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Midweek Lent 3  
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Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita  
The Lord's Prayer

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

Now that we've been shown our sin with the Lord's 10 Words  
and seen how each comes to us as a protective gift—

and now that we've received the creed  
as a clear confession of who God is and what He does—

Today we learn how to call upon the Lord in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

But before we take a close look at the Lord's Prayer in particular,  
it'd be good to consider why we pray in the first place.

Luther, in his Large Catechism, gives us four very good reasons to pray.

The *first* is simply because God *commands* us to pray.

The second commandment, as you remember from your Catechism, says,

“You shall not misuse the *name* of the Lord your God.”

What does this mean?

“You should fear and love God so that you do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble; pray, praise, and give thanks.”

Here we see in the very commandment that prayer is required of us.

By praying, we use the Lord's name for the purpose that He gave it to us.

That's also why, when we pray, we always pray,

“In Jesus' *name*—”

or,

“Through Jesus Christ.”

But the Lord didn't just command prayer,

He also graciously promised to *hear* our prayer.

(This is the *second* reason for prayer.)

In Psalm 50:15 we hear,

**“Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”**

And again, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, we hear,

**“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” (Mt 7:7-8).**

With these passages and many others like them we hear of a God who delights in hearing what His people have to say—

He promises to *hear* and *answer* and *give* us all good gifts from above.

The *third* reason we pray is because He puts His own words into our mouths.

In our Gospel reading for today Jesus says,

**“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this:**

**Our Father...”** (Mt 6:7-9).

Our Lord Jesus gives us the “Lord’s Prayer” not merely as an example of *how* to pray, but as *the* prayer that has with it the sure and certain guarantee that He delights in our prayer and desires to answer it.

So it is that the Lord’s Prayer serves as the foundation of our Spirituality.

We pray it before receiving Holy Communion,  
at home before bed,  
in the morning when we wake up,  
and even at times before meals.

If you’re ever in doubt about what to pray,

then pray the Lord’s Prayer—

all that we could ever want or need or imagine,  
even heaven itself, is included in that prayer.

And the *fourth* reason Luther gives for why we should pray, is because of our sinful flesh, this fallen world, and the evil works of the Devil.

Prayer is there for us when we’re in trouble, or hurt,  
when in pain or agony,  
frustration or despair,  
when life is at its end—and even at its beginning.

We are to pray when the governments of this world oppress their people,  
when earthquakes and Tsunamis strike,  
and when life gives us its worst:  
cancer, diabetes, heart attacks, and disease.

For all these things, and for all these reasons we are to pray.

And yet, how often do we fail to pray?

How often do we put prayer off until we’ve cleared our schedule a bit—  
done this or that first?

How often do our home devotions slide into the background,  
even get bumped out of our hectic lives?

How often do we despise prayer by considering it worthless or powerless?

Repent.

Prayer isn't an option, not a take-it or leave-it, or a suggestion to help you out—  
as a Christian you're required to pray.

If you don't, you're taking the Lord's name in vain,  
and in a much more serious way than saying, "O my God."

What's more, is that by not praying you're refusing the promises that He'll *hear* and *give* much more than you could ever imagine.

That's how it is with prayer;  
when you pray, the Lord gives you whatever you want or better—  
it's never worse.

And don't think your prayers are a bother to Him,  
"Oh, I don't want to waste His time with that little thing..."

That, too, is despising the Lord's Name.

If you want health, ask for health.  
If you want to be superman, ask to be superman.  
If you want world peace, pray for world peace.  
And if you want to be with the Lord, pray for Him to take you.

You'll never be disappointed with prayer—  
if He doesn't make you superman, it's because He's got something much better in store.

There's no fear in asking Him—  
remember, He's your Heavenly Father—  
and that brings us to the Lord's Prayer.

*"Our Father who art in heaven..."*

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He truly is our Father and we are truly His dear children.

And like Jesus says in Matthew's Gospel,

**"Which of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?"**

and,

**"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?" (Mt 7:9,11)**

*"Hallowed be Thy name."*

To be sure, God's name is certainly holy in itself,  
but we pray here that it may be kept holy among us, too.

*How is that?*

This is so when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as children of God, lead holy lives according to it.

So the Lord's name is hallowed, or sanctified, wherever true doctrine is preached and believed.

*"Thy kingdom come..."*

The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself, without our prayer,  
but we pray that it may come to us also.

*How does His kingdom come?*

The kingdom comes to us when the heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit so that by his grace we believe His holy Word and live a godly life.

That means the Kingdom comes to us wherever the Gospel is preached,  
baptism applied,

and the people of God are fed with the Lord's Supper.

*"Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*

To be sure, the good and gracious will of God is done without our prayer,  
but we pray that it may be done among us also.

*How is God's will done?*

Whenever He breaks and destroys every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world,  
and our sinful flesh,  
and when he strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his Word and in faith even  
to the end.

This is his good and gracious will:

That the Law do its work of showing our sin,  
and the Gospel do its work of healing, and raising us from the dead.

*"Give us this day our daily bread."*

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to the wicked,  
but we pray that God would teach us to recognize this and receive His gifts with  
joy and great thanksgiving.

*And, what is daily bread?*

Everything.

Everything that sustains and nourishes  
and blesses and protects  
and comforts and heals—

both bread for the body as well as the life-giving bread for the soul.

*"And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."*

We pray here that our heavenly Father would not look at our sins, or deny our prayers  
because of them.

We don't deserve anything for which we pray, and yet we pray.

Although we sin daily and deserve nothing but punishment, we nevertheless pray  
that God grant us all things by his grace.

We also pray that we learn to forgive as we are forgiven.

*"And lead us not into temptation."*

While God tempts no one,

we pray that God would guard and preserve us that the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins,

but even in our temptation, that we may finally overcome and win the victory.

*“But deliver us from evil.”*

Here we actually pray that He would deliver us from *the evil one*—that is, Satan. And with that, may He deliver us from every evil of body or soul, possessions or reputation, and finally, when the hour of death comes, that he give us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

Finally, when you pray, always say, “Amen!”

“Amen” means that you believe the Lord’s promises to hear your prayer and give you more than you ask.

“Amen” is always *your* part.

Say, “Amen,” loudly and clearly after every prayer—whether in church or at home—confessing your faith in Christ to hear and answer.

Say, “Amen,” whenever you hear,

“In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;”

say, “Amen,” when the Body and Blood of Christ are held before your eyes.

Say, “Amen,” when your child receives a blessing at the communion rail.”

Say, “Amen,” when you receive the benediction and the Lord’s name is put on you.

Amen is always your part, and it confesses that you believe your Lord is the one who has promised to hear and answer and give you more than you could even ask for.

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*