



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

February 23, 2025 A.D. 7th 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 37)

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way.

Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

be not envious of wrongdoers!

For they will soon fade like the grass

and wither like the green herb.

Trust in the LORD, and do good;

dwel in the land and befriend faithfulness.

Delight yourself in the LORD,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the LORD;

trust in him, and he will act.

Scripture Lesson

(Genesis 45:3-15)

³ Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

⁴So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all

Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. ¹⁰You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.' ¹²And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. ¹³You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." ¹⁴Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

Scripture Lesson

(Luke 6:27-38)

²⁷[Jesus said:] "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

³²"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

³⁷"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

Sermon

Grace, mercy & peace to you from God - Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.

Generally speaking, communication is a good thing and if people aren't talking to one another, something has gone terribly wrong. Now sometimes, this lack of communication happens because people are trying to punish one another. For instance, if there was a fight or an argument, someone might say, "I'm never talking to you again!" Or maybe if the argument wasn't really all that bad, someone might just end up getting the "silent treatment". But other times, communication stops because someone does or says something shocking! When this happens someone might exclaim, "I don't know what to say!" or "I'm speechless!" or just fumble over their words, not able to say really anything at all. This is what we see happening in our Old Testament lesson when Joseph's brothers are standing before him.

For those who may not know or remember, Joseph had an interesting relationship with his siblings. Filled with jealousy, Joseph's brothers pushed him into a well to kill him, saving him only after they realized they could make some money by selling him as a slave. Joseph was then taken down to Egypt where, through a series of extraordinary events guided by God's grace and mercy, he went from being a slave in prison to the second most powerful man in the kingdom,

second only to the Pharaoh. This happened, in large part, because God helped Joseph interpret Pharaoh's dream about a terrible famine and then had Joseph help all of Egypt prepare for the seven years of little food. So, when the famine did come, Egypt had so much food, that other nations, including Joseph's brothers, were coming to it for help.

And this is why Joseph's brothers are standing in front of him in our text today. During the famine, their father sent them to Egypt to buy food where, as far as they knew their brother was still a slave or maybe even dead. Imagine their surprise then, when they find out that their brother, whom they tried to kill and then sold into slavery, is not only the one they must buy food from to keep their families alive, but also is now this incredibly powerful ruler who could easily have them and their families killed! So great a shock is this that we are told when the brothers find this out they are literally speechless.

I think that it is safe to say that at this point, everyone who hears this story of Joseph and his brothers expects Joseph to finally have his vengeance. That's what the brothers no doubt think what will happen. But looking at our reading from the Old Testament, that is not what happens. In Genesis 45:5 Joseph says to his brothers, "*And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.*" Instead of seeking revenge, Joseph has mercy and forgives his brothers, inviting their families to come and live with him in Egypt where they will all be taken care of during the rest of the famine. Joseph kisses his brothers, as a sign of his forgiveness and then we are told, "*After that his brothers talked with him*" (v.15). This is, of course, an incredible surprise to Joseph's brothers and to just about everyone who ever hears of these events. But it shouldn't be – because throughout all of the ups and downs in his life, we see that Joseph completely trusts God and His mercy. Again in 45:7-8 Joseph tells his brothers, "*And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So, it was not you who sent me here, but God.*" Joseph knows that despite his brothers wanting to hurt and harm him, God had a bigger plan, using their evil to bring about an incredible good. Joseph knew that God had used his brothers' treacherous ways to save not only Egypt and Joseph, but also the very ones who had betrayed him. And Joseph knows that God works like this because that is how God is.

We see this in our Gospel lesson, where Jesus teaches His disciples some shocking things. Society in His day lived by the rule "an eye for an eye". The Romans had a saying, "I give so that you give" – sort of a *quid pro quo*. And things haven't really changed all that much as I just heard someone say the other day that they believed the Golden Rule was, "Whoever has the gold, makes the rules." But Jesus tells His disciples to, "Love your enemies. If someone strikes you on the cheek, turn your other one to them. If someone takes your coat, offer them your shirt as well. And do unto others as you would have them do to you." Instead of just looking out for themselves or their own interests, Jesus says that His disciples are to be merciful and forgiving because...that is how God is!

Joseph knew of God's love and mercy, so he was able to forgive his brothers of the terrible things they had done to him, and even see how God would use their evil for good. Jesus, would not only teach His disciples of God's love, but show them and the world God's love when He gave His life on the cross to die for our sins. Our sins against God often make what Joseph's brothers did to him look like nothing. But instead of destroying or condemning us, God sent His Son to die for us so we could be forgiven. Jesus then teaches that because God is merciful towards us, and because God forgives us, this is how we are supposed to behave in the world today. Joseph, who lived almost 2000 years before Jesus died and rose again understood this – how much more should we, who live on this side of the cross, be merciful and forgiving?

Martin Luther said that God forgives freely and without condition, out of pure grace, because this is what He has promised. In a world that far too often lives by “an eye for an eye” and believes that whoever has the money makes the rules, people need to know and be reminded of God’s love and forgiveness. So, Luther reminds Christians that their forgiveness of others does not earn God’s forgiveness, but is a sign alongside of the God’s promise. It’s a sign that Joseph showed his brothers and a sign that all of us can show to whomever God brings into our lives as well, by being merciful and forgiving. Amen.

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.**

Bethany’s Prayer List

Thanksgiving

- Nashua - (infant son of Robby & Annie Russman) - baptism today
- Mitch Myers - recovered after surgery

Entrusting into God’s Care

- Nathan & Sarah Federwitz - Lutheran Bible Translators
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Clyde (friend of Dave Johnson) - upcoming heart procedure
- Earlene Francik - medical tests
- Shannon (relative of Tim Potter) - cancer
- Darrell (friend of Barb Deetz) - health issues
- Carolyn (mother of Mary Vezina) - health issues
- Bernice Stonewall (former member) - recovering after surgery
- Ella (friend of Zimmermans) - recovering after surgery
- Harold Schoen - recovering after surgery
- Ron Prescott - recovering after surgery
- Tom Larson - health issues
- Everly Zimmerman - knee injury
- Dave Christian - cancer treatment

- John Hamm - recovering at assisted living in Waukee
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

Homebound

- Verlyn & Paul LeFevere - at home

Mourning, friends and family of

- Jeremy (relative of Elaine Behrens) - died 2/12
- Colleen (friend of Kroemers) - died 2/18
- Charlotte (relative of E Kroemer) - died 1/23

Serving Our Country

- Aiden (grandson of Foremans) - US Army
- Mallory (friend of Abi Clark) - IA National Guard
- Amber (daughter of Ann Balvanz) - US Army, Germany
- Ben (son of Kroemers) - IA National Guard
- Devin (friend of Kroemers) - IA Army National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy

Collect of the Day

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in You, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; 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

Merciful Father, through Holy Baptism You called us to be Your own possession. Grant that our lives may evidence the working of Your Holy Spirit in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, according to the image of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior...

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.