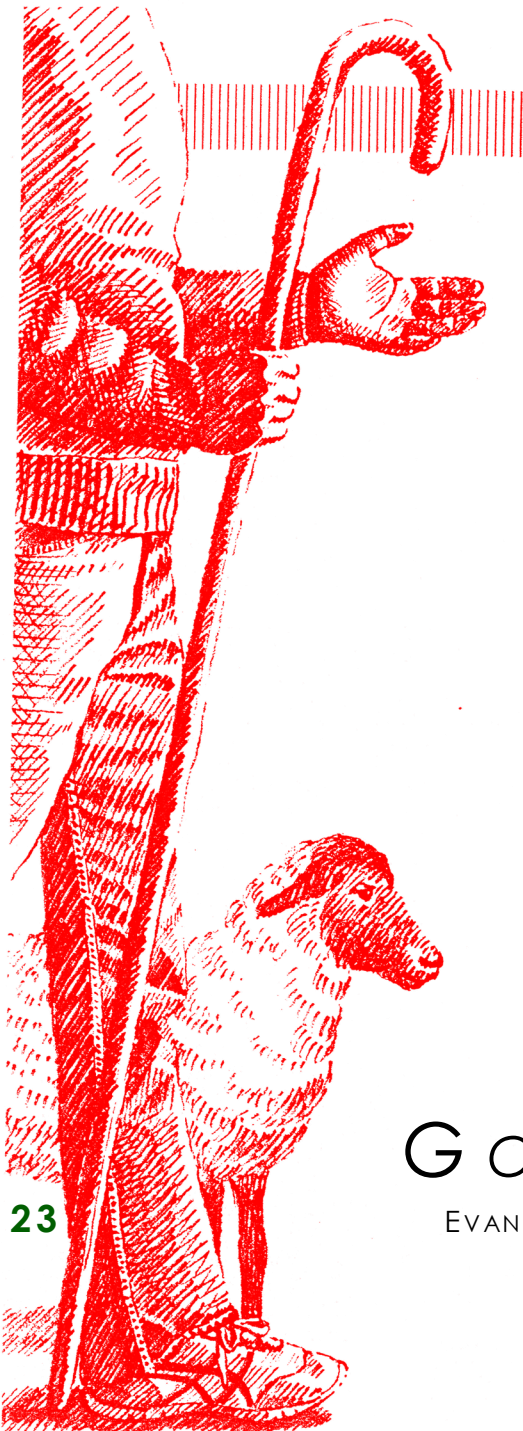


Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15



Daily 5 With Luther

23

GOOD SHEPHERD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, USA

*Serving all people with the
Gospel of Jesus Christ*

Pastor Paul A. Tullberg Pastor John T. Melke
3k-Gr.5 Principal/Educator Hannah E. Cook
ECM Director / Teacher Amanda Irwin

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1



December 1
THE LORD'S PRAYER
Thy kingdom come.

* * *

The second petition, like all the rest, does two things: it humbles and it lifts up.

It humbles us, in that it forces us to confess with our own mouths the dreadful calamity of our exiled state. But it lifts us up, for it instructs us how to conduct ourselves in our humiliation.

In the first place, it humbles us for a purpose: that we may fully know that the kingdom of God has not yet come to us. We have been driven into an exiled state because of our rebellion. We are still living among fearful enemies of the Lord God and all that is holy and good. We are deprived of the best of all countries.

Thus God the Father has been robbed of His kingdom within us. He who is, and will be Lord of all creation, does not, enjoy as He ought our lives as part of His power and glory. Our sin gets in the way. This hindrance of sin does in no small degree dishonor Him.

And we hang out as strangers and exiles in captivity among the most numerous and dreadful enemies of the world. This is the state of each one's life. Yet few can see things as they really are. If they would, it may justly be a greater cause of terror than a thousand deaths.

In the second place, Christ desires that we not fall into despair. This deep reflection humbles us. It truly revealed our calamity. Then swiftly follows the comfort, which lies alone in our kind Master, Christ. God taught us to pray. God desires that we be delivered out of this exiled state of sin and rebellion.

God will not impute the sin of those who feel they have placed a hindrance in the way of the kingdom of God. These souls are the crushed ones. In sorrow and distress they pray that God's kingdom might at length come to them. These then are believers.

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

Believers in Christ Jesus grieve over their sin and pray in this attitude. They are assured that God will not impute their sin, which otherwise He might justly punish.

**Your kingdom come! Yours let it be In time, and through eternity!
O let Your Holy Spirit dwell With us to rule and guide us well;
From Satan's mighty power and rage Preserve Your Church from age to age.**

December 2

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

*** * ***

This petition also humbles and lifts up: it manifests the ungodly and makes the godly. For at all times the Word of God works both judgment and righteousness.

Judgment is nothing else than someone knowing, judging, and condemning *himself*. And after having been thus brought to a knowledge of himself, righteousness is nothing else than a man's truly desiring and seeking) the grace and mercies of God.

We see then, first, that we judge and condemn ourselves by our own words. We confess that we are disobedient to God. We do not do His will. For if we really did the good will of God, this would be a useless petition given to us.

This prayer is to be used by us even to the very end of our lives. Thus the Lord is also teaching us how we really are and remain according to our inborn nature. Even to the moment of our death we are transgressors of the divine will.



"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

countless, damnable sins. Who is found to be free? And even if any one be of such moral goodness that he is not as yet polluted with these greater public sins, still he remains a debtor to God! For no one fulfills the law of God. No one displays the least gratitude or thanks to God for all the abundant gifts and generous benefits that he has received as God's dear child.



And therefore, if God should contend with him, that which Job said would be proved to be true. ***"If one wanted to take God to court, he could not answer God even once in a thousand times." (Job 9:3).***

And clearly, then, it is humility alone that keeps us safe, even those who live under grace. Our own sins are not imputed to us. Sin agrees with God and judge and condemns itself. Guilty ones plead for pardon. These are the ones who in turn mercifully pardon their debtors.

Secondly, there are also those who are debtors to us. For in His management of things, God forbids that some one or another should rise up who may trouble or injure our property. God forbids the tarnishing of our name or harm to anything else which belongs to us. Thus God gives us an occasion for not only repenting of our sins but the opportunities to freely and eagerly pardon our debtors.

And here, turn your judgment on yourself. But commune for but a moment with your own heart. Yes, see who and what you are. Then speedily turn your gaze. Today's mercies in Jesus Christ cause you to forget all the evils of your neighbor. You yourself will find both your hands full of, yes, even running over with, your own evils.

**Lord, all our trespasses forgive, that they our hearts no more may grieve,
As we forgive their trespasses who unto us have done amiss;
Thus let us dwell in charity, and serve each other willingly.**

**December 5
THE LORD'S PRAYER
And lead us not into temptation.
* * ***

From this short petition we again learn how miserable this life on earth is. Our entire life is only one long state of temptation. Even if we were all fired up with the desire for peace, and even if we were all directed our efforts to attaining it, it would be to no purpose. Why you ask? Think:

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

this life is a state of temptation, and so it will remain, whether there is temporal peace and goodwill or not.

Therefore we do not pray: "Take away temptation," but "**Lead us not into temptation.**" Temptation is of two kinds.

The one kind of temptation is from the left hand. This is the kind of temptation which drives us on to anger, hatred, bitterness, laziness, disgust, and impatience.



This is the kind of temptation that seeks us when we are in ill health or in poverty. This is the type of temptation that nips at our heels when we are treated with disrespect, or when we are under any of those things which bring grief and distress to the mind.

At those moments we pray: "O Father, this temptation comes upon me, I know, by Your permission. Therefore, according to Your Word and promises, send me help that it does not overcome me nor draw me away from you."

No one can be free from temptations. One may resist these evils and wisely escape them although it is only through prayer and by imploring the Lord's aid that this happens.

There is another kind of temptation from the right hand. This temptation drives us on to lust, pleasure, pride, greed, and conceit. In a word, this type of temptation coerces and deceives us into all those things which are sweet and pleasant to our sinful nature.



This type of temptation is the strongest when there is no restraint placed on self-will. This kind of temptation is strong when words, opinions, and works are praised, when honor is paid, and one is promoted. In short when one is lifted up, this temptation comes.

In conclusion, there is nothing we are to so watch and guard against after God has forgiven us our trespasses as that we fall not again into the same filth from which the Lord has washed us clean.

**Into temptation lead us not; And when the Foe doth war and plot
Against our souls on every hand, Then armed with faith, O may we stand
Against him as a valiant host, Through comfort of the Holy Ghost.**

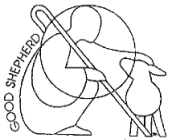
**December 6
THE LORD'S PRAYER
But deliver us from evil.**

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

God rightly judges us according to the strictness of His judgment. Based on His holiness and perfection, we are judged without excuses and loopholes. We stand guilty, immoral and damned every moment of our life.

And secondly, God reveals what true righteousness is. The reason He does this is so we will deeply examine ourselves and discover that we sinners have placed ourselves outside of God's kingdom. Grieving sinners need not despair on account of any judgement of God, no matter how one may feel such justice is rightly deserved.

Rather the Lord bids us flee to the grace of God. He urges us to most firmly believe and trust in Him. It is His good and holy will to deliver us from disobedience and the transgression of His will.



For the soul who stands righteous before God humbly admits his rebellion. God wants sinners to admit their transgressions deserve the strictest judgment of God. And God wants sinners so crushed by the Law to seek His grace with all his heart.

Such a repentant sinner is to not doubt that he shall receive God's promise of grace and mercy.

**Your will be done on earth, O Lord, as where in heaven You are adored!
Patience in time of grief bestow, obedience in weal and woe;
Our sinful flesh and blood control that thwart Your will within the soul.**

**December 3
THE LORD'S PRAYER
Give us this day our daily bread;**

* * *

Here, now, we consider the poor bread-basket, the necessities of our body and of the temporal life. It is a brief and simple word, but it has a very wide scope.

When you mention and pray for daily bread, you pray for everything that is necessary in order to have and enjoy daily bread. At the same time you are also praying against everything that interferes with you receiving daily bread.

Therefore you must open wide and extend your thoughts.

Go beyond the oven or the flour-bin. Go to the distant fields and the entire land. The system that God has put in place that bears and brings

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

to us daily bread and every sort of sustenance. For if God did not cause it to grow, and bless, and preserve it in the field, we could never take bread from the oven or have any to set on the table. To summarize it briefly, this petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in the world.

To serve Christ Jesus as best as He will enable us, He alone generously provides all that is needed: spiritually, emotionally, physically. On that account alone we ask for daily bread. Now for our life it is necessary that our body have food and covering and other necessities. But we also have a need to spend our days in peace and quiet among the people and nation with whom we live. These are the souls we interact with in daily business and conversation and the like.

In short, whatever and all that pertains both to the domestic and to the neighborly or civil relation and government is included in this singular request. Do you see it now? This is the way our Father wishes to indicate to us how He cares for us in all our needs. This is how God desires to faithfully provide for our temporal support.

And although the Lord abundantly grants and preserves these things even to the wicked and knaves, yet God desires that we pray for these blessings. He does this not to benefit Himself, but so that we may benefit. We are the ones who need to recognize we receive these gifts from His hand. Thus we see His fatherly goodness toward us.

**Give us this, day our daily bread and all that for this life we need;
From war and strife be our Defense, from famine and from pestilence,
That we may live in godly peace, unvexed by cares and avarice.**



**December 4
THE LORD'S PRAYER
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

* * *

By grace, we are under the view that every soul is a sinner against God. Each soul also has those who have sinned against him, debtors to, himself. *Firstly*, we are sinners against God. We are in such great, ceaseless and

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

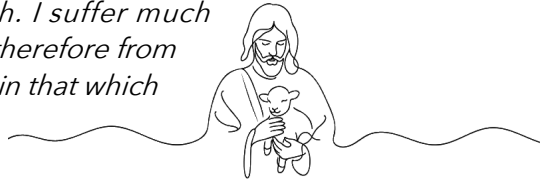
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Here note carefully that it is at the end that we prevent by this prayer, and are taught to prevent, the evils themselves. We may beg of God that these evils may be forestalled and hindered. Yet the petition comes in its proper order, in the last place.

There are not a few who honor God and pray to Him only that they may be delivered from evil. All such souls seek after is to fend off evil. Such individuals rarely if ever think anything about the first petition. They do not seek to prefer the honor, name and will of God to everything else.

Rather these fools seek their own will only, they want to be delivered from their own troubles whether God wills such deliverance or not. They care not a twit whether what they request is to God's honor or not.

Contrast such a godless attitude with the praying of a truly God-fearing man who worships this way: "*O dearest Father, the trouble of this evil that is come on me burdens and distresses me much. I suffer much adversity and disquietude of mind. Deliver me therefore from these evils. And yet, do this in no other way than in that which may redound to Your glory, honor, and praise. I do not want my will, but Yours to be done.*"



For the honor and will of Your divine Majesty are dearer to me than all my own peace or advantage, either temporal or eternal."

This is a consistent and correct prayer, which will without doubt be heard in heaven. But if we pray from any other motives, that type of worship will neither please God nor be heard at all.

We ought to pray to be delivered from evil for this reason: that the will of God may be done, that His kingdom may come, that praise and glory of His holy name may multiply.

**From evil, LORD, deliver us! The times and days are perilous;
Redeem us from eternal death; And when we yield our dying breath,
Console us, grant us calm release, And take our souls to Thee in peace.**

**December 7
THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Amen!

* * *

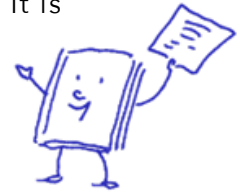
The word ***Amen*** means "certainly" or "truly." It is a term worthy of particular notice, because it is expressive of faith. Faith is necessary for all our petitions. Jesus Christ said: "***Therefore I tell you, everything that you ask for in***

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24). One who is ready to pray ought to test and examine himself: does he believe or doubt that he shall be heard.

For God has most certainly promised us that we shall receive whatsoever we shall ask in prayer. How shall it please God, if by our unbelief we call Him a liar?! How shall it please God if the whole of our prayer acts within us against the very prayer itself?!

Amen therefore is a term expressing a solid soul-faith. It is as if one would say: *"I do not doubt, O divine Father, that that for which I have prayed will be done and accomplished. This shall happen because You have commanded that these matters be requested.*



Lord, You have promised that You wilt grant them. Therefore it does not depend on the worthiness of my prayer. My prayer depends on the worthiness of Your Word. Your Word is truth and fully persuades me to believe. Your promises convince me beyond all doubt that all is and will be, Amen."

All prayer must and shall firmly rest on the truth and promise of God. For if God had not commanded us to pray all creatures together could not obtain one single request. And if God had not promised beforehand that He would hear us, all creatures together could not obtain one single grain of profit by all their prayers. however urgent they might be.

It is the Word of God and His promise, not our devotion, that makes the prayer good. In such a right and righteous prayer our faith rests on the Word of God. Then the Lord brings our state of mind to His place of blessing.

**Amen! that is, so let it be! Confirm our faith continually,
That we may doubt not, but believe that what we ask we shall receive;
Thus in Your name and at Your Word we say: Amen; O hear us, LORD!**

December 8

I have kept my feet off every evil path in order to keep Your words. I have not turned from Your judgments, because You yourself have instructed me.

Psalm 119:101-102

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One person instructed Luther that those who ascribed too much to the literal Word were actually sinning against God and His almighty power. They were doing as the Jews did in naming the ark God as their blessing instead of the Spirit of the Lord God. Luther corrected him in the following manner:

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1



You err in that you cut asunder and separate the Word and the Spirit! You separate those that preach and teach the Word from the living God who works the same Word. And the ministers who baptize? You also separate them from God who commands it. You think that the Holy Spirit is given and works without the Word. And you claim the Word is an external sign and mark that finds the Spirit. You claim that the Spirit has already taken residence in the heart is that then grasps the Word.

According to your false opinion, if the Word does not find the Spirit, but is heard by an ungodly person, then it is not God's Word! Thus you define the Word but you do not define it according to God who speaks it. You define it according to how people entertain and receive it!

You still claim God's Word is what purifies and brings peace and life. But when the Word does not work in the ungodly, you claim it is not God's Word! Do you see what you are claiming?! You will not yield that **God's Word is the very instrument through which the Holy Spirit has choses to work and carry out His work.** The Word even prepares the beginning to righteousness or justification. It is the Word, from beginning to ending.

Therefore I say: Teach the truth. Recognize that the Word, whether it produces fruit or not, is God's strength, His power, and the Word of God saves all who trust in Jesus.

**Your Word's the power of God to save from sin and Satan and the grave;
It works the faith which firmly clings to all the treasures which it brings.**

December 9

You reject all who stray from Your statutes, because their deceitfulness is built on a lie. You discard all the wicked of the earth like slag. Therefore, I love your testimonies.

Psalm 119:118-119

* * *

I have lived to see the greatest plague on earth! What is this tragic plague? The ridiculing of God's Word. This scourge is so great and fearful that it surpasses all other plagues in the world! For when the Word is belittled all kinds of eternal and corporal punishments shall surely follow! If I had sinfully intended to wish to anyone all bitter plagues and curses, I would wish against him the ridiculing of God's Word. For in this one affliction are all



Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

the other bitter plagues. In this way he would have all the plagues at once, both inward tragedies and outward misfortunes.

What afterwards follows such a mockery of God's Word the wicked shall know to their sorrow. The ridiculing of God's Word is the forerunner and messenger of all of God's punishments. The Scriptures witness for us the examples of Lot, Noah, and of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Those who will acknowledge that the writings of the Evangelists are God's Word we are willing to encounter in a dispute. But when someone denies the same, we refuse to exchange even a word. This is true also with one who rejects the first books of the Bible.

Some are of the opinion that the first principle among the five books of Moses was not written by Moses himself! How foolish to claim Moses did not write that book and yet debate it as Moses' book.

Many other cold and fruitless opinions and questions we therefore firmly reject. And we do not listen to them but rather shun them. We do not want to even suggest that there is any good in clinging to their false opinion which is against God.

**Those haughty spirits, LORD, restrain, who o'er Your Church with might would reign,
and always set forth something new, devised to change Your doctrine true.**

December 10

Those who pursue evil plans are near, but they are far from your law. You are near, O Lord, and all Your commandments are truth.

Psalm 119:150-151

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Dr. Justus Jonas told Dr. Martin Luther of a noble and powerful Misnian. This character above all things occupied himself in amassing gold and silver. Yet he was so buried in darkness that he gave no heed to the five books of Moses.

At one time Duke John Frederic was discussing the Gospel with Misniah who said: "Sir, the Gospel pays no interest." Upon hearing this Luther interposed "Have you no grains?" Then Luther told this fable: A lion making a great feast, invited all the beasts, and with them some swine. When all manner of dainties were set before the guests, the swine asked: "Have you no grains?"

Even so in these days, continued Doctor Luther, it is with our epicureans. We preachers set before them the most dainty and costly dishes. These delights are everlasting salvation, the remission of all sins, and God's abundant grace and mercies. But these fools, like swine, turn up their snouts, and ask for money. It is to offer a cow nutmeg, and she rejects it for old hay.

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1



This reminds me of the answer of certain parishioners to their minister. The minister had been earnestly exhorting them to come and listen to the Word of God. "Well," said they, "if you will tap a good barrel of beer for us, we'll come with all our hearts and hear you." The Gospel at Wittenberg is like to the rain which, falling upon a river, produces little effect; but descending upon a dry, thirsty soil, renders it fertile.

Bread of our souls, whereon we feed, True manna from on high; Our guide and chart, wherein we read of realms beyond the sky: Lord, grant us all aright to learn the wisdom it imparts; And to its heavenly teaching turn. With simple, childlike hearts.

December 11

The wicked are lying in wait for me to kill me, but I will ponder Your testimonies. I see a limit to all perfection, but Your commandment has no limits.

Psalm 119:95-96

* * *

The great unthankfulness, the contempt of God's Word, and willful ignorance of the world that keeps it in darkness—such tragedy. It makes me fear that the divine light will soon cease to shine on man. Why am I in temptation to feel this way? I know that God's Word has always had its sure and certain path even in the time of the Apostles.

Do not misunderstand. Yes, there were heresies, errors, and evil doctrines spread abroad by false brethren. Then came Arius, and the Word of God was hidden behind very dark deceiving clouds.

But by God's grace, the holy fathers: Ambrose, Hilary, Augustine, Athanasius, and others, were given to God's people and used by the Holy Spirit to disperse the murkiness.

Greece and many other countries have heard the Word of God, have they not? But think: they have abandoned it. And today as I look about, it is to be feared even now the Word may abandon Germany and go into other lands.

I hope the Last Day will not be long delayed.

The darkness grows thicker around us.

Godly servants of the Most High become scarcer every day.

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

Impiety and brazen depravity are rampant throughout the world, men live like pigs, like wild beasts, devoid of all reason.

But a voice shall soon be heard thundering forth: '*Behold, the Bridegroom comes.*' God will not be able to bear this wicked world much longer. But He shall keep His Word. The Lord shall come, with the dreadful Day. God Himself will rebuke those that scorn His Word.

**O grant that in Your holy Word we here may live and die, dear Lord;
When finally ends our journey here, receive us into glory there.**

December 12

I have inherited your testimonies forever.

Yes, they are the joy of my heart. . . . You reject all who stray from Your statutes, because their deceitfulness is built on a lie.

Psalm 119:111, 118

* * *

I have grounded my preaching upon the literal Word of God. He who pleases may follow me. He who will not follow may stay. *There is no coercion, no force of my will against another.*

Rather I call on the Lord who spoke through St. Peter, St. Paul, Moses, and all the saints. Did they ever fundamentally comprehend one single Word of God, without studying it over and over and over again?

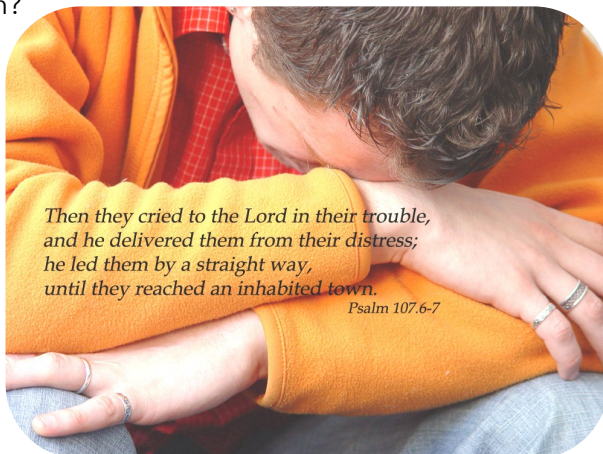
Think: the Psalm says: *His understanding is infinite.*

The saints, indeed, know God's Word. They can talk about God's Word. But the practice of God's Word is another matter. In this by God's grace we shall ever remain students.

Here a fine analogy may be used: it is as with a sphere or globe. A globe lying on a table touches it only with one very small point. Yet it is the whole table which supports the globe.

Though I am an old doctor of divinity, to this day I have not gotten beyond the children's learning – the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. I do not understand these so well as I should, even though I study them daily.

If I thoroughly appreciated these first words of the Lord's Prayer, "**Our Father, who art in heaven,**" if I really believed that God, who made heaven and earth, and all



“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1

creatures, and has all things in His hand, is my Father, then I would certainly conclude that I also am a lord of heaven and earth.

Then I would correctly understand that *all* the angels are my attendants. I would appreciate that these heavenly creatures have given to me by my Heavenly Father to keep me in the path. They are taking such care just in case unawares I knock my foot against a stone. What unseen mercies of God surround my daily walk!

**Your Word is everlasting truth:
How pure is every page! Your holy
Book shall guide our youth,
And well support our age.**



December 13

**I hate the doubleminded, but I love your law. You are my Hiding
Place and my Shield. I wait confidently for Your word.**

Psalm 119:113-114

*** * ***

The Holy Scriptures surpass in their effectiveness all the arts and all the sciences of the philosophers and judges. Although these are good and necessary to life here below, they are useless and have no effect as to what concerns the life eternal.

The Bible is to be regarded with wholly different eyes from those with which we view other productions. He who completely renounces himself, and does not rely on mere human reason, will make good progress in the Scriptures.

But the world does not comprehend them, out of sheer willful ignorance they place human reason and thought above God's own words and thoughts.

Can anyone who does not understand God's Word even come to truly understand God's works? We have a picture of the world and God's Church, which shows how things work.

The ungodly Cain was a great lord in the world. His brother Abel, was an upright and pious man. Yet Abel was an outcast, subject and oppressed by his brother.

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

But before God the case was quite contrary: Cain was rejected by the living and holy God. Abel was accepted and received as God's beloved child. Now let us think on further point:

Ishmael is also a fair name, "hearer of God," while Isaac's was little. Esau's name means "actor," or "the man that shall do the work," Jacob's was nothing. The name Absalom signifies "the father of peace."

Do you not see? The ungodly always bear such fair and glorious colors in this world. The ungodly appear in bold and fanciful tints and shades. But the reality, the truth and deed, are that they are mockers, scoffers and rebels who love darkness and deceit and are set against the Word of God.

But by that same living and active Word, God be praised, we are enabled to discern and know all such matters. Therefore let us hold the Bible in precious esteem, and diligently read it.

**How precious is the Book divine, By inspiration given;
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine, To guide our souls to heaven.**

December 14

**How sweet are Your sayings to my taste, sweeter than honey to my
mouth! From your precepts I gain understanding.
Therefore, I hate every false road.**

Psalm 119:103-104

* * *

The Holy Scriptures are such wisdom that we must continually remain students of them. We are unable to sufficiently fathom the depth of one Word in them. When we think we understand a great deal in them, we have scarcely learned the a-b-c's.



Who is able to know himself? We see and learn how badly man's heart is spoiled and poisoned by original sin. This sinful nature is deeply rooted

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

in us and we cannot rid ourselves of it. Similarly, we find God's word and will far deeper than that we with our five senses can comprehend it.

To the understanding of the worldly wise there is no lighter nor easier art than Divinity. They claim it is a simple matter to fully understand God's Word. But they shoot far from the mark.

Why do they think this way? The cause which makes people think that Divinity is so easy and light is this: they soon weary of it and are quickly filled. The wise of the world, and the great ones, do not understand a jot of God's Word.



But the living God has revealed it to the poor, ridiculed, simple people, as our Savior witnesses: At that time, Jesus continued, **"I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from clever and learned people and have revealed them to little children."** Matthew 11:25

St. Gregory speaks well and rightly that the Holy Scripture is like a lake. It is a lake in which an elephant must swim, but it is a lake through which a little lamb can safely walk.

No greater disobedience can ever happen to Christian people than when God's Word is taken from them and falsified. How arrogant that the counterfeit, the phony, the error-riddled confusion is held up loftily as good and holy.

How beyond sadness that the very words of the living God are not retained pure and clear by God's own blood-bought people. God grant that we and ours may not live to see such mischief take effect.

**Lord, open now my heart to hear, And through Your Word to me draw near,
Let me Your Word e'er pure retain, Let me Your child and heir remain.**

December 15

I have more wisdom than all my teachers, because Your testimonies are my meditation. I have more understanding than the elders, because I guard Your precepts.

Psalm 119:99-100.

* * *

Whoever has made himself master of the principles and text of the Word runs little risk of committing errors. A theologian should be thoroughly in possession of the basis and source of faith: the Holy Scriptures.

It was armed with this knowledge that I confounded and silenced all my adversaries. God's enemies do not seek to fathom and understand the Scriptures. They pass them over negligently and drowsily. God's enemies speak, write, and teach according to the suggestion of their heedless and foolish imaginations.

My counsel is this: Let us draw water from the true Source and Foundation, that is, let us diligently search the Scriptures. The one who wholly possesses the text of the Bible, is an accomplished doctor of divinity.

One single verse, one sentence of the text, is of far more instruction than a whole host of glosses, footnotes, annotations and commentaries. These things are neither strongly penetrating nor an armor for defense of the Word.

For example, Before me I have that text, those words of God through His apostle Paul. It is written: **"In fact, everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving."** This text shows that what God has made is good.

Now eating, drinking, marrying, etc., are of all God's making. Therefore they are all inherently, and by definition, good. Yet the glosses and annotations of many ancient fathers disagree with this text. The



“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1

“scholars” Bernard, Basil, Jerome, and others, have written to far other purposes. But I prefer the text, God’s Words, to them all, though, in the papacy, the glosses were deemed of higher value than the bright and clear text.

**Divine Instructor, gracious Lord!
O be forever near;
Teach me to love Your sacred Word,
And view My Savior there.**

December 16

I have hidden Your sayings in my heart, so that I may not sin against You.

Blessed are You, O Lord! Teach me Your statutes.

Psalm 119:11-12

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The Bible, Holy Scripture, is like a most beautiful and spacious orchard. In this orchard all sorts of trees grow. From those trees we may pluck various kinds of fruits. In the Bible we have rich and precious comforts, teachings, admonitions, warnings, promises, threats, etc.

The Holy Scripture is full of divine gifts and godly virtues. The books of the heathen taught nothing of Faith, Hope, and Love.

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

Think clearly on this matter: the heathen knew nothing at all of these things.

Therefore their books are aimed only at that which was present and current which they can apprehend with natural wit and understanding. A human creature is able to comprehend and take hold of some such temporal matters. But about trust in God? About eternal hope in the LORD? No! There was nothing written in their books because they are unable to see or comprehend such weighty matters.

In the Psalms and in Job we may see and discover in just those two books how to treat and handle Faith, Hope, Patience, and Prayer.

To be short, the Holy Scripture is the best and the most precious book of God. The Holy Scripture is full of comfort in all manner of trials and temptations.

The Holy Scriptures teaches about Faith, Hope, and Love, in ways far other than human reason and understanding can comprehend.

And, in times of troubles and vexations, only the Holy Scripture teaches how these virtues should light and shine.

The Holy Scripture likewise teaches and reveals that after this poor and miserable life there is another greater life, which is glorious, eternal and everlasting!

**This Lamp, through all the tedious night of life,
shall guide our way,
Till we behold the clearer light
of an eternal day.**

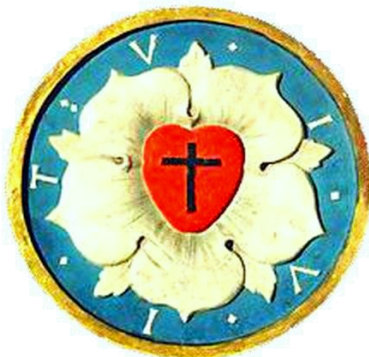


"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
In ev'ry generation!
Praise Him all creatures here below! He gave to us salvation!
Praise Jesus Christ, the LORD of heaven,
Who died and rose to life again
All sins are gone! The Father's Son
Has given me salvation!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
In ev'ry generation!
Praise Him all creatures here below! He gave to us salvation!
Praise Him above, angelic host!
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
Let all creation praise the Lord
With love and adoration.

Tune: "Oh Tannenbaum" Text: Paul A.Tullberg



Selections from Luther's Commentaries-St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 1535, Edwinus London; Epistles of St. Peter & St. Jude 1523, E. H. Gillett; Select Works of Martin Luther 1555, Rev. Henry Cole; Familiar Discourses of Luther 1566, Capt. Henry Bell, Rev. R.D.Fish; The Lutheran Hymnal; Rev. J.T. Mueller, 1925; Rev Paul A.Tullberg 2024.