

TEACH US TO *Pray*

An Order of Worship for the Home

March 21, 2021

This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.

There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we continue our Covid adjustments related to gathering, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit www.calvaryslz.org to give online.

Invocation

Reader 1: We invite you, Father,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We ask you, Jesus,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We desire your presence, Holy Spirit,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We need you, God...
Reader 2: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Reader 1: Teach us to pray.
Together: Amen.

Psalm 127:1-2

¹Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.

²It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.

Confession & Absolution

Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.

Christian Confessing: My prayers are weak and faltering. My thoughts waver and my words wander. Some days I enter prayer oblivious to my own sin and the holiness of the God I approach. Other days, I struggle to pray on account of the guilt I feel. I fail in the action of prayer. I fail in the attitude of prayer. My struggles in prayer reflect my struggles in all of life. I need forgiveness. I need faith. I need a Savior.

Christian Responding: Know for certain, that your God loves you. He meets your weak prayers with his strength. He meets your faltering prayers with the certainty of his promises. Jesus is your Savior, and he grants you forgiveness. He sends his Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith. He invites you to pray to your Father in confidence. Your heavenly Father gives good gifts to his children. You are his child, and his gifts are yours.

Together: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: The Fourth Petition (Luther's Small Catechism)

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

Exodus 16:9-21

⁹Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.'" ¹⁰And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.¹¹And the Lord said to Moses, ¹²"I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

¹³In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. ¹⁶This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.'" ¹⁷And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. ¹⁹And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning."²⁰But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. ²¹Morning by

morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.

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.

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

³⁴“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Message

Therefore

We're going to work through today's gospel reading, but first I'd like to provide some focus. We're in our series on the Lord's Prayer and we've come to this request:

Give us this day our daily bread.

I think the first part of Martin Luther's explanation gives good direction for how to think about this line.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

We want to remember God is the source of our daily bread. We ask for daily bread because of a need to receive and a need to realize the source. Our gospel reading, taken from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, can help us with this. Let's look at that reading.

Therefore... (Matthew 6:25)

We have to pause here. I have a friend in Texas who would always remind me to ask, "What's the therefore there for?" It's a good habit. That opening word alerts us that what's coming is a next step. We're continuing from a conclusion previously mentioned. In this case, Jesus has been teaching us to store up treasures in heaven, instead of storing up treasures on earth. He's been contrasting earthly wealth with heavenly values. He's reminded us that when we chase money or property it begins to set our direction. He closed that section with "You cannot serve God and money." Then, he said, "Therefore..."

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (Matthew 6:25)

Money will compete for attention. Possessions will draw your focus away from what's really important. Therefore, do not be anxious about these things or what they claim to protect.

Think about this: Worry is the entry point for the idolization of money. Worry is the place where money and possessions sneak into our minds and offer answers. They offer solutions to calm our anxiety.

The German pastor and writer, Dietrich Bonhoeffer had this to say in regard to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6. "The way to misuse our possessions is to use them as an insurance against the morrow." (The Cost of Discipleship, chap. 17)

Possessions will not ease our worry. Money will not alleviate anxiety. In their attempt to answer 1 challenge they will bring 5 more. So, Jesus gives an invitation – not a command, mind you – to stop worrying. You have no need to worry. It becomes obvious that "do not be anxious" is an invitation as we make our way into the topics which follow.

Your life is not defined by food and drink. Your body is not valued according to what covers it. Jesus brings a series of rhetorical questions. They gently remind us how easy it is for our thinking to be steered away from the truth. Life is bigger than your next meal, right? Your body is more than a mannequin or dress form to display the latest fashions, isn't it?

He's caught our attention with his questions. He's brought up food and clothing, two very basic needs. Yet, these needs quickly become wants, and those wants lead us in new directions. Listen as Jesus addresses each of these in turn.

²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:26)

There's really nothing to say, is there? Jesus isn't looking for a verbal response. He's pointing out what you already know, and he's reminding you that you do not need to worry. Are you not of more value than the birds?

Uh, well, I guess you're right, Jesus.

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? (Matthew 6:27)

If we translate the Greek wording more directly, it reads something like this. Can worry stretch the journey of your life one cubit further? Of course not. Not even one cubit. That's about 18 inches, by the way – less than a full step. But worry can't give us even that much!

²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (Matthew 6:28-30)

O you of little faith. That can sound a bit condescending. However, it's tricky to translate what Jesus is saying here. One commentary I read suggests "you little faiths." The root word is faith, which recognizes the presence of faith. But this is faith with room to grow. It's a reminder that we are mere children in faith, and our Lord looks forward to the day when we will mature in this gift.

So, he asks us children in faith, if we recognize that God will care for us much more than he cares for the grass and flowers. Once again, he is not looking for a spoken response. Once again, if we gave one, it might sound like this.

Uh, well, I guess you're right, Jesus.

Therefore... (Matthew 6:31)

What's the therefore there for? In light of these reminders of how our heavenly Father cares for all of creation, and cares for us...

³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (Matthew 6:31-32)

Therefore, don't worry! There's no need to be anxious about these things! When you worry about these things, you sound like the rest of the world. But your treasure is in heaven, and you're chasing after that treasure. You have a different goal from this world, and that makes your life look different.

By the way, does your life look different? Do your priorities take you in a different direction? Does it look like you're chasing a different set of goals from the rest of this world? Or do you look rather like the world around you?

There's no need to chase what this world tells you is so important. Your heavenly Father knows what you need. If you need it, he knows. If he moves your life in a direction different from what you want, could you change that anyway? Would you change it if you could?

Your heavenly Father knows what you need.

³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

Seek first, but not simply first in a list of all the things you want to acquire. Jesus doesn't move on to a second, third, and fourth. Seek first, to the exclusion of all else!

Seek the kingdom. Seek the reign of God. Look for him at work in this world and in your life. Where do you seek him? How do you do this? Start by seeking him in the places he's promised to be found.

Your God is at work in the water of baptism; changing lives and calling people into his family. He's at work in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. In this meal we receive the very body and blood of Jesus which brings to us gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and faith.

Seek God among his people. Jesus promised to be present wherever 2 or 3 gather in his name. He gave his Holy Spirit to us and that Spirit dwells among us, as a gathered community.

Seek God in his Word. The Word of God is living and active, and your God speaks through that Word. Spend time in that Word. Read it with the people in your home. Remember FAITH5? I hope you remember. I hope you've brought it into your home. Reading God's word is one of those 5 daily practices. It's a discipline we take on as families.

Seek the reign of the King and the movement of his kingdom in these places. Look for it! Watch for it! Hunt for it!

As you seek you may wonder, what does the reign of my King look like? There's a reference to Jesus as King later in Matthew's gospel. It serves as a good reminder for what the reign of your King looks like in this world.

And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. ³⁶Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." (Matthew 27:35-37)

The King went to the cross for his subjects. He took the place of sinners like you and me. The King became a servant and a sacrifice. That's what defines his reign. Love for you defines your King.

Your King died, but he also rose again. He is the One who defeated death. He knew exactly what you needed. He provides all that you need.

Seek first this King. Seek his reign in this world and in your life. Seek this and you'll see that there's nothing to worry about. Seek the One who came to serve, and allow yourself to be served by him. Allow him to serve this world through you.

Therefore... (Matthew 6:34)

This time you know what it's there for.

³⁴“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:34)

“Do not be anxious.” This is God’s gracious invitation. Remember Luther’s words from earlier?

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow.

Therefore, allow yourself to look different from this world.

Therefore, seek God among his people and in his Word.

Therefore, give thanks to God who provides all you need.

Therefore, there’s nothing left for you to accomplish.

Therefore, stop trying to build a kingdom. You already have a place in his.

Therefore, know that you are loved by your King.

Therefore, do not worry. Your King supplies daily bread and so much more.
Amen.

Prayers and the Lord’s Prayer

Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord’s Prayer together.

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.

Offering Prayer

If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.

Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.

Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.

Reader 2: Receive our offerings.

Together: Receive us as your own. Amen.

Blessing *(Philippians 4:4-7)*

Reader 1: The Lord is at hand;

Reader 2: do not be anxious about anything,

Reader 1: but in everything by prayer and supplication

Reader 2: with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to God.

Reader 1: And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

Reader 2: will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

Together: Amen.

As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at www.calvaryslz.org. We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.

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