



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

March 30, 2025 A.D. – The 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.

Psalm

From Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin!

For I know my transgressions,

and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,

and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

Scripture Lesson

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

¹Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus]. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

³So he told them this parable: . . .

“There was a man who had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them.

¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’” ²⁰And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’” ²²But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’” ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’” ³¹And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

Sermon

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

Our Scripture reading today is one of the most cherished and famous parables of Jesus - The Prodigal, or wasteful, Son. The religious leaders at the time were complaining that Jesus was hanging around some of society’s least favorite people – prostitutes, Jewish men who were loyal to the invading Romans, and so forth. So, Jesus told them a story to show them how things work, not according to their ways, but according to God’s.

A man had two sons. One son came up and asked for his inheritance. This would be unheard of because as we all know, an inheritance, even today, is only given when someone dies. So, this younger son comes up to his father and basically says, “You’re dead to me! Give me your stuff!” In response to this outrageous request, the father actually divides his property, and gives the younger son his share. Now, most people listening to Jesus first tell this parable would have thought the father had went insane. But there may have been a few, who would have seen what the father had done as an act of love for his youngest son.

Unfortunately, the younger son takes his inheritance and goes off to a foreign land to live it up. He blows through all that his father had worked for by having a good time and is soon left with nothing. Remembering that as a Jew, pigs were unclean, Jesus says he becomes so desperate that he wished he could eat the food that the unclean pigs were eating. But eventually he comes to his senses. He’ll go back to his father, confess his sins, and ask to work as a hired servant. But he doesn’t want any mercy from his father or his brother. He’ll work for his living and to pay back anything he owes. This will still allow him some freedom and to save a little face.

Now just imagine if the parable stopped right here. Wouldn’t that be a nice little moral story for all of us. We’d learn that there are real and sometimes unpleasant consequences for our

actions. Or perhaps we might learn that if you make a mistake in life, you should go and fix the problems you have caused. For the religious leaders who didn't like Jesus hanging out with the sinners, this story would have been to their liking. A sinner should repent and try to make amends for what they had done. I think that even most of us would have liked it if the story would end right here. It has been said that we are a nation of second chances. So, when our politicians, or sports stars, or movie stars mess things up, we like to see them say they are sorry and go into therapy, do some community service, or maybe even spend a little time in jail. But once they have paid their debt to society, most of the time all is forgiven and if they win championships or make a great movie, or pull some favors for the community in Des Moines or Washington, then they are usually welcomed back with open arms.

But thankfully, Jesus doesn't end the story right here. He's telling us how things work according to God's plans. And so, when the father sees the son coming home, he runs out to meet his son and hugs and kisses him. At this point the son begins his speech that he had been working on. *"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son..."* But before he can get to the part about making amends for his sin, the father orders the servants to prepare a celebration because his son, not a new hired servant, but his son was dead and is alive again. The son never mentions anything about working for his father and it's not because he was interrupted, but because he was overwhelmed by the father's grace.

This father is really something, isn't he. First the son tells him he wishes he was dead, so he gives him his inheritance. And then when the son comes crawling back home, he puts a robe on his back and ring on his finger, they kill the fattened calf and have a party. But remember Jesus is telling this parable to show us how God works. And just as Jesus, the Son of God loved those sinners that He ate with, the father in our story loves his son so much that once the son says he is sorry, everything is all right. For the father was not worried about the money, he was devastated over the broken relationship that existed between him and his son. And there is no amount of work on the son's part that can repair this broken relationship except to repent. Except to say, "I'm sorry" and trust in the father's grace, mercy, and love. And when the father hears this, he knows the relationship is back where he wants it.

All people everywhere should rejoice that this is how our God works. For the Bible says that all of us have sinned and pulled away from our Father in Heaven. It doesn't matter if we are young or old. Living in the same town where we were born or half way around the world. The Bible tells us that flesh gives birth to flesh, and therefore we all have been born in sin. And yet despite of that sin, despite of that rift in their relationship, God longs to welcome back all those who have been lost. He does this through the sacrament of Holy Baptism, that actually does something – that is it washes away our sin and brings us back into the family of God. Not as a hired hand, but true sons and daughters of the living God.

It does not matter if one is a relatively innocent or the worst of sinners and tax collectors whom Jesus was eating with - God loves us all and welcomes back everyone who turns from their sin. He does not ask that we make amends for our wrongdoings. He does not ask that we pay some sort of price. This would be how the world says we need to repair our relationship with God. But God doesn't listen to the world, and so instead of us making amends, He sends His own Son Jesus Christ to the cross. He cleanses us through the waters of baptism. He gives us His body and blood at His table. All of this, so that we can be back with God. Back in His family. So that those who were once dead, now can have life and have it abundantly. 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.

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

- Luci Stoelting - recovered after fall
- Derek (son of Hackbardts) - recovered after surgery

Entrusting into God's Care

- Noah Pelletier traveling to Moldova serving Ukranian refugees
- Tony Dixon & family (King of Kings DCE) - house fire on 2/25
- Nathan & Sarah Federwitz - Lutheran Bible Translators
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Linda Patten - recovering after surgery
- Rick Foreman - recovering after surgery
- Kelly Johnson - life issues
- Pat Krekeler - recovering after hospitalization
- Ron Prescott - recovering after surgery
- Tom Larson - health issues
- Dave Christian - cancer treatment
- Deb Heitland - health issues

- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

Homebound

- Carol Grimminger - Cottage Grove

Mourning, friends and family of

- Kim (relative of Shirley Witte) - died 3/19

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
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - IA National Guard
- Harrison (son of Siecks)- US Army, Germany

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.

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.

