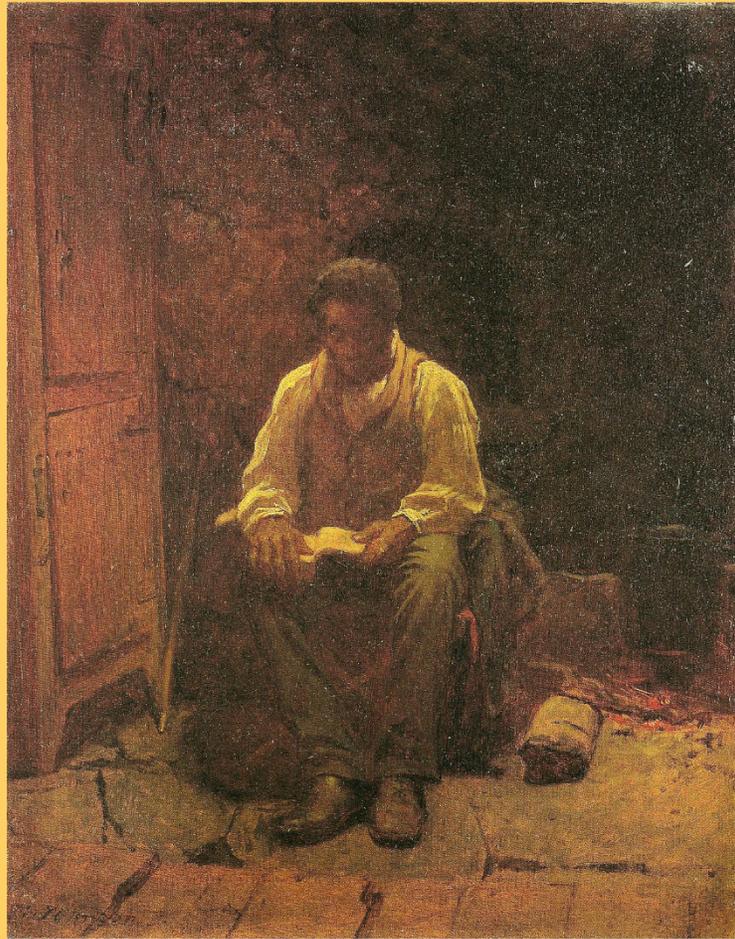


The
DEVOTIONAL
CHALLENGE
BOOK



Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller

THE DEVOTIONAL CHALLENGE BOOK

Pastor Bryan Wolfmüller

DRAFT: Ash Wednesday, 2017

Dedication

For the Catechumens of Hope Lutheran Church,
that you would delight in the Lord's Word.

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A Note About This Edition

Dear Friends,

You have in your hands a draft edition of the Devotional Challenge Book. This workbook has been written to build strong devotional habits of daily hearing the Lord's Word and praying the Scriptures back to God.

This is a working draft edition. If you find any errors, or have any suggestions, please send them to me. My email address is bwolfmueller@gmail.com. I would very much appreciate all feedback regarding the helpfulness of this text.

This book is available as a free download at www.wolfmueller.co/devotionalchallengebook. Links are also there to purchase the workbook through lulu.com.

May our Lord and God Jesus Christ keep us steadfast in His Word.

Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller

Hope Lutheran Church, Aurora, CO

Acknowledgements

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Many thanks to Pastor Andrew Packer who helped with the idea, editing, and motivation of this text!

Introduction: A Daily Delighting in the Lord's Word

It came as a surprise to me that the Bible never once talks about the Christian reading the Bible. We are never commanded, encouraged, or instructed to read the Scriptures. Instead, the Scriptures command us to “hear” God’s Word, “meditate” on God’s Word, and “delight” in God’s Word.

The book of Psalms begins with this this promise:

**Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
or sits in the seat of the scornful.
But his delight is in the law of the LORD;
and in his law does he meditate day and night.
And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
that brings forth his fruit in his season;
his leaf also shall not wither;
and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalm 1:1-3)**

Verse two gives us the purpose of this Devotional Challenge Book. We want to train ourselves to delight in the Lord’s word, and meditate on it night and day. We want to hear the Lord’s Word, rejoice in the Lord’s Word, delight in the Lord’s Word, believe, pray, and use the Lord’s Word fruitfully. We know that His Words are the “words of eternal life” (John 6:68), and that “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The Lord’s Word is our treasure (Psalm 19:10), our joy (Psalm 119:111), our light and salvation (Psalm 119:105). It gives us wisdom (Psalm 119:98) and peace (Psalm 119:165) and all the treasures of heaven.

The Lord’s Word also informs our prayers. When we pray we are not pulling words out of the corrupt depths of our own heart (Mark 7:20), but taking up the Sword of the Spirit to wield against the devil and the world in our prayers (Ephesians 6:17-18). Our prayers are rich and strong when they well up out of the Lord’s Word, hidden in our heart.

When we pray we are beginning to keep the Second Commandment, and use the Lord’s name in a good and fruitful way. When we meditate and rejoice in the Lord’s Word we are beginning to keep the Third Commandment and make holy our days and ourselves. Our sinful flesh does not know how to believe in God, and so it does not know how to pray or meditate on the Scriptures. These things are taught to us by the Lord Himself. The disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray,” (Luke 11:1), and we ask the same thing, that the Lord would make us His students, that He would open our ears to hear His Word, and open our lips to “make our requests known to Him” (Philippians 4:6).

About this Workbook

This text is designed as a workbook to be used for 16 weeks. At the end of this workbook the reader should be equipped to sustain the daily work and joy of hearing God’s Word and prayer.

Each week introduces a new Devotional Challenge.

The daily worksheets which follow instruct the Christian in that particular challenge. When you begin you will only need this workbook, but as you progress you will begin using your own Bible, hymnal, and

other resources. We will warn you ahead of time when you will need to have supplemental texts, but here is a list for those of you who like to plan ahead.

Week 10: Bible

Week 16: Notebook or Journal

The plan of this Devotional Challenge Workbook is such that you are working your way out of the workbook and into the Bible and other devotional texts. The workbook is training you away from this workbook.

In the first few weeks you will only need a couple of minutes for each day's challenge. As the challenges are added each week there will be more time required, reaching a maximum of 15 or 20 minutes on week 8. This time is long enough to spend some time with the Scriptures and in prayers, but brief enough to not be burdensome. Of course, any time we open the Scriptures we could spend hours considering and praying the words. This workbook is not intended to be a burden, but rather bring the blessing of the Lord's Word into our ears and hearts.

This Devotional Challenge Book is designed to be used individually, but it can also be used as a family or with a group. It is offered to the church with the prayer that it will be helpful for the Gospel, that the Word of Christ would dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16) and bear the fruit of life and salvation.

This workbook may be downloaded for free at www.wolfmueller.co.

Lord's Blessings,

Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller

Ash Wednesday, 2017

Week 1 Challenge: A Time for Prayer

We are all busy, and the devil loves it. We run around this way and that doing all sorts of stuff: working, playing, talking, doing, fixing, moving. Some things are good, some are useless, some are bad, but the devil uses this busyness to push out time for hearing the Lord's Word and prayer.

Our schedule, though, can be used as a tool against the devil. We can schedule time for prayer.

With all of the various duties and obligations, it is almost impossible to give appropriate attention to hearing the Lord's Word and to prayer unless we plan to do so. So, this week's challenge is:

SCHEDULE A TIME FOR PRAYER

For the prayers this week you will only need 2-3 minutes. (As we add more challenges you will need a bit more time, perhaps 10-15 minutes, but we are starting very slow.) Pick a time and a place where you will pray each day on the top of the next page. Then, after you pray each day, mark the time and place that you actually prayed.

We are working toward matching up our plans with our prayers, but don't feel bad if you don't get it done. If, for example, you planned to pray every morning at 5:00 am in your bedroom, but never woke up until 8:00 am every morning, don't skip your prayers. Write in your log that you prayed at night before bed. And, next week, try to schedule a different time for prayer that works with your schedule.

It is helpful to pick a time on the edges of our activity. The history of the church has proven that first thing in the morning or the last thing in the evening are some of the best times for our individual prayers and devotions, like meal-times are the best times for family devotions.

The prayers this week and next are so short that you could pray anywhere, but we will soon need a time and place for reading and reflection, so pick a place and time that you think will mostly be uninterrupted. Also, we want to begin to pray out loud, so it is good to have a private location.

We introduce, this week, the five basic prayers of Evangelical Piety: The Invocation, The Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and the Morning or Evening Prayer. It is always appropriate to offer other prayers for ourselves and others.

Week 1 Workbook and Prayers

I plan to pray each day at _____ (time) at _____ (location).

(Use the following chart to log your prayers)

Sunday:	_____ (time)	_____ (location)
Monday:	_____ (time)	_____ (location)
Tuesday:	_____ (time)	_____ (location)
Wednesday:	_____ (time)	_____ (location)
Thursday:	_____ (time)	_____ (location)
Friday:	_____ (time)	_____ (location)
Saturday:	_____ (time)	_____ (location)

PRAYERS (to be prayed out loud)

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE 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.

PRAY 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.

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 2 Challenge: The Ten Commandments

Next to the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments are the most important words for our Christian living and praying. Most people think of the Ten Commandments as God's set of do's and don'ts, but they are much more.

First, the Ten Commandments are given to protect the Lord's gifts to us. For example, in the First Commandment, "You shall have no other gods," the Lord is giving us the gift of Himself as our God. In the Second Commandment we are given the gift of prayer, in the Third Commandment we are given the gift of God's Word, of His teaching, and of the church. The Fourth Commandment protects the gift of family, authority, and an ordered world. The Fifth Commandment protects life, the Sixth protects marriage, and the Seventh protects private property. The Eighth Commandment protects our name and our neighbor's name and reputation, and the Ninth and Ten Commandments protect our contentment and our hearts for all kinds of false desires. When we meditate on the Ten Commandments we are meditating on the gifts of God for our life in this world.

Second, the Ten Commandments give shape to our Christian love for our neighbor. Every day we are living in this world, acting, doing, talking and listening, and what we should do and say is not always obvious. So we fall back on this fundamental question for our lives and our prayers, "What is my station in life according to the Ten Commandments?" The Ten Commandments give shape to our Christian love for our neighbor.

Third, the Holy Spirit uses the Ten Commandments to calibrate our conscience. The devil is always working to confuse, disorient, and harden our conscience. He wants us to call "good" "evil" and "evil" "good". The devil wants us to think that our good works are sin, and that our sin is not that bad. He enlists the world and our sinful flesh to confuse our conscience. Meditating on the Ten Commandments helps keep our conscience tender and working properly.

This week's challenge is:

MEDITATE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

If you say your prayers in the morning, repeat the Ten Commandments *after* your prayers. If you say your prayers in the evening, say the Ten Commandments *before* your prayers. Say them word for word, out loud. You will soon have them memorized and learned by heart, and you will be carrying them with you everywhere you go.

You will also schedule your prayers this week. If last week's plan didn't work out, try a different time.

Week 2 Workbook and Prayers

I plan to pray each day at _____ (time) at _____ (location).

(Use the following chart to log your prayers)

Sunday:	_____	(time)	_____	(location)
Monday:	_____	(time)	_____	(location)
Tuesday:	_____	(time)	_____	(location)
Wednesday:	_____	(time)	_____	(location)
Thursday:	_____	(time)	_____	(location)
Friday:	_____	(time)	_____	(location)
Saturday:	_____	(time)	_____	(location)

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

PRAYERS (to be prayed out loud)

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE 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.

PRAY 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.**

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 3 Challenge: Hearing God's Word

God's Word is our great treasure in life. King David reminds us of this in the last half of Psalm 19:

**The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb. (Psalm 19:7-10)**

This week we add the Scriptures to our devotions, and give attention to hearing the Lord's Word. Our prayers are our words to God. The Scriptures is God's word to us. When we read the Scriptures we are hearing the voice of our Lord and God, our Creator and Redeemer. His voice gives us life and hope, forgiveness and salvation. We, then, want to spend our lives hearing and rejoicing in His Word.

This week's challenge is:

GIVING ATTENTION TO THE LORD'S WORD

A small section of Scripture is included for each day of the week. Read the text out loud at a moderate pace. Read with a pencil (or pen). Underline important sentences. Circle important words. Put a question mark next to things that you don't understand. There is margin around the text for notes, insights and questions.

The passages these next few weeks are intentionally short. Take your time. Stop and think about what you are reading. Ask questions of the text. "Who is talking? Who are they talking to? What is happening? What am I learning? What is important to remember? What is the surprise in this passage?"

You might want to read out of your Bible. Try reading the passages from the following pages for a few weeks. It is easier to mark up a workbook than you Bible. There is reading and there is *attentive* reading. We want to give our attention to these holy words.

We still want to schedule a time for prayer, finding a time that works best for us. We are also (and for the rest of our lives) praying the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.

Week 3 Day 1 Workbook

..... (date)

I plan to pray each day at _____ (time) at _____ (location).

John 6:66-69

_____ (time) _____ (location)

After this many of his [Jesus'] disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

What is the main teaching in this passage?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 3 Day 2 Workbook

..... (date)

Mark 8:27-29

_____ (time) _____ (location)

And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.”

What is the main teaching in this passage?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 3 Day 3 Workbook

..... (date)

Matthew 3:13-17

_____ (time) _____ (location)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

What is the main teaching in this passage?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 3 Day 4 Workbook

..... (date)

Luke 15:1-7

_____ (time) _____ (location)

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

So he told them this parable: “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 3 Day 5 Workbook

..... (date)

Acts 1:6-10

_____ (time) _____ (location)

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

What is the main teaching in this passage?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 3 Day 6 Workbook

..... (date)

Matthew 9:1-8

_____ (time) _____ (location)

And getting into a boat he [Jesus] crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 3 Day 7 Workbook

..... (date)

Mark 7:24-30

_____ (time) _____ (location)

And from there he [Jesus] arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 3 Prayers

PRAYERS (to be prayed out loud)

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE 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.**

PRAY 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.**

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 4 Challenge: Looking for Law and Gospel

God speaks to us in two different words: the word of the Law and the word of the Gospel. The Law is God's word of instruction, it tells us what to do and how to live. The Law always demands, and the promises of reward for keeping the Law are always conditional. The Law is summarized and put forth completely in the Ten Commandments. Because we are sinner the Law always accuses us. Like a mirror it shows us our sin and our great need for a Savior.

The Gospel, on the other hand, is the free and gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins through the death of Jesus on the cross. While the Law commands and threatens, the Gospel promises and forgives. The Gospel is unconditional, a free gift from God not based on our actions, works, or even on who we are, but is God's gracious work and attitude towards us.

Both the Law and the Gospel are God's Word, and the Bible contains both. (In fact, both the Old and New Testaments contain both Law and Gospel.) The Law and the Gospel are given for different purposes. The Law instructs us and convicts us of sin. The Gospel forgives us and comforts us before God.

When hearing the Scriptures, it is supremely important to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel. The Lutheran fathers said this about the distinction between Law and Gospel:

As the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a special brilliant light, which serves to the end that God's Word may be rightly divided, and the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles may be properly explained and understood, we must guard it with especial care, in order that these two doctrines may not be mingled with one another, or a law be made out of the Gospel, whereby the merit of Christ is obscured and troubled consciences are robbed of their comfort, which they otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached genuinely and in its purity, and by which they can support themselves in their most grievous trials against the terrors of the Law. (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration V.1)

This week's challenge is:

LOOK FOR LAW AND GOSPEL

Ask yourself, as you are reading, "Is this a command or a promise? Does this accuse or forgive? Is this about what I am to do or about what God has done for me?" Put an "L" next to the text that is Law, and a "G" or a "+" next to the passages of Gospel.

Readings this week are from St. Paul's epistles, where the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is most clearly seen. Continue to focus on attentive reading, underlining and marking the text, and reading and praying everything out loud.

Also focus on memorizing the words to the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. In the weeks to come we will stop printing these prayers and ask you to pray them from memory.

Week 4 Day 1 Workbook

..... (date)

I plan to pray each day at _____ (time) at _____ (location).

Sunday: Romans 8:18-23

_____ (time) _____ (location)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

What things are commanded (Law)?

What things are promised (Gospel)?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 4 Day 2 Workbook

..... (date)

1 Corinthians 10:6-13

_____ (time) _____ (location)

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

What things are commanded (Law)?

What things are promised (Gospel)?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 4 Day 3 Workbook

..... (date)

Galatians 5:16-24

_____ (time) _____ (location)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

What things are commanded (Law)?

What things are promised (Gospel)?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 4 Day 4 Workbook

..... (date)

Ephesians 3:13-21

So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering _____ (time) _____ (location)
for you, which is your glory.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family³ in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.
Amen.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

What things are commanded (Law)?

What things are promised (Gospel)?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 4 Day 5 Workbook

..... (date)

Philippians 1:3-11

_____ (time) _____ (location)

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace,⁴ both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

What things are commanded (Law)?

What things are promised (Gospel)?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 4 Day 6 Workbook

..... (date)

Colossians 1:9-14

_____ (time) _____ (location)

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

What things are commanded (Law)?

What things are promised (Gospel)?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 4 Day 7 Workbook

..... (date)

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

_____ (time) _____ (location)

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

What is the main teaching in this passage?

What things are commanded (Law)?

What things are promised (Gospel)?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 4 Prayers

PRAYERS (to be prayed out loud)

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE 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.**

PRAY 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.**

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 5 Challenge: Meditating on the Text

The Bible never talks about “reading” the Bible. It does talk about “meditating” on God’s Word. To meditation to think about, ponder, talk about, and give our minds and imagination over to a thing. Psalm 1 promises, “Blessed is the man ... [whose] delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

We mostly hear about meditation in connection with the eastern religions, where the goal is to empty our minds. Christian meditation is the opposite of this: we want to fill our minds and hearts with God’s Word.

A traditional picture of meditation is the cow chewing the cud. The cow takes a bite of grass, chews on it for a while, swallows it, spits it back up, chews some more, swallows again, spits up again, chews some more, and so forth. Meditating on the Scripture is something like this. We say the words, hear the words, think on the words, imagine the words, talk about the words, read the words again, pray the words, and so forth.

We see examples of meditation with people who love a sports team. They are always thinking, reading, learning, talking about that team. We are meditating on a song when it gets stuck in our head. We want to be this way with God’s Word, getting it stuck in our head, getting excited about the things we hear there. We want to delight in the Lord’s Word, and meditation on God’s Word is the way to get there.

We normally read to understand the text. This is of first importance, but when we meditate on the text we are also paying attention to our imagination and desires. The Holy Spirit is using the text to teach us, convict us, and comfort us.

It is helpful, when meditating on the text, to engage our imagination. We want, in this way, to “enter” the text. What are the sounds, the colors, the smells of the text? What to the different people want? How do the people feel? What is driving them to do what they do?

We also want the text to enter into our hearts. So we ask questions like, “What is God saying in these words? How do these words instruct me? Convict me? Comfort me?”

We often picture meditation as a solitary and silent practice, but Christian meditation is noisy! We are talking about the Lord’s Word with our family and neighbors. “talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6:7).

This week’s challenge:

MEDITATE ON THE SCRIPTURE

Each text is followed with a reflection question. Read the passage once out loud. Read the question. Then read the passage again with the question in mind. Write your thoughts after the questions. Look for opportunity to talk of these things with your family and friends throughout the day.

This is the last week that you will write the time for your devotions. If you are still having trouble developing the habit of devotions, please continue to adjust your plans. This is something to ask the Lord

for help with in your prayers. The words of the Lord's Prayer are also omitted. If you have not memorized this prayer, please see the prayers from the previous week.

Week 5 Day 1 Workbook

..... (date)

I plan to pray each day at _____ (time) at _____ (location).

Sunday: Matthew 4:1-11

_____ (time) _____ (location)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written,
“Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,
“He will command his angels concerning you,’
and
“On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.””

Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,
“You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.””

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Can you imagine the hunger of Jesus, and the smell of the bread the devil puts in front of Him?

How would it be to stand on the top of the temple and have the devil talking about the angels and their arms to catch you?

What would it be like for Jesus to be on the mountain and see all the nations of the world, and hear the devil's offer to concede all the nations to Him?

What does the face of the devil look like as Jesus quotes the Scriptures?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 5 Day 2 Workbook

..... (date)

Matthew 15:21-28

_____ (time) _____ (location)

And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

What was the life of this Canaanite woman, with her demonized daughter, like?

Why did she come to Jesus? What were her hopes? Her fears?

Jesus seems to insult her, telling her that she, a dog, should not take the children's food. How does she react?

How did she feel when she heard the promise of Jesus? How did she feel when she arrived home and found her daughter rescued?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 5 Day 3 Workbook

..... (date)

John 6:1-15

_____ (time) _____ (location)

After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Imagine the scene. The Sea of Galilee is close by. They can see the water, but they are not close enough to hear it or smell it. They are sitting on green grass on the side of a hill. They have been enraptured by the teaching of Jesus, but now He has stopped teaching, and they realized that they haven't eaten and are hungry. There are 5,000 men, and many women and children. They are especially interested in Jesus power to heal them. What are they thinking now, especially when Jesus tells them to sit down?

Imagine disciples. How did they feel when Jesus asks them to feed the crowd? How would it be when they see the miracle start to unfold, and the people all have enough to eat?

What other Scriptures come to mind as you hear this passage?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 5 Day 4 Workbook

..... (date)

Matthew 21:1-11

_____ (time) _____ (location)

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

“Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt,¹ the foal of a beast of burden.’”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

What did the donkey smell like? What did its hooves sound like walking on the coats and palm branches? Imagine the children singing Hosanna from Psalm 118. What did their faces look like? The faces of their parents? The faces of the Pharisees watching this unfold?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 5 Day 5 Workbook

..... (date)

John 13:3-10

_____ (time) _____ (location)

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet,¹ but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you."

How does the water sound as Jesus pours it into the bowl?

Imagine you are St. Peter. What are you thinking as Jesus comes to you, and takes your feet into His hands to wash them?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 5 Day 6 Workbook

..... (date)

John 19:16b-20

_____ (time) _____ (location)

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.

Much of the meditation in the Christian tradition is on the crucifixion of Jesus, as seen in the art and poetry, as well as the piety of the Church. It is important, as we imagine the crucifixion and meditate on the death of Jesus, that we remember that with was all for us and our salvation.

As you imagine the crucifixion of Jesus, think of this: how is the crucifixion of Jesus different than the crucifixion and death of the two men crucified with Him?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 5 Day 7 Workbook

..... (date)

Mark 16:1-8

_____ (time) _____ (location)

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

What were the women thinking as they walked through the darkness to the tomb of Jesus? Can you smell the spices they are carrying to anoint the body of Jesus? Can you feel their fear that they will be discovered? Can you imagine what they were thinking as they anticipated wrapping the body of Jesus with the grave clothes? What did they think when they saw the stone rolled back? When they saw the angel and heard his voice? What was in their mind and on their heart as they left the grave?

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 5 Prayers

PRAYERS (to be prayed out loud)

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE 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.

PRAY 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.**

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 6 Challenge: How to Read the Psalms

The Psalms are the prayer book of the Bible, and the foundation of our devotional life. For centuries the Lord's People have treasured the Psalms, and found in them help and consolation. The Psalms embrace all the contours of our human life, the joys and troubles, the fears and hopes, and they take our feet and plant them firmly in front of the face of God.

The Psalms assume that we are Christian, that we believe in God and hope in Him. The Psalms assume that we have trouble in this life, even that we have enemies. The Psalms assume that we need help, and that God is our helper.

The Psalms are poetry. They are written to be read, heard, and prayed again and again. Reading poetry is different from reading prose. A different approach is needed. There are two most important questions that we want to ask when reading the Psalms to help us get into the text.

The first question is: **“Who is talking to whom?”**

Is the Psalm a Christian talking to God (individual prayer)? Is it the congregation talking to God (corporate prayer)? Is it a preacher talking to the church or to the world (sermon)? Is it a troubled person talking to their enemies? It could be that the Psalm is God talking to us.

Note, please, that this can change throughout the Psalm. One verse might be a prayer, and the next verse a sermon! In one moment the Psalmist could be rebuking the enemies of God, and in the next verse his is praying to God for help and deliverance.

The second question is, **“What is the image?”**

The Psalms speak in pictures, and seeing and meditating on the pictures gets us into import and importance of the Psalms. “The Lord is my shepherd” brings all the imagery of the sheep resting in the shadow of their shepherd. I am that sheep. “God is our refuge and strength” has me on the ramparts of a strong castle wall, looking without fear over the armies that vainly march against me. “...he is like a tree planted by streams of water” has the coolness of a garden and the strength of the tree all bound up together, and this is contrasted to the dry and dust “chaff which the wind drives away. The images capture our imagination.

Often the Psalms will mix the pictures. Psalm 23, for example, begins with the image of the shepherd and his sheep to the image of a king at the banqueting table. When we identify the images we then listen to see how they interact with each other.

When we've identified who is talking to whom and what the images are, we can also look at the structure, the historical context, the use in the church, etc. But these questions come later. This week's challenge is to

MEDITATE ON THE PSALMS

Ask: “Who is speaking to whom?” and “What is the image?” Space will be provided to answer these questions.

Beginning this week, the words of the Lord's Prayer are omitted from the prayers. If you are still working to memorize these words, please refer to the previous devotions.

Week 6 Day 1 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 1

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.**

Who is talking to whom?

What is (are) the image(s)? (Circle the words that carry the imagery.)

(Remember to practice your active and attentive reading, marking, circling, underlining words. Continue to look for Law and Gospel, and practice meditating on the Psalms.)

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 6 Day 2 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 23

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.**

Who is talking to whom?

What is (are) the image(s)? (Circle the words that carry the imagery.)

(Remember to practice your active and attentive reading, marking, circling, underlining words. Continue to look for Law and Gospel, and practice meditating on the Psalms.)

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 6 Day 3 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 46

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.
The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah
Come, behold the works of the Lord,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
“Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

Who is talking to whom?

What is (are) the image(s)? (Circle the words that carry the imagery.)

(Remember to practice your active and attentive reading, marking, circling, underlining words. Continue to look for Law and Gospel, and practice meditating on the Psalms.)

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 6 Day 4 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 76

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**In Judah God is known;
his name is great in Israel.
His abode has been established in Salem,
his dwelling place in Zion.
There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war.
Glorious are you, more majestic
than the mountains full of prey.
The stouthearted were stripped of their spoil;
they sank into sleep;
all the men of war
were unable to use their hands.
At your rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both rider and horse lay stunned.
But you, you are to be feared!
Who can stand before you
when once your anger is roused?
From the heavens you uttered judgment;
the earth feared and was still,
when God arose to establish judgment,
to save all the humble of the earth.
Surely the wrath of man shall praise you;
the remnant of wrath you will put on like a belt.
Make your vows to the Lord your God and perform them;
let all around him bring gifts
to him who is to be feared,
who cuts off the spirit of princes,
who is to be feared by the kings of the earth.**

Who is talking to whom?

What is (are) the image(s)? (Circle the words that carry the imagery.)

(Remember to practice your active and attentive reading, marking, circling, underlining words. Continue to look for Law and Gospel, and practice meditating on the Psalms.)

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 6 Day 5 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 121

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.**

Who is talking to whom?

What is (are) the image(s)? (Circle the words that carry the imagery.)

(Remember to practice your active and attentive reading, marking, circling, underlining words. Continue to look for Law and Gospel, and practice meditating on the Psalms.)

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 6 Day 6 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 130

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!
O Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!
If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness,
that you may be feared.
I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.
O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.
And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.**

Who is talking to whom?

What is (are) the image(s)? (Circle the words that carry the imagery.)

(Remember to practice your active and attentive reading, marking, circling, underlining words. Continue to look for Law and Gospel, and practice meditating on the Psalms.)

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 6 Day 7 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 142

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**With my voice I cry out to the Lord;
with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord.
I pour out my complaint before him;
I tell my trouble before him.
When my spirit faints within me,
you know my way!
In the path where I walk
they have hidden a trap for me.
Look to the right and see:
there is none who takes notice of me;
no refuge remains to me;
no one cares for my soul.
I cry to you, O Lord;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."
Attend to my cry,
for I am brought very low!
Deliver me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me!
Bring me out of prison,
that I may give thanks to your name!
The righteous will surround me,
for you will deal bountifully with me.**

Who is talking to whom?

What is (are) the image(s)? (Circle the words that carry the imagery.)

(Remember to practice your active and attentive reading, marking, circling, underlining words. Continue to look for Law and Gospel, and practice meditating on the Psalms.)

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 6 Prayers

(to be prayed out loud)

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE 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.

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 7 Challenge: Pray the Psalms

We will spend another week working on the Psalms, and particularly focus this week on praying the Psalms. Many of the Psalms are already prayers, and we see in them the cry of the Christian's heart to God our only help in time of need. Other Psalms are teaching and instruction which informs our prayers.

When we read the Scriptures and pray we have an audience with God. He is speaking to us, and we are speaking to Him. He is in the room with us, or better, we are standing before His throne, listening to His decrees and giving Him our petitions.

It is often difficult, as we are reading our Bible and praying, to remember that we stand before God's throne of grace. This week's challenge, then, is

PRAYING THE PSALMS

We will stop, as we read and meditate on the Psalms, to pray. If the Psalm is already a petition, we will take it up as our own prayer for ourselves and our neighbors. If the Psalm is instruction, we will craft it into a prayer. We will work through Psalm 27 a verse at a time, practicing as we go. Read the verse, paying attention to the words. Ask who is speaking to whom. Look for the images. Consider how this verse is a prayer for you and your neighbors.

This will seem clumsy at first, but the more we practice it the more comfortable we become with turning the Lord's Word into our own prayers.

Here is an example of how it will work this week.

Psalm 4

- ¹ Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!
You have given me relief when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!**

Pray this verse with your own words:

*O God, You are my righteousness. You have always helped me when I needed help.
Hear my prayer today. Answer me. Be gracious to me.*

- ² O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?**

Pray this verse with your own words:

*You, Lord, are my honor. My baptism is my honor. Being a Christian is my honor,
but all the people around me mock me for this. They want me to be ashamed of being a*

Christian. They try to turn my honor into shame. How long will this go on, Lord?
Give me strength to rejoice in You as my treasure and my life.

Week 7 Day 1 Workbook

..... (date)

Sunday: Psalm 27:1

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?**

**The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?**

Who is talking to whom?

What are the images of this verse (circle the words that paint the picture)?

Pray this verse with your own words:

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 7 Day 2 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 27:2

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**When evildoers assail me
to eat up my flesh,
my adversaries and foes,
it is they who stumble and fall.**

Who is talking to whom (you will need to look at the context to answer this question)?

What are the images of this verse (circle the words that paint the picture)?

Pray this verse with your own words:

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 7 Day 3 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 27:3

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.**

Who is talking to whom (you will need the context to answer this question)?

What are the images of this verse (circle the words that paint the picture)?

Pray this verse with your own words:

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 7 Day 4 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 27:4

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple.**

Who is talking to whom?

What are the images of this verse (circle the words that paint the picture)?

Pray this verse with your own words:

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 7 Day 5 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 27:5

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.**

Who is talking to whom?

What are the images of this verse (circle the words that paint the picture)?

Pray this verse with your own words:

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 7 Day 6 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 27:6

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.**

Who is talking to whom?

What are the images of this verse (circle the words that paint the picture)?

Pray this verse with your own words:

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 7 Day 7 Workbook

..... (date)

Psalm 27:7-9

_____ (time) _____ (location)

**Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;
be gracious to me and answer me!
You have said, "Seek my face."
My heart says to you,
"Your face, Lord, do I seek."
Hide not your face from me.
Turn not your servant away in anger,
O you who have been my help.
Cast me not off; forsake me not,
O God of my salvation!**

Who is talking to whom?

What are the images of this verse (circle the words that paint the picture)?

Pray this verse with your own words:

(continue to the prayers...)

Week 7 Prayers

(to be prayed out loud)

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

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- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE 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.**

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 8 Challenge: Scripture and Psalms, Putting it Together

Both the Psalms and the other books of the Bible are important part of our devotional life. The reading the Psalms together with the rest of the Scriptures fills out our devotional life. We will work, this week, to combine all the things we've learned so far, reading both a Psalm and a portion of Scripture each day.

This week's challenge:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: READING THE PSALMS AND OTHER SCRIPTURES

You will, this week, need more time to complete your devotional challenge. If you do not have time to complete all the readings, do what you can with the time you've appointed. Each day's challenge should take about 15 minutes. Of course you could spend much more time with these readings and prayers. It is important to not become discouraged, and doing a little each day is better than doing nothing at all. Remember, we are working to build devotional habits that will endure for a lifetime. We are committing to spend teach every day of our life hearing God's Word and asking Him for the help we need.

If you are consistently running out of time, try reading only the first paragraph of the Scripture passage. You might also consider reading both in the morning and the evening, using the Scripture meditation to begin your day, and meditating on the Psalm before going to sleep.

We also begin, this week, on a reading plan for the Scriptures. We will read a chapter of the Gospel of Matthew each day, finishing in 28 days. In the last challenge of this book we will consider different reading plans and approaches as you are preparing to launch out on your own.

Each passage is followed by a few questions to help you focus on attentive reading, looking for Law and Gospel, and meditating on the text. Next week you will begin reading the Scriptures out of your own Bible.

The Psalms are specially selected this week and next. On week 10 we will begin to read through the Psalms in order.

Each Psalm is followed with a number leading questions to help you keep paying attention to the words, identifying who is speaking to whom, and seeing the pictures. One verse of the Psalm is bolded to turn into a prayer.

Week 8 Day 1 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 1

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, 8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

12 And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, 14 and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, 15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What is the importance of the genealogy of Jesus?

Can you imagine being Joseph, and receiving the message from the angel in your dream?

Psalm 33

1 Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous!
Praise befits the upright.

2 Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre;
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

3 Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

4 For the word of the Lord is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.

5 He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

7 He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;
he puts the deeps in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!

9 For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.

11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

13 The Lord looks down from heaven;
he sees all the children of man;

14 from where he sits enthroned he looks out
on all the inhabitants of the earth,

15 he who fashions the hearts of them all
and observes all their deeds.

16 The king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

17 The war horse is a false hope for salvation,
and by its great might it cannot rescue.

18 **Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,**

19 **that he may deliver their soul from death
and keep them alive in famine.**

20 Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.

21 For our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.

22 Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 18 and 19?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 8...)

Week 8 Day 2 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 2

The Visit of the Wise Men

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men¹ from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose² and have come to worship him.” ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶ “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

The Flight to Egypt

¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Herod Kills the Children

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.” 21 And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. 23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

Where is the comfort in the text?

How do the Old Testament promises quoted in verse 6 and 18 fit into the text?

Psalm 91

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say¹ to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”
- 3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 **He will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.**
- 5 You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
6 nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
- 8 You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.
- 9 Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge²—

10 no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.
11 For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.
12 On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.
13 You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.
14 “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows my name.
15 When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.
16 With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.”

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 4?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 8...)

Week 8 Day 3 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 3

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’”

4 Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, 6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

John the Baptist preaches repentance. Can you imagine being on the shore of the Jordan River and listening to John preach?

The baptism of Jesus is one of the most wonderful events in the Gospel. Can you see the Law and Gospel in the text?

Psalm 112

1 Praise the Lord!

**Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who greatly delights in his commandments!**

2 His offspring will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever.

4 Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;
he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

5 It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;
who conducts his affairs with justice.

6 For the righteous will never be moved;
he will be remembered forever.

7 He is not afraid of bad news;
his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.

8 His heart is steady; he will not be afraid,
until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.

9 He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever;
his horn is exalted in honor.

10 The wicked man sees it and is angry;
he gnashes his teeth and melts away;
the desire of the wicked will perish!

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 1?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 8...)

Week 8 Day 4 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 4

The Temptation of Jesus

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” 4 But he answered, “It is written,

“‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

“‘He will command his angels concerning you,’

and

“‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”

7 Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

“‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”

11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Jesus Begins His Ministry

12 Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

15 “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— 16 the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

18 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus Ministers to Great Crowds

23 And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. 24 So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. 25 And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

How do you imagine the temptation of Jesus? His hunger? The devil's voice? Can you see how Jesus fights off the devil not with His strength but with the Lord's Word?

The last half of this chapter is the real beginning of Jesus ministry. What do you notice in these verses? What surprises you?

Psalm 88

1 O Lord, God of my salvation;
I cry out day and night before you.
2 Let my prayer come before you;
incline your ear to my cry!
3 **For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.**
4 **I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am a man who has no strength,**
5 **like one set loose among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more,
for they are cut off from your hand.**
6 You have put me in the depths of the pit,
in the regions dark and deep.
7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
and you overwhelm me with all your waves.
8 You have caused my companions to shun me;
you have made me a horror to them.

I am shut in so that I cannot escape;
9 my eye grows dim through sorrow.
Every day I call upon you, O Lord;
I spread out my hands to you.
10 Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do the departed rise up to praise you?
11 Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?
12 Are your wonders known in the darkness,
or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
13 But I, O Lord, cry to you;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
14 O Lord, why do you cast my soul away?
Why do you hide your face from me?
15 Afflicted and close to death from my youth up,
I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.
16 Your wrath has swept over me;
your dreadful assaults destroy me.
17 They surround me like a flood all day long;
they close in on me together.
18 You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me;
my companions have become darkness.

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 3-5?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 8...)

Week 8 Day 5 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 5

The Sermon on the Mount

1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

The Beatitudes

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Anger

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be

liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Lust

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Divorce

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

Retaliation

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Love Your Enemies

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

Matthew 5-7 is the famous Sermon on the Mount. Can you imagine sitting on the mountain and listening to this sermon?

How is Jesus preaching on the Ten Commandments in the chapter?

Psalm 16

- 1 Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
- 2 I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you."
- 3 As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.
- 4 The sorrows of those who run after another god shall
multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names on my lips.
- 5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.
- 6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.
- 7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.
- 8 I have set the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
- 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.
- 10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol
or let your holy one see corruption.
- 11 **You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 11?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 8...)

Week 8 Day 6 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 6

Giving to the Needy

1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2 “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The Lord's Prayer

5 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 “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. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,
12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fasting

16 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Do Not Be Anxious

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? 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? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 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? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But 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.

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

Jesus preaches about worry. What does this mean for you?

What are your other impressions of this text?

Psalm 146

- 1 Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, O my soul!
- 2 **I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**
- 3 Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
- 4 When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;

on that very day his plans perish.
5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God,
6 who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever;
7 who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets the prisoners free;
8 the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.
9 The Lord watches over the sojourners;
he upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
10 The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Praise the Lord!

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 2?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 8...)

Week 8 Day 7 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 7

Judging Others

1 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

6 “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Ask, and It Will Be Given

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 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!

The Golden Rule

12 “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

A Tree and Its Fruit

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

I Never Knew You

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Build Your House on the Rock

24 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of

mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

The Authority of Jesus

28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises did you hear in this text?

What promises did you hear?

What did you learn?

Psalm 115

**1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!**

**2 Why should the nations say,
“Where is their God?”**

3 Our God is in the heavens;
he does all that he pleases.

4 Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of human hands.

5 They have mouths, but do not speak;
eyes, but do not see.

6 They have ears, but do not hear;
noses, but do not smell.

7 They have hands, but do not feel;
feet, but do not walk;
and they do not make a sound in their throat.

8 Those who make them become like them;
so do all who trust in them.

9 O Israel, trust in the Lord!

He is their help and their shield.
10 O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord!
He is their help and their shield.
11 You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord!
He is their help and their shield.
12 The Lord has remembered us; he will bless us;
he will bless the house of Israel;
he will bless the house of Aaron;
13 he will bless those who fear the Lord,
both the small and the great.
14 May the Lord give you increase,
you and your children!
15 May you be blessed by the Lord,
who made heaven and earth!
16 The heavens are the Lord's heavens,
but the earth he has given to the children of man.
17 The dead do not praise the Lord,
nor do any who go down into silence.
18 But we will bless the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore.
Praise the Lord!

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 1?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 8...)

Week 8 Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE 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.

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 9: Daily Repentance

The first time we hear the word “cross” in the New Testament is Matthew 10. This verse is not about the cross of Jesus, but about the cross of the Christian. Jesus says, “And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:38-39). Jesus repeats the same teaching a few chapters later, “Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 16:24-25). This taking up our cross is a “daily” activity (Luke 9:23).

The Christian life is not a life of ease and enjoyment, but a life lived under the cross, a life of death and resurrection. St. Paul connects this to our baptism. “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4). Martin Luther explains this verse in the Small Catechism:

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

The Christian life is a life of **daily repentance**. Repentance has two parts: contrition and faith. Contrition is hearing clearly the Law’s convicting voice. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit shows us our sin, our breaking of God’s Law, our transgressions. Faith is believing the promises of the Gospel. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit comforts us with the kindness of Jesus.

The fruit (or result) of repentance is love for God and our neighbor, the good works of which our Christian life consists.

In this week’s challenge is

DAILY REPENTANCE

We will focus on hearing the Law and the Gospel in the Psalms and the Scriptures, and consider how the Holy Spirit uses these two words to create in us contrition and faith. Meditation towards repentance follows this instruction: “Consider your station in life according to the Ten Commandments...” This consideration leads to repentance.

The seven Psalms we will read this week are known in the church as the “Seven Penitential Psalms.” More than any other portions of the Scriptures these Psalms capture the two parts of repentance. We also begin, this week, to read the Scripture Passages out of our own Bible. The words of the Apostles’ Creed are removed from the prayers. If you are still working to memorize the words of the Creed, please see a previous week’s prayers.

Week 9 Day 1 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 8

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises you about the text? What do you notice?

Psalm 6

- 1 O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath.
- 2 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;
heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.
- 3 My soul also is greatly troubled.
But you, O Lord—how long?
- 4 **Turn, O Lord, deliver my life;
save me for the sake of your steadfast love.**
- 5 For in death there is no remembrance of you;
in Sheol who will give you praise?
- 6 I am weary with my moaning;
every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.
- 7 My eye wastes away because of grief;
it grows weak because of all my foes.
- 8 Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.
- 9 The Lord has heard my plea;
the Lord accepts my prayer.
- 10 All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled;
they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verse 4?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 9...)

Week 9 Day 2 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 9

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises you about the text? What do you notice?

Psalm 32

- 1 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
- 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no
iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- 3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
- 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
- 5 **I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.**
- 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.
- 7 You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.
- 8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
- 9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,
or it will not stay near you.
- 10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.

11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verse 5?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 9...)

Week 9 Day 3 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 10

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises you about the text? What do you notice?

Psalm 38

- 1 O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath!
- 2 For your arrows have sunk into me,
and your hand has come down on me.
- 3 There is no soundness in my flesh
because of your indignation;
there is no health in my bones
because of my sin.
- 4 For my iniquities have gone over my head;
like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.
- 5 My wounds stink and fester
because of my foolishness,
- 6 I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;
all the day I go about mourning.
- 7 For my sides are filled with burning,
and there is no soundness in my flesh.
- 8 I am feeble and crushed;
I groan because of the tumult of my heart.
- 9 O Lord, all my longing is before you;
my sighing is not hidden from you.
- 10 My heart throbs; my strength fails me,
and the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me.
- 11 My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague,
and my nearest kin stand far off.
- 12 Those who seek my life lay their snares;
those who seek my hurt speak of ruin
and meditate treachery all day long.
- 13 But I am like a deaf man; I do not hear,
like a mute man who does not open his mouth.

14 I have become like a man who does not hear,
and in whose mouth are no rebukes.
15 But for you, O Lord, do I wait;
it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.
16 For I said, "Only let them not rejoice over me,
who boast against me when my foot slips!"
17 For I am ready to fall,
and my pain is ever before me.
18 I confess my iniquity;
I am sorry for my sin.
19 But my foes are vigorous, they are mighty,
and many are those who hate me wrongfully.
20 Those who render me evil for good
accuse me because I follow after good.
21 **Do not forsake me, O Lord!**
O my God, be not far from me!
22 **Make haste to help me,**
O Lord, my salvation!

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 21-22?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 9...)

Week 9 Day 4 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 11

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises you about the text? What do you notice?

Psalm 51

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- 2 **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!**
- 3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 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.
- 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- 6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
- 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- 9 Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 11 Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

and uphold me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
build up the walls of Jerusalem;

19 then will you delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 2?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 9...)

Week 9 Day 5 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 12

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises you about the text? What do you notice?

Psalm 102

1 Hear my prayer, O Lord;
let my cry come to you!
2 Do not hide your face from me
in the day of my distress!
Incline your ear to me;
answer me speedily in the day when I call!
3 For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.
4 My heart is struck down like grass and has withered;
I forget to eat my bread.
5 Because of my loud groaning
my bones cling to my flesh.
6 I am like a desert owl of the wilderness,
like an owl of the waste places;
7 I lie awake;
I am like a lonely sparrow on the housetop.
8 All the day my enemies taunt me;
those who deride me use my name for a curse.
9 For I eat ashes like bread
and mingle tears with my drink,
10 because of your indignation and anger;
for you have taken me up and thrown me down.
11 My days are like an evening shadow;
I wither away like grass.
12 But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever;
you are remembered throughout all generations.
13 You will arise and have pity on Zion;
it is the time to favor her;
the appointed time has come.

14 For your servants hold her stones dear
and have pity on her dust.
15 Nations will fear the name of the Lord,
and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory.
16 For the Lord builds up Zion;
he appears in his glory;
17 he regards the prayer of the destitute
and does not despise their prayer.
18 Let this be recorded for a generation to come,
so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord:
19 that he looked down from his holy height;
from heaven the Lord looked at the earth,
20 to hear the groans of the prisoners,
to set free those who were doomed to die,
21 that they may declare in Zion the name of the Lord,
and in Jerusalem his praise,
22 when peoples gather together,
and kingdoms, to worship the Lord.
23 He has broken my strength in midcourse;
he has shortened my days.
24 **“O my God,” I say, “take me not away
in the midst of my days—
you whose years endure
throughout all generations!”**
25 Of old you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.
26 They will perish, but you will remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.
You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away,
27 but you are the same, and your years have no end.
28 The children of your servants shall dwell secure;
their offspring shall be established before you.

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 24?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 9...)

Week 9 Day 6 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 13

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises you about the text? What do you notice?

Psalm 130

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!

2 **O Lord, hear my voice!**

**Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!**

3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?

4 But with you there is forgiveness,
that you may be feared.

5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;

6 my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.

7 O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.

8 And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 2?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 9...)

Week 9 Day 7 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture: Matthew 14

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises you about the text? What do you notice?

Psalm 143

1 Hear my prayer, O Lord;
give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

2 Enter not into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.

3 For the enemy has pursued my soul;
he has crushed my life to the ground;
he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

4 Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is appalled.

5 I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands.

6 I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah

7 **Answer me quickly, O Lord!**
My spirit fails!
Hide not your face from me,
lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

8 **Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love,**
for in you I trust.
Make me know the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.

9 Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord!
I have fled to you for refuge.¹

10 Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God!

Let your good Spirit lead me
on level ground!

11 For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life!
In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!

12 And in your steadfast love you will cut off my enemies,
and you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul,
for I am your servant.

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Underline the promises and note the verses of comfort.

How would you pray verses 7-8?

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 9...)

Week 9 Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED FROM MEMORY

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 10: What do I pray for? Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Thanksgiving

We will, in the next few weeks, shift our focus to our prayers, considering, first, what prayer is.

Most simply, prayer is asking God for the things needed. Intercession is prayer for others. Petition is prayer for ourselves. Thanksgiving is giving thanks for the gifts God for the things He has done. (Praise, as distinguished from Thanksgiving, is praising God for who He is. These are very close to each other.)

In the prayers for the past ten weeks we have had times for “Prayers for Ourselves and Others.” It is helpful to consider what things we might include in these prayers.

Paul, in his letter to Timothy, says, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people” (1 Timothy 2:1). We say there are different types of prayers. *Supplications* are prayers for help. *Prayers* includes all of our petitions to the Lord. *Intercessions* are prayers on behalf of other people. *Thanksgivings* are prayers of thanks and praise for the things God has done for us.

This week we will begin building our prayer lists with these different categories of prayer. We will offer to the Lord our supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings.

We will use a few key questions to build our prayer lists, and each day we will add people, situations, and other things to our prayers, and include these in our petitions. After the Scripture readings we will plan our prayers, and then include the things we’ve written when we pray.

This week’s devotional challenge is

BUILDING A PRAYER LIST

Each day will have a set of questions. The answer to these questions will be the things we pray for in the “Prayers for ourselves and others.” Not knowing what to pray for is often a hindrance to our prayers. By planning our prayers ahead of time we are not troubled to think of things as we pray. Of course we are free to include all the concerns that come to our mind when we pray.

Try to pray out loud. It is better.

We also, this week, begin reading through the Psalms out of our own Bible, beginning with Psalm 1. This week we will suggest a verse to turn into a prayer. Next week you will be identifying that verse on your own. We continue reading through the Gospel of Matthew, and we will continue to include the prompting questions for the Scripture reading and Psalms for a few more weeks, but you will notice these helps gradually fading away as you become more comfortable reading, meditating on the Scriptures yourself.

Plan on 15 minutes for these readings and prayers. If this is not enough time, do what you can, focusing on this week’s challenge, and not troubling yourself to finish it all. Remember, we are working on building devotional habits that will carry through to the end of our life.

Week 10 Day 1 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 15

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises or delights you in the text? What is the impact?

Psalm 1

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Verse for prayer: 6

Questions for Prayer

What am I worried about?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 10...)

Week 10 Day 2 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 16

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises or delights you in the text? What is the impact?

Psalm 2

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Verse for prayer: 11

Questions for Prayer

What are today's plans?

(And: What am I worried about?)

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 10...)

Week 10 Day 3 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 17

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises or delights you in the text? What is the impact?

Psalm 3

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Verse for prayer: 3

Questions for Prayer

Who needs my prayers?

(And: What are today's plans? What am I worried about?)

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 10...)

Week 10 Day 4 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 18

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises or delights you in the text? What is the impact?

Psalm 4

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Verse for prayer: 8

Questions for Prayer

What am I thankful for?

(And: Who needs my prayers? What are today's plans? What am I worried about?)

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 10...)

Week 10 Day 5 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 19

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises or delights you in the text? What is the impact?

Psalm 5

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Verse for prayer: 11

Questions for Prayer

Think of your vocation in family, and list the family members (parents, siblings, spouse, children, grandchildren, etc.) to pray for....

(And: What am I thankful for? Who needs my prayers? What are today's plans? What am I worried about?)

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 10...)

Week 10 Day 6 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 20

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises or delights you in the text? What is the impact?

Psalm 6

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Verse for prayer: 1

Questions for Prayer

Think of your vocation in church, and list the pastor(s), members, events, missionaries and so forth to pray for. Think also of your friends and family that are not Christians or do not attend church....

(And: Vocation of family. What am I thankful for? Who needs my prayers? What are today's plans? What am I worried about?)

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 10...)

Week 10 Day 7 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 21

Questions:

What are the most important verses in the chapter? The most important words? (Underline and circle the important parts of the text.)

Where is the Law in the text? The Gospel?

What surprises or delights you in the text? What is the impact?

Psalm 7

Questions:

Who is talking to whom?

What are the pictures?

Verse for prayer: 17

Questions for Prayer

Think of your vocation in the state, and list elected officials, any disasters or community concerns to pray for....

(And: Vocation of family and church. What am I thankful for? Who needs my prayers? What are today's plans? What am I worried about?)

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 10...)

Week 10 Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED FROM MEMORY

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

Include here all the things listed in the daily worksheet.

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 11: Luther’s Fourfold Strand of Prayer, Part 1, Instruction

Part of our Christian devotion is learning to pray the Bible. We normally think of our prayers coming from our hearts, but prayer is something that we are taught. The Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, teach us what to pray.

In 1535 Martin Luther wrote a wonderful little letter to his barber Peter about how he constructs his prayers from the catechism and the Scriptures. Luther talks of weaving a “four-fold strand” of prayer. Here is the important passage:

If I have had time and opportunity to go through the Lord's Prayer, I do the same with the Ten Commandments. I take one part after another and free myself as much as possible from distractions in order to pray. I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands. That is, I think of each commandment as, first, **instruction**, which is really what it is intended to be, and consider what the Lord God demands of me so earnestly. Second, I turn it into a **thanksgiving**; third, a **confession**; and fourth, a **prayer**.

We will spend the next four weeks working on pulling these four things out of the Scripture texts, concentrating this week on instruction. This week’s challenge, then, is

PRAYING THE INSTRUCTION OF THE TEXT

We take what we learn from the Lord and bring it back to Him in our prayers. The questions following the readings have been simplified to pull out of the readings the instruction that can be prayed. Examples are provided on the first two days. The basic prayer will be something like, “Lord, in this place you teach me that...” This is the first step towards praying the words of the Scriptures.

Also, look over the things you wrote down for last week’s prayers. The last few pages of this workbook are provided as a log for your prayers. Be sure to write the date next to each prayer. You might consider finding a notebook, log, or journal to keep track of the things that you want to keep in mind for your prayers. (We will talk more about maintaining a prayer list in a future week.)

Week 11 Day 1 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 22

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

The invitation to the Lord's church is strangely rejected, but the feast is open to all.

*Because God is the God of the living, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be resurrected!
(Verse 32) And so will I!*

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Psalm 8

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

The Lord's name (His Word, His truth) is excellent (verses 1 & 9).

The Lord is concerned, even for us (verses 3-5).

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 11...)

Week 11 Day 2 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 23

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

Jesus has woes and warnings for everyone who trusts their own righteousness. This is a warning to me, to not trust in myself or my own goodness or works.

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Psalm 9

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

The Lord blots out the name of the wicked (verse 5).

The Lord remembers the poor and needy. We cry out to Him in humbleness (verse 18).

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 11...)

Week 11 Day 3 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 24

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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Psalm 10

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 11...)

Week 11 Day 4 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 25

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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Psalm 11

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 11...)

Week 11 Day 5 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 26

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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Psalm 12

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 11...)

Week 11 Day 6 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 27

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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Psalm 13

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 11...)

Week 11 Day 7 Worksheet

_____ (date)

Scripture:

Matthew 28

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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Psalm 14

Question:

What instruction does this text give me?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 11...)

Week 11 Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED FROM MEMORY

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYER FROM THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Heavenly Father, in the Scriptures You teach me ...

In the Psalm You teach me ...

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

What am I worried about? What are today's plans? Who needs my prayers? Include here the prayers listed on the back pages of this workbook.

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 12: Luther's Fourfold Strand of Prayer, Part 2, Thanksgiving

“Rejoice always. Prayer without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17). The Christian lives a life of thanksgiving, rejoicing in the Lord for His great gifts to us.

We are often tempted to think about all the bad things that have happened to us, the troubles that we have faced, the difficulties in our life, but thankfulness puts into our minds all the blessings the Lord has given us, the gifts, the joys, even in the midst of trouble.

All of us have so much to be thankful for, and this week we will focus on the gifts the Lord gives us in His word and in our lives. This week's devotional challenge is

THANKFULNESS

We will identify the gifts the Lord gives in the text and the gifts the Lord gives to us that are pointed out in the text, and weave these together with the things the Lord teaches us.

This week's worksheets will look much like last week, with the added prayer of thanksgiving.

Next week we will drop the text of the Ten Commandments from the prayers, so if you have not learned the commandments by heart, spend some time focusing on the commandments this week.

Week 12 Day 1 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 1

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

.....
.....

Psalm 15

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

.....
.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 12...)

Week 12 Day 2 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 2

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

.....
.....

Psalm 16

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

.....
.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 12...)

Week 12 Day 3 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 3

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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.....

Psalm 17

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

.....
.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 12...)

Week 12 Day 4 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 4

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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.....

Psalm 18

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 12...)

Week 12 Day 5 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 5

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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.....

Psalm 19

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 12...)

Week 12 Day 6 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 6

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Psalm 20

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 12...)

Week 12 Day 7 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 7

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

.....
.....

Psalm 21

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

.....
.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 12...)

Week 12 Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER

- 1. You shall have no other gods.**
- 2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not murder.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED FROM MEMORY

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYER FROM THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Heavenly Father, in the Scriptures You teach me ...

I give you thanks for all Your gifts and benefits, and especially ...

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

What am I worried about? What are today's plans? Who needs my prayers? Include here the prayers listed on the back pages of this workbook.

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 13: Luther's Fourfold Strand of Prayer, Part 3, Confession

Jesus promises us that the Holy Spirit comes to convict us of our sin. "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit holds the Law before us like a mirror so that we see our sin, and confess it.

While the devil wants to keep us in the darkness, the Holy Spirit teaches us to walk in the light. The devil is always trying to distort and harden our conscience, the Holy Spirit works through the Law to tenderize our conscience. While the devil is always trying to hide our sin, the Holy Spirit teaches us to confess it.

Confession is the third of Luther's four-fold strand of prayer, and it is this week's devotional challenge:

CONFESSION

This week is very similar to Week 9, and the challenge of daily repentance. We will be listening for the Law, and tuning in to the Holy Spirit's work of teaching us our sin from the text. We will then weave that repentance into our prayers.

We will drop the text of the Ten Commandments from the prayers, but they are more important than ever this week, so we will ask in regards to each reading what commandment(s) are being taught, and ask how this shows us our sin. If you do not have the Ten Commandments memorized, you can find the text on the back page of this workbook.

Week 13 Day 1 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 8

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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.....

Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Psalm 22

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 13...)

Week 13 Day 2 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 9

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Psalm 23

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 13...)

Week 13 Day 3 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 10

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Psalm 24

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 13...)

Week 13 Day 4 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 11

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Psalm 25

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 13...)

Week 13 Day 5 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 12

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Psalm 26

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 13...)

Week 13 Day 6 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 13

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Psalm 27

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 13...)

Week 13 Day 7 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 14

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Psalm 28

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 13...)

Week 13 Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER FROM MEMORY

SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED FROM MEMORY

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYER FROM THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Heavenly Father, in the Scriptures You teach me ... (INSTRUCTION)

I give you thanks for all Your gifts and benefits, and especially ... (THANKSGIVING)

I confess to You all my sins, and ask for Your mercy. Especially I pray that You would forgive... (CONFESSION)

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

What am I worried about? What are today's plans? Who needs my prayers? Include here the prayers listed on the back pages of this workbook.

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 14: Luther's Fourfold Strand of Prayer, Part 4, Prayer

Prayer is, at last, asking.

There are many voices telling us that it is not right or good to always being asking God for things. This is wrong. If we are not asking, we are not praying. "Ask, and you will receive" says Jesus (Matthew 7:7). Our praying of the Scriptures must end with a petition, an asking God for the things we need and the things He promises.

"Prayer" or "petition" or "asking" is the fourth and final strands of Luther's suggested wreath of prayer. We begin with instruction, continue with thanksgiving and confession, and end with asking. This week's devotional challenge, then, is

FINDING PETITIONS IN THE TEXT

If there are promises in the text, we ask the Lord to keep those promises with us. If there are warnings in the text, we ask the Lord to give us His Holy Spirit so that we would heed His instruction. We pray that the Lord would give us the wisdom taught in the text, or the patience or hope. Finally, we pray that the Lord would give us the faith to believe His Word and the love to begin to live a godly life according to it.

We add a fourth question to our text as a place to add promises and petitions, and these are to be prayed in the prayers.

Continue to add things to your prayer list, and note if there are specific prayers that have been answered. Many people find it comforting to mark when prayers are answered, and to note how the Lord takes care of all the things we want to worry about.

Next week we will drop the words of the morning and evening prayers, so focus on these if you are still learning them.

Week 14 Day 1 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 15

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

.....

Psalm 28

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 14...)

Week 14 Day 2 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Romans 16

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

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Psalm 29

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 14...)

Week 14 Day 3 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Hebrews 1

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

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Psalm 30

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 14...)

Week 14 Day 4 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Hebrews 2

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

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Psalm 30

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 14...)

Week 14 Day 5 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Hebrews 3

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

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Psalm 31

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

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(Continue to the Prayers for Week 14...)

Week 14 Day 6 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Hebrews 4

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

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Psalm 32

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 14...)

Week 14 Day 7 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scripture:

Hebrews 5

Questions:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

.....
.....

Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

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Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

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Psalm 33

Question:

Instruction: What does this text teach me?

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Thanksgiving: What does this text give me? Of what gifts from God does this text remind me?

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Confession: What commandment(s) are put forth in the text? How does this text show me my sin?

.....
.....

Petition: What does this text promise? What does this text prompt me to pray for?

.....

(Continue to the Prayers for Week 14...)

Week 14 Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER FROM MEMORY

SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED FROM MEMORY

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

PRAYER FROM THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Heavenly Father, in the Scriptures You teach me ... (INSTRUCTION)

I give you thanks for all Your gifts and benefits, and especially ... (THANKSGIVING)

I confess to You all my sins, and ask for Your mercy. Especially I pray that You would forgive... (CONFESSION)

I pray... (PETITION)

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

What am I worried about? What are today's plans? Who needs my prayers? Include here the prayers listed on the back pages of this workbook.

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 15: Crafting a Collect

“Collect” is the name for a short prayer used, most often, in the services of the church. There are appointed collects for each Sunday of the Church Year, and for various different occasions. The Collect generally follows a fixed form with five parts:

1. The Address (to whom we are praying, normally God the Father, often God the Son, sometimes the Holy Spirit, and rarely all three Persons of the Godhead).
2. The Rationale (a mention of an attribute or work of God on which the petition will rest).
3. The Petition (the prayer itself).
4. The Result (our confidence that the Lord will hear and answer our prayers).
5. The Conclusion (which brings in the mediation of the other Two Persons of the Trinity who were not first addressed, and the Amen).

This ancient form of prayer is very helpful when we are shaping our thoughts and meditation on the Scriptures into prayers. Here are a few example collects used in the church. Here is the Collect for the Word, based on Romans 15:4:

Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by the patience and comfort of Thy holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which Thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The five parts are:

1. Address: *Blessed Lord,*
2. Rationale: *who has caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning,*
3. Petition: *grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,*
4. Result: *that by the patience and comfort of Thy holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which Thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ,*
5. Conclusion: *who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.*

Here is another example, the Collect for Peace generally used in the Vespers service:

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto Thy servants that peace, which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey Thy commandments, and also that by Thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

1. Address: *O God,*
2. Rationale: *from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed:*
3. Petition: *Give unto Thy servants that peace, which the world cannot give;*
4. Result: *that our hearts may be set to obey Thy commandments,*
5. 2nd Petition: *and also that by Thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies,*
6. 2nd Result: *may pass our time in rest and quietness;*
7. Conclusion: *through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.*

This week’s devotional challenge is:

CRAFTING A COLLECT

We will take a verse from the Scripture reading or the Psalm, and build a collect with that text. The worksheet will remind you of the parts, and there will be space to put them all together.

Forming a Collect is another helpful way to turn the Scriptures into prayer, and it is particularly helpful for crafting prayers to be prayed in public.

We continue to read and meditate on a Scripture passage and a Psalm. Looking for the teaching, the surprises, delighting in the text.

NOTE

The conclusions of the collects follow a specific form.

If the prayer is addressed to God the Father, the conclusion is:

“...through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, world without end. Amen.”

If the prayer is addressed to Jesus, the conclusion is:

“...who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God, world without end. Amen.”

If the prayer is addressed to the Holy Spirit, the conclusion is:

“...for You live and reign with the Father and the Son, One God, world without end. Amen.”

If any of the Person of the Holy Trinity are not originally addressed, but mentioned in the prayer, then the phrase “the same” is added before their name in the conclusion. For example, if the prayer is addressed to God the Father, but the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the body of the prayer, then the conclusion would be as follows:

“...through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the same Holy Spirit, One God, world without end. Amen.”

Please remember, though, that these rules are helping us form our prayers, and certainly should not restrict or hinder our prayers to the God who loves us and delights to hear our prayers.

Week 15 Day 1 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures:

Hebrews 6

Psalm 34

Notes from the readings, observations, etc.

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.....

Verse to use to form a Collect. What are the main ideas?

.....
.....

Address, to whom are we praying?

.....

Rationale, what does this text teach us about God that gives us confidence to pray?

.....

Petition, what do we learn to ask for from this text?

.....

Result, what do we hope and expect as God grants our petition?

.....

Conclusion

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Collect:

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Week 15 Day 2 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures:

Hebrews 7

Psalm 35

Notes from the readings, observations, etc.

.....
.....

Verse to use to form a Collect. What are the main ideas?

.....
.....

Address, to whom are we praying?

.....

Rationale, what does this text teach us about God that gives us confidence to pray?

.....

Petition, what do we learn to ask for from this text?

.....

Result, what do we hope and expect as God grants our petition?

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Conclusion

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Collect:

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Week 15 Day 3 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures:

Hebrews 8

Psalm 36

Notes from the readings, observations, etc.

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.....

Verse to use to form a Collect. What are the main ideas?

.....
.....

Address, to whom are we praying?

.....

Rationale, what does this text teach us about God that gives us confidence to pray?

.....

Petition, what do we learn to ask for from this text?

.....

Result, what do we hope and expect as God grants our petition?

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Conclusion

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Collect:

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Week 15 Day 4 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures:

Hebrews 9

Psalm 37

Notes from the readings, observations, etc.

.....
.....

Verse to use to form a Collect. What are the main ideas?

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Address, to whom are we praying?

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.....

Rationale, what does this text teach us about God that gives us confidence to pray?

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Petition, what do we learn to ask for from this text?

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Result, what do we hope and expect as God grants our petition?

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Conclusion

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Collect:

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Week 15 Day 5 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures:

Hebrews 10

Psalm 38

Notes from the readings, observations, etc.

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.....

Verse to use to form a Collect. What are the main ideas?

.....
.....

Address, to whom are we praying?

.....

Rationale, what does this text teach us about God that gives us confidence to pray?

.....

Petition, what do we learn to ask for from this text?

.....

Result, what do we hope and expect as God grants our petition?

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Conclusion

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Collect:

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Week 15 Day 6 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures:

Hebrews 11

Psalm 39

Notes from the readings, observations, etc.

.....
.....

Verse to use to form a Collect. What are the main ideas?

.....
.....

Address, to whom are we praying?

.....

Rationale, what does this text teach us about God that gives us confidence to pray?

.....

Petition, what do we learn to ask for from this text?

.....

Result, what do we hope and expect as God grants our petition?

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Conclusion

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Collect:

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Week 15 Day 7 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures:

Hebrews 12

Psalm 40

Notes from the readings, observations, etc.

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Verse to use to form a Collect. What are the main ideas?

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Address, to whom are we praying?

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Rationale, what does this text teach us about God that gives us confidence to pray?

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Petition, what do we learn to ask for from this text?

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Result, what do we hope and expect as God grants our petition?

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Conclusion

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Collect:

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Week 15 Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER* YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING PRAYER FROM MEMORY

SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED FROM MEMORY

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MEMORY

COLLECT FROM THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

OTHER PRAYERS FROM THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Instruction, Thanksgiving, Confession, Petition

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

What am I worried about? What are today's plans? Who needs my prayers? Include here the prayers listed on the back pages of this workbook.

THE MORNING PRAYER

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.

THE EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

Week 16: Putting It All Together

For the past 15 weeks we have been building devotional habits, learning how to give our attention to the Lord's Word and to prayer. We have, in fact, been meditating on the Second and Third Commandments.

The Second Commandment is "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God." What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic art, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks. The Second Commandment authorizes our prayers.

So too the Third Commandment authorizes our hearing and rejoicing in the Lord's Word. "Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy." What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it. The hearing of the Lord's Word brings faith and life, joy and peace.

The practice of hearing the Lord's Word and asking for the Lord's help is a life-long process. This week's challenge is:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

We will consider all the putting the pieces of the devotional life into a reasonable practice that we can sustain until our death. Each day will have an outline to plan a devotion. What will you read? What will you pray? You might want to find a blank notebook to help you plan your devotions when the week is over.

For the past fifteen weeks this workbook has held your hand and led you to the Scriptures and through your prayers, and you are ready, now, to take your daily devotions and shape them yourself. You should know what worked and what didn't, what was helpful and what was difficult.

As you consider each day the shape of your prayers and meditation, remember that we are shaping a life-time of hearing and rejoicing in the Lord's Word. What we don't read today will wait for us tomorrow. And the Holy Spirit is always helping to shape our prayers and petitions to the Lord. We remain students of His Word and of prayer until we are, at last, standing before the Lord and worship together with the saints in the resurrection.

May God grant it. Amen.

Week 16 Day 1 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures/Readings:

- []
- []
- []

Things to remember when reading:

- [] Hearing the Scriptures, read the text out-loud
- [] Look for the most important teachings in the text. What is the Law? What is the Gospel?
- [] Praying the Text, What is the instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and petition?
- [] Crafting a collect: Address, Rationale, Petition, Conclusion, Amen.

Remember these parts of our devotions:

- [] Invocation
- [] Lord's Prayer
- [] Creed
- [] Morning/Evening Prayer
- [] Daily Prayers
- [] Prayers for ourselves and others

Notes:

Week 16 Day 2 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures/Readings:

[]

[]

[]

Things to remember when reading:

[] Hearing the Scriptures, read the text out-loud

[] Look for the most important teachings in the text. What is the Law? What is the Gospel?

[] Praying the Text, What is the instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and petition?

[] Crafting a collect: Address, Rationale, Petition, Conclusion, Amen.

Remember these parts of our devotions:

[] Invocation

[] Lord's Prayer

[] Creed

[] Morning/Evening Prayer

[] Daily Prayers

[] Prayers for ourselves and others

Notes:

Week 16 Day 3 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures/Readings:

[]

[]

[]

Things to remember when reading:

[] Hearing the Scriptures, read the text out-loud

[] Look for the most important teachings in the text. What is the Law? What is the Gospel?

[] Praying the Text, What is the instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and petition?

[] Crafting a collect: Address, Rationale, Petition, Conclusion, Amen.

Remember these parts of our devotions:

[] Invocation

[] Lord's Prayer

[] Creed

[] Morning/Evening Prayer

[] Daily Prayers

[] Prayers for ourselves and others

Notes:

Week 16 Day 4 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures/Readings:

[]

[]

[]

Things to remember when reading:

[] Hearing the Scriptures, read the text out-loud

[] Look for the most important teachings in the text. What is the Law? What is the Gospel?

[] Praying the Text, What is the instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and petition?

[] Crafting a collect: Address, Rationale, Petition, Conclusion, Amen.

Remember these parts of our devotions:

[] Invocation

[] Lord's Prayer

[] Creed

[] Morning/Evening Prayer

[] Daily Prayers

[] Prayers for ourselves and others

Notes:

Week 16 Day 5 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures/Readings:

[]

[]

[]

Things to remember when reading:

[] Hearing the Scriptures, read the text out-loud

[] Look for the most important teachings in the text. What is the Law? What is the Gospel?

[] Praying the Text, What is the instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and petition?

[] Crafting a collect: Address, Rationale, Petition, Conclusion, Amen.

Remember these parts of our devotions:

[] Invocation

[] Lord's Prayer

[] Creed

[] Morning/Evening Prayer

[] Daily Prayers

[] Prayers for ourselves and others

Notes:

Week 16 Day 6 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures/Readings:

[]

[]

[]

Things to remember when reading:

[] Hearing the Scriptures, read the text out-loud

[] Look for the most important teachings in the text. What is the Law? What is the Gospel?

[] Praying the Text, What is the instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and petition?

[] Crafting a collect: Address, Rationale, Petition, Conclusion, Amen.

Remember these parts of our devotions:

[] Invocation

[] Lord's Prayer

[] Creed

[] Morning/Evening Prayer

[] Daily Prayers

[] Prayers for ourselves and others

Notes:

Week 16 Day 7 Worksheet

..... (date)

Scriptures/Readings:

- []
- []
- []

Things to remember when reading:

- [] Hearing the Scriptures, read the text out-loud
- [] Look for the most important teachings in the text. What is the Law? What is the Gospel?
- [] Praying the Text, What is the instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and petition?
- [] Crafting a collect: Address, Rationale, Petition, Conclusion, Amen.

Remember these parts of our devotions:

- [] Invocation
- [] Lord's Prayer
- [] Creed
- [] Morning/Evening Prayer
- [] Daily Prayers
- [] Prayers for ourselves and others

Notes:

Appendix A: A Bible Reading Plan

There are hundreds of Bible Reading plans. Many are very complicated and detailed, others very simple. Some people like to read straight through the Bible. Other like to jump from the Old to the New Testament, or read from different parts of the Bible every day.

If you read three chapters of the Bible every day you would read through the entire Scriptures in one year. But some portions of the Bible are easier to read than others. The narrative portions of the Old Testament and Gospels read very quickly. The epistles of Paul and Peter are very dense.

Pick a plan that works for you, and try it for a while. If it doesn't stick, try something different. It is a good goal to consider reading the entire Bible through cover to cover.

This is the plan that I find easiest to follow and the most helpful. It involves reading three chapters a day, six days a week. (Saturday is for catching-up or review.)

The Psalms are read through, one chapter a day.

One chapter of the Old Testament is read. I like to read through the Old Testament in rough chronological order, going back and forth between history and prophecy.

One chapter of the New Testament is read every day, rotating between the Gospels and the epistles.

My suggested ordering of the books is on the next page. It can be cut out and used as bookmarks.

Following this plan you will read through the Old Testament in two-and-a-half years, the Psalms twice a year, and the New Testament one-and-a-half times a year.

Old Testament Order

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Job
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon
1 Kings
Obadiah
Joel
2 Kings
Jonah
Amos
Hosea
1 Chronicles
Isaiah
2 Chronicles
Micah
Nahum
Zephaniah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Habakkuk
Daniel
Ezekiel
Ezra
Haggai
Zechariah
Esther
Nehemiah
Malachi

New Testament Order

Matthew
Romans
Hebrews
Mark
1&2 Corinthians
James
Luke
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 & 2 Peter
John
1 & 2 Thessalonians
Philemon
1, 2, & 3 John
Acts
1 & 2 Timothy
Titus
Jude
Revelation

Back Page Prayers

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

**In the name of the Father and of the Son +
and of the Holy Spirit.**

SAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OUT LOUD *AFTER*
YOUR MORNING PRAYER OR *BEFORE* YOUR EVENING
PRAYER

1. You shall have no other gods.
2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not murder.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

SAY THE 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.**

PRAY 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.**

PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

THE MORNING PRAYER

**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.**

THE EVENING PRAYER

**I thank you, my heavenly Father, through
Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have
graciously kept me this day; and I pray that
You would forgive me all my sins where I
have done wrong, and graciously keep me
this night. 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.**