

Week of Trinity 19

First recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the weekly section of the Small Catechism. Then read the Proper and assigned Scripture reading followed by the devotion. Conclude with singing the hymn of the week.



Weekly Catechism section: The Lord's Prayer

The Introduction? (*Luther's Small Catechism*)

Hymn of the Week: *I Will Sing My Maker's Praises* (TLH #25)

Monday - Introit (Psalm 35:3b; 34:17; 48:14a, 78:1-4b)

Read Psalm 78.

Our *Introit* comes from four Psalms, 34, 35, 48, and 78. Each of these Psalms describes how God delivers his people out of trouble. First, Psalm 34 is written by David after God rescued him from being killed by the Philistines. So he writes, "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles." Psalm 35, also written by David, speaks of God being our salvation while others rise up to accuse us. Here he speaks about the devil who afflicted Christ and also afflicts us. But just as God rescued his precious life from the devilish lions, so does he rescue us. Therefore, God says to our soul, "I am your salvation." Psalm 48 is written by the sons of Korah, priests who wrote for the worship of God's people. This Psalm describes how God protects Zion, his church against the rulers of this world. And this is how we know God. We know him by what he does, by his protection from evil. This is why the Psalmist concludes by saying, "For this is God forever and ever." Who is God except he who delivers us from evil? Psalm 78 describes how God has continually been faithful to his people even though they have continually been rebellious.

The devil and the world are not our only enemies. Our sinful flesh is as well, that corrupt nature, which rebels against God. We need our sinful flesh to be crucified. And this is why the Psalmist says that he will open his mouth in parables. Parables are meant to hide God's mysteries from the wise and boastful and reveal them instead to those who are broken and contrite of heart (Matt 11:25; 13:11; Luke 8:10). We need God to do this to our sinful nature. Instead of pandering to our wicked desires God condemns them. And he therefore reveals to our humbled spirit his mercy and goodness. So the Psalmist continues by saying, "We will tell the generation to come the praises of the Lord." Jesus' authority to

forgive sins and heal diseases was hidden from the Pharisees, because they were wise in their own eyes. But to the generation to come, that is, to those who have been humbled, to those who have died to themselves, they find rebirth -- a new generation -- in God's Son who delivers them from evil.

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Genesis 28:10-17)

Read Genesis 28.

God descends to man in order to bless him. This is what Jacob experienced in his dream. A ladder was set up between earth and heaven. The Lord sat on top of the ladder, and he promised Jacob that he would bring him back to the land of his father, and that through his see all the families of the earth would be blessed. And how would this be? Because God would be with him the whole way. This is the kind of God we have. He is the God who is very near. This is the God who became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. John says in his Gospel (John 1:14), "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." And later on, this same Word made flesh explains to Nathanael that he would see angels descending and ascending on the Son of Man (John 1:51). Jesus, the Son of Man, is that ladder to heaven. He descended to earth, and he ascended to heaven. He has all authority in heaven and earth.

And what does he do with this authority? Does he give us rules and regulations while he sits high up in his heavenly office? No, he is with us, just as he was with Jacob. He dwells with us in his Word and his body and blood, through which he nurtures us with his Holy Spirit of life. And why does he do this? Why does his authority prompt him to come to us and dwell with us? Because his authority, his divine right greater than any power known to heaven or earth, is to forgive sins. By the authority of the Father, Jesus went to the cross, establishing himself as the way, the truth, and the light, the ladder to the throne of God. And he did not stay dead. He rose and then ascended on high. This means that he didn't merely pave the way for us. He has in fact accomplished for us our heavenly seat with him. This is not a god we find within our own feelings and emotions. This is the God whose throne is heaven and whose footstool is earth. And he became flesh in the person of his Son. He speaks truth to our sinful condition. And he calls us out of darkness and into his marvelous light. This is his authority. It is how he rules us. Thank God for his great goodness!

Wednesday - Gradual (141:1-2)

Read Psalm 141.

Those who are familiar with our daily office of *Vespers* should recognize the words of our *Gradual* taken from Psalm 141:2: "Let my prayer rise before you as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." The evening sacrifice was done in the tabernacle and later in the temple, where one lamb would be offered in the morning and another at twilight. This was to be done daily (Exod 29:38-39). It was done in anticipation of God's merciful atonement, which he would provide in his Son, who covers us daily with his righteousness. Thus, Jeremiah can boast:

he steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness. (Lam 3:22-23)

In our baptism God daily renews in us the rebirth he first created in us by his Holy Spirit. This is why St. Paul calls it the washing of rebirth and renewal (Tit 3:5). Therefore, when we go to bed at night, we can be certain that just as surely as our Lord's mercy covers us in evening and in morning, he will hear our prayers, and he will renew his mercy toward us. We therefore boldly pray in Jesus' name:

Lord, I cry out to You;
Make haste to me!
Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.

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Thursday - Epistle (Ephesians 4:22-28)

Read Ephesians 4.

If God forgives us of our sins, then it follows that something changes. The old leaven has been put away and something new has come. Jesus has created in himself a new man. He has died to sin and now lives to God. This is the source of God's verdict of forgiveness of sins toward us. So it follows that if we have this verdict of God then we are new creatures. This is what happened to us in our baptism where we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit of God. We were altogether reborn. Our old man was crucified as we were united to our Lord's death, and we were made into new creatures as we share in our Lord's resurrection. This is therefore what we continue to learn from our Lord. We have been given new identities in Christ through our baptism into him. So

Jesus teaches us to live within this identity. St. Paul reminds of this teaching of Christ in our Epistle lesson from Ephesians 4, that we continue to put off the old man who decays in its deceitful desires and be renewed in the new man created by God in true righteousness and holiness.

Putting off this old man with all sin and evil desires is an everyday activity in the Christian life. This isn't because we haven't yet received full forgiveness of our sins. No, it is quite the opposite. It's precisely because we have received the full and free forgiveness of our sins that we are able to put off the old man. Those who trust in Christ stand righteous before God. In his own body he has taken our sin and in exchange given us his own righteousness (2 Cor 5:21). The old, sinful desires are called old because they are not part of our lives anymore. They still tempt us as we still fall in weakness. But St. Paul encourages you not to be ruled by these sins. Because the Holy Spirit has sealed you for the day when he will finally rescue you from all evil, and he continues to renew your mind as a new creature in Christ. So even though your sinful desires will remain to various degrees throughout your life, don't let this stop you from living the new life Christ lives to give you. Speak the truth. Be honest. Love your neighbor. The sin that still clings to you can no longer claim or identify you.

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Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 98:1)

Read Psalm 98.

Our *Alleluia verse* is from Psalm 98, a joyful song declaring the works of God. Sing unto the Lord a new song! He has done marvelous things! His right hand and holy arm have gain him the victory. He has shown his salvation and revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. Our *Alleluia* only includes the first words of this Psalm, "Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things." This sets us up for our Gospel lesson in which our Lord forgives sins and causes a lame man to walk. The Gospel lesson speaks for itself as the *Alleluia* anticipates it. This is how it always is throughout our church year.

But consider how Jesus fulfills what Psalm 98 speaks of! He tells a man who is unable to walk that his sins are forgiven. This truly is the righteousness of God. It is that he does not count our sins against us. It is his salvation. This is the greatest of his works, and everything following it pales in comparison. Yet it follows that the fruits of God forgiving us of our sins is that he heals our diseases and ailments, as he

promises ultimately to do on the resurrection. But Jesus came to earth to show in real time that he is the one who forgives and heals. He healed this man, revealing how marvelous his righteousness truly is. It is written down for us so that we may rejoice in his works and look forward to the fulfillment of his promises.

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Saturday - Gospel (Matthew 9:1-8)

Read Matthew 9.

You might think that it is easier to forgive than to heal. After all, it only requires you to say "I forgive you," right? Healing requires advanced and even supernatural skills. But we see from experience as sinners that forgiving is not as easy as we might think. How easy is it to harbor anger or contempt in your heart when your neighbor sins against you? This is why Jesus' question is so important: Which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven you," or to say, "Rise and walk"? The scribes accused him of Blasphemy, because only God can forgive sins (Luke 5:21). But Jesus reveals that they don't even know the half of it. Sure, they say rightly that only God can forgive, but then they deny the very means by which he delivers forgiveness. They deny his Son whom he sent in the flesh to die for our sins. They put on a faux piety, assuming to give all the honor to God. Yet, in reality, they are treating forgiveness as a trite and trivial matter. But Jesus teaches them that it is much harder than healing. God forgiving the sinners of the world was not a matter of simply outweighing his attribute of justice with his attribute of mercy. Rather, his mercy drove him to fulfill his justice in his own Son. It's as we sing in Luther's great hymn:

But God had seen my wretched state/ Before the world's foundation,
And mindful of His mercies great,/ He planned for my salvation.
He turned to me a father's heart;/ He did not choose the easy part
But gave His dearest treasure.

And as we also sing, "The wrath and stripes are hard to bear, but by Thy passion men shall shall the fruit of Thy salvation." Sin is a terrible corruption, which makes every single action, thought, emotion, feeling, and impulse eternally guilty of hellfire. It is not an easy thing to look over. It isn't just a matter of looking in our hearts to find it. We will only find more sin. But God found it in his heart, in his bosom, as he sent the Only Begotten One (John 1:18) into the flesh to earn for us forgiveness. So it is based on this that all forgiveness flows.

25

I Will Sing My Maker's Praises

Eph. 5: 19, 20

Sollt' ich meinem Gott nicht singen

Paul Gerhardt, 1659, cento

Tr., composite

8. 7. 8. 7. 8. 7. 7. 8. 7. 7.

Sollt' ich meinem Gott

Johann Schop, 1641



1 I will sing my Mak-er's prais-es And in Him most joy-ful be,
2 Yea, so dear did He es-teem me That His Son He loved so well



For in all things I see trac-es Of His ten-der love to me.
He hath giv-en to re-deem me From the quenchless flames of hell.



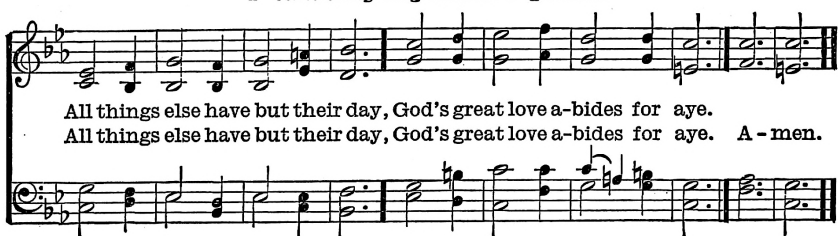
Noth-ing else than love could move Him With such sweet and ten-der care
O Thou Spring of bound-less bless-ing, How could e'er my fee-ble mind



Ev-er-more to raise and bear All who try to serve and love Him.
Of Thy depth the bot-tom find Tho' my ef-forts were un-ceas-ing?



I Will Sing My Maker's Praises



All things else have but their day, God's great love a-bides for aye.
All things else have but their day, God's great love a-bides for aye. A-men.

3 All that for my soul is needful
He with loving care provides,
Nor of that is He unheedful
Which my body needs besides.
When my strength cannot avail me,
When my powers can do no more,
Doth my God His strength outpour;
In my need He doth not fail me.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

4 When I sleep, He still is near me,
O'er me rests His guardian eye;
And new gifts and blessings cheer me
When the morning streaks the sky.
Were it not for God's protection,
Had His countenance not been
Here my guide, I had not seen
E'er the end of my affliction.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

5 As a father never turneth
Wholly from a wayward child,
For the prodigal still yearneth,
Longing to be reconciled,
So my many sins and errors
Find a tender, pardoning God,
Chastening frailty with His rod,
Not, in vengeance, with His terrors.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

6 Since, then, neither change nor coldness,
In my Father's love can be,
Lo! I lift my hands with boldness,
As Thy child I come to Thee.
Grant me grace, O God, I pray Thee,
That I may with all my might,
All my lifetime, day and night,
Love and trust Thee and obey Thee
And, when this brief life is o'er,
Praise and love Thee evermore.