

**The Lord's Prayer: In Life and Faith | Luke 11:1-4**  
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For over a year now we've been on a mission to cover the six chief parts of Luther's Small Catechism here in worship. So far we've taken a look at the 10 Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and this morning we are wrapping up this four week series on the Lord's Prayer. Stay tuned though, because in January and February of 2020 we're going to tackle the Sacraments...Baptism and Communion, and we'll also take a look at confession as well. Martin Luther, he wrote these important and telling words concerning the catechism,

*...each morning, and whenever else I have time, I do as a child who is being taught the catechism and I read and recite word for word the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the catechism daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the catechism - and I also do so gladly.*

See, the goal of this is to take us all back to the basics of our Christian faith. No matter when you when through Catechism class, no matter how learned you are, we all need to continually have our foundation strengthened and built up. So we started with the commandments, that is, God's instructions to His people and to you and me. Then, with the Creed, we saw not what God demands *from* us but what God has done *for* us. In that creed, as we recite it each week, we see God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

Now we come to the Lord's Prayer. We come to God in prayer in order to help us live out this Christian life, to follow his law, and to continually receive his gifts. Again, we hear Luther,

*We are in such a situation that no one can keep the Ten Commandments perfectly, even though he or she has begun to believe. Besides, the devil, along with the world and our flesh, resists them with all his power. Consequently, nothing is so necessary as to call upon God incessantly and to drum into his ears our prayer that he may give preserve, and increase in us faith and the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments and remove all that stands in our way and hinders us in this regard. That we may know what and how to pray, however, our Lord Christ himself has taught us both the way and the words, as we shall see.*

Indeed Jesus has given us the way to pray and the words to pray. And we've seen these past three weeks and we'll see again today that Jesus doesn't give us a

complicated prayer. It's certainly not a wordy prayer. But it's a prayer that allows us to come to God, seeking the good things that He has to give us.

Now, we've been moving slowly through this prayer. In fact, so slowly that we're only just now, in the last week of this series, starting to talk about the petitions of the prayer that we actually pray for ourselves. See, we've focused intently on *God* these last three weeks. First, we saw that God is our Father who...

- 1) Is Present with us
- 2) Has done something for us
- 3) Wants to connect with us

This is our heavenly father to whom we pray! And more than that, we saw in week two that this heavenly father is both unconditionally loving *and* perfectly holy and righteous. And both of these things come together in Jesus who actually makes happen in us that which the Father demands. God demands perfection and righteousness from his children, and though we can't make that happen in ourselves, Jesus makes it happen for us through his life, suffering, death, and resurrection.

Finally, last week we talked about the coming of God's Kingdom. It has come to us in time and space first through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, and now through the written Word and the Sacramental Word. God's kingdom comes about as the Gospel is preached and as we eat and drink His body and blood. But God's Kingdom also comes at the *end* of time when Jesus himself, our risen Lord, returns so that we too might experience that same resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

So it seems, based on what we've seen these last three weeks that we have it all. We have it all, don't we? We have an incredibly loving heavenly father who is present, who has defeated sin and death, who desires a relationship with us and beckons us into this relationship through his word and prayer and worship. Not only that, but our Heavenly Father has also bestowed on us his infinite mercy and grace by making us holy as he is holy. Our sins are buried with Christ and we have risen to new life by grace, through faith. And not only that but we have this promise of our Lord that he will return so that eternity is ours with him.

We have it all, do we not? So it seems that the Lord's prayer ought to just end there. We pray for all these things that God gives us anyway...we know that he gives it to us. Done. Why say any more?

Well, because God has also given us the ability to draw breath in and let it out, he has made this thing in our noggins that somehow makes us conscience and allows us to move about and, well, live. And to live we need some things. We need sustenance, we need the things that make life possible.

"Give us this day our daily bread"

And when we're talking about daily bread we're not just talking about a hunk of Franz. When we're talking about daily bread we're talking about food, sure, but also drink, clothing, shoes, house, money, property, spouses, children. Daily bread even goes so far as good government, good weather, peace, health, honor, good friends, good neighbors.

In his large catechism Luther expounds on what 'daily bread' actually means. It's not just at meal time. It's the way in which God holds us and rules over this physical world which he created. It's everything that makes life possible. Daily bread is a prayer for good government which seeks justice for each and every one of its citizens.

All of this we need and we need it continually. Each and every day we must be sustained. Therefore, we pray each and every day that God would give us all that we need for that day. We pray that God would continue to sustain us with all that we need to make life possible.

It may sound trite, it may sound petty to pray for such things but Jesus tells us that we have a heavenly father who wants to give us good things. In fact, just after Jesus teaches his disciples to pray in Luke 11, Jesus goes on to draw a little comparison between our earthly fathers and our heavenly father. Luke 11:9ff:

*And I tell you, ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

Even though God does give us these things, we go to him in prayer, asking, seeking, knocking, because it constantly reminds us from whom all these things come. All food, clothing, good government and protection, they all come from God. God has set them up for us, for our own benefit. We, though, are self-sufficient people who want to believe that all these things come from ourselves and from our own hard work. But if you've ever planted a garden or anything like that, you know exactly how much comes from God.

Earlier this summer Jen planted a yellow tomato plant on our front yard. It's in this small little planter right next to our garage...not a whole lot of space. We were good about watering it for the first few weeks and then we kind of slacked off. You think that would be bad but evidently this little tomato plant loves this little spot it's planted in because it's not a little tomato plant any more. In fact, we couldn't really keep up with it, confining it to the tomato cage we put around it. It got out of control, almost blocking the entrance to our house. It grew at an incredible pace, and once it started producing fruit, it just

pumped out tomatos by the bowl-full. And it still is! Please, come by our house and pick some of these tomatos. There are too many of them!

But when you plant something like this and it produces fruit, when you have a front-row seat to your own food production rather than buying it in a grocery store all pre-packaged for you, you see just how little control you have over what God' earth produces. Even for the most basic of necessities we rely on God and His provision for us. We're reminded of this each and every time we say, "Give us this day our daily bread..."

### **Forgive Us Our Sins...**

There is, of course, more to the prayer than just daily bread. Added to all that we have said about God we still pray that God would forgive us our sins...as we forgive those who sin against us.

Similar to the previous petition, we know that God grants us forgiveness on account of Jesus and his death and resurrection. But we pray for this anyway because, well, we need it *continually*. For we still sin. We still wander off from God. So our prayer is that God will continually...over and over again...forgive us our sins. And this is what we need because if God doesn't deliver to us the forgiveness of sins day in and day out we are lost. We are hopeless.

In addition to this, the forgiveness of sins gives us the confidence to come before God and continue to bring our prayers to him. Thus, we can be confident that, because our sins have been forgiven, because God looks upon us with grace and mercy, our prayers are heard.

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But there's a second part to this petition, right? Forgive us our sins...as we forgive those who sin against us. In Matthew 18, Jesus tells a parable to his disciples after Peter, the spokesman for the group, wants to know how many times he ought to forgive someone. Peter suggests seven times as a more than fair number. The old Jewish teaching was that three times was the magic number. Forgive someone three times and you're off the hook. So Peter more than doubles that number in an effort to perhaps impress his Rabbi, Jesus. But Jesus' answer is more impressive. Not just seven times...77 times.

This is the extravagant love of God we see in Jesus. The love of our Heavenly Father that knows no bounds. This is the extravagant love of God in Jesus that is given to us as a gift and then flows out from us. Forgive us our sins...as we forgive those who sin against us.

What Jesus is teaching isn't a quid pro quo type of thing here. It's not as if there is a balance sheet where once we forgive another one of our sins is marked off and so on. No, that's foolish because, frankly, y'all would still be drowning in your sins. Jesus shows us what this looks like by giving us an anti-example. He tells a parable that demonstrates how and why we ought to forgive others.

[read matthew 18:23-35]

We have been forgiven much...thus from us flows that same forgiveness to our family, friends, neighbors, yes even strangers! Forgiveness is a gift we have received. And all that we receive from God in this prayer, the Lord's Prayer, all of it, forgiveness, daily bread, the kingdom of God made manifest through Jesus and his Word, it's not just for ourselves.

It's for the world. It's for our families, it's for our neighborhoods. We pray for God's blessings, his fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, his holiness and righteousness, his kingdom, his blessings of daily bread, and his forgiveness...all these gifts for which we pray in the Lord's Prayer...we pray that they would come for us...indeed for the entire world. Now and on into eternity. Amen.