullie - employment search
- Nathan & Sarah Federwitz - Lutheran Bible Translators
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine
- Trinity Lutheran School Principal search

Healing

- Ken Cook - upcoming surgery 6/20
- Kristi Montague - upcoming surgery 6/21
- Sandy (relative of Emily Kroemer) - skilled care for rehab
- Tim (friend of Pete Larson) - health issues
- Angela Yuza - recovering after surgery
- Joseph (relative of Angela Yuza) - recovering after surgery
- Arlen Breiholz - recovering after surgery
- Sharon Ramsey - recovering after surgery
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Aaron Moffett - recovering after eye surgery
- Ron Prescott - health issues
- Kim Neuhaus - recovering after surgery
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

Homebound

- Carol Grimminger - Cottage Grove

Mourning, friends and family of

- Merlin (grandfather of Dathan Hinrichs)- died 6/10
- Chuck (husband of Luci) Stoelting - died 6/8
- Marilyn (friend of Hinrichses) - died 6/6
- Alivia (friend of Pfeils) - died 6/5
- Jena (friend of Ann Balvanz) - died 5/16

Serving Our Country

- Mallory (friend of Abi Clark) - IA National Guard
- Amber (daughter of Ann Balvanz) - US Army, stationed in RI
- 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

Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that 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.

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.



✠ *Looks are Deceiving* ✠

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

We've all heard the saying that "looks can be deceiving" and this seems to be the point of the Parable of the Mustard Seed that we read of in our Scripture lesson today. Here, Jesus compares the Reign and Rule of God to a tiny little mustard seed. Which if you think about it, is not all that surprising. After all, what had happened in Mark's Gospel up to that time didn't seem all that important. You had Jesus, a carpenter's son from the obscure little town of Nazareth, calling a bunch of fishermen to come and follow Him. Two thousand years ago, this event and others that followed hardly seemed significant to anyone. Yet look where we are today.

Just as the tiny little mustard seed when planted grows into the largest plant in a garden, with branches that all the birds of the air may rest and make their nests in, so too has the Kingdom of God grown into a place where all the peoples of the earth may rest from their labors and ultimately find their heavenly home. God has certainly ruled over all of creation since its beginning, but today the Good News of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ has gone

out from a few people walking around in Galilee, to here in Eastern Iowa and all the earth. Jesus is teaching the disciples that looks not only can be deceiving, but when it comes to God, looks are deceiving!

Jesus's disciples needed to hear this when they were walking with Him in Galilee and His disciples need to hear this when we are walking with Him today. Because there will always be the tendency for us, being influenced by the world and tempted by the devil, to think that God should work in some other way than what He really does. Instead of a mustard seed, the world says that God's Kingdom should be more like the mighty cedars and lofty mountains that Ezekiel talks about. If God is going to reign these days it should be done with power and might. Those living in His Kingdom should be sitting on thrones, not pews or folding chairs, even though they may be padded. They should be wealthy and never get sick, maybe even never die. And of course, if God really were ruling today, Christians would be living perfect lives.

But what does the world see when it looks at this Kingdom of God today? What do we see when we look at the Kingdom? When we look at ourselves? It certainly doesn't look all that powerful or glamorous. Of course there are many things that we can see God doing in the world today through the church, but looking closely, we see a lot of things that don't quite seem to fit. We see some of the most influential people and institutions in our society mocking God and Christians being persecuted. We see people neglecting God's Word and being lazy in their prayer lives. We see people doubting God's promises and instead trusting in themselves. Looking at the Kingdom today, we see thieves, liars, and cheaters. People of all ages ignoring their families and neighbors. We see the adulterers and homosexuals. People filled with hatred and living to satisfy the appetites of their own sinful flesh. What so many see when they look at the kingdom of God today is evil, because they see sin. And with this, we see ourselves. But remember... in the Kingdom of God, looks are deceiving.

Jesus didn't stay in Nazareth or in Galilee for that matter. Eventually we read in the Gospels that He made His way to the Holy city of Jerusalem. And while He was greeted as triumphant King upon His arrival there, less than a week later He was crucified on a cross outside of the city. Too many this looked like the ultimate defeat for Jesus. But in reality, it was the ultimate victory of God. For by dying on the cross, Jesus took all of the sins of the world upon Himself. So that now, those who live in Kingdom through faith in Jesus, are no longer looked upon as liars, murderers, or sexually immoral – Because Christ has taken away our sin, we are looked upon as children of God.

Today, the world and even ourselves, may see weakness and sin when we look at the Kingdom of God. And apart from God this is indeed all there is. But right now and when those who are in the Kingdom of God through their faith in Jesus stand before the throne on Judgment Day, God will only see one of His own, cleansed with the blood of Christ. With our sins forgiven, what else is there to see in us other than our good and pleasing works? This is God's promise to each one of us – to every bird in the air. It may not seem like much right now, like only a tiny little mustard seed. But give it time. Time to grow, because in God's Kingdom, looks are deceiving. Amen.

