

“Pray Without Ceasing ...!”

(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

This booklet of Prayers has been prepared for personal use. Prepared especially for the Body of Christ at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church (LCMS), Aberdeen, SD

Prayers written by Pastor Hyle Anderson, September, 2005, while serving, Trinity Lutheran, Bemidji, MN. These prayers were written after a discussion on prayer in the adult Bible class on Sunday morning.

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Teach Us
to Pray

HELPS

For **additional prayers** for your personal or family devotions, refer to our hymnal, *Lutheran Worship*, pages 124-133, or *Lutheran Service Book*, pp. 305-318, or *The Lutheran Hymnal*, pp. 102-119.

Refer also to the prayers included in the “Portals of Prayer.” The “Portals of Prayer” includes one or two sentence prayers for each day and also includes prayers for morning and evening of each day of the week.

Practice also preparing your own personal prayers. Use the format of the “Collects” included in our worship service (consider the examples below):

- 1) In introduction: “Dear Father in heaven ...”
- 2) A “thanksgiving” (or praise): “I Praise and thank You that You, O God, are unchanging and will always remember me (us) in my (our) need ...”
- 3) A reference to what God, in His grace, has done in the past: “You are the Author and Giver of all that’s good ...”
- 4) Your request: “I ask that You would keep me in Your grace ...”
- 5) Conclusion: “I pray, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.”

A Hymn from *The Lutheran Hymnal* on “Prayer”

“Prayer is the Soul’s Sincere Desire” (# 454, sts. 1, 5, 8)

Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire unuttered or exprest,
The motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.

Prayer in the Christian’s vital breath, the Christian’s native air,
His watchword at the gates of death – he enters heaven with prayer.

O Thou by whom we come to God, the Life, the Truth, and Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod – Lord, teach us how to pray.

“Don’t Forget to Pray!” (a poem)

Wherever you go, whatever the way,
Ask for His help: don’t forget to pray!

He’s there when you need Him, He’ll hear you today;
Ask for His blessing: don’t forget to pray!

He will take your hand and guide you along;
So lift up your voice and praise Him in song!

He knows what you need, He will with great care
Grant what you ask and answer your prayer!

The time may be long and great be the span
Till the blessings are known from the prayers of the man;
But take heart, my friend, He'll hear you today!
Get down on your knees! Don't forget to pray!

The Bible references selected for this booklet are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*; The Lockman Foundation, LaHabra, CA 90631; from the 1995 edition of the NASB; from a CD, copyright 1999 to 2002; (www.NASBible.com).

An Order for Personal Devotions and Prayer

The Invocation:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son (+), and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise.

A Reading: (as a personal confession of faith; Rom. 6:8-11)

“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, ¹is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

My Prayer

(select one of the prayers of this booklet or other prayer of your choice)

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction: (2 Cor. 13:14)

The Grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with me and all for whom I have prayed. Amen.

Prayers for Daily Problems and Burdens

1) A Prayer for Forgiveness

Psalm 51:1-4

- 1 "Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;
According to the greatness of Your compassion 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, I have sinned
And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak
And blameless when You judge.

Holy Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; I, a poor sinner come before You, knowing, and in my heart confessing Your majesty and glory. Like King David I must admit, "Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge" (Ps. 51:4). I know that none of my sins are hidden from Your sight and I am helpless to atone for my sin by my own works. I cannot bargain with You, O God, with a false pretense to do better. I simply come before You as did the publican and I pray "God, be merciful to me, the sinner" (Lk. 18:13). You promise that if we confess our sins, You are indeed faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn. 1:9).

O Lord, I confess before You that I have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. I lay before You everything that weighs heavy on my heart, even those sins I've tried to hide from others and even to hide them from You. I know Your anger against sin, otherwise my Lord and Savior would not have had to die in my place. I pray, cover me with His holy and precious blood. Wash me and I will be whiter than snow (Is. 1:18). By Your Holy Spirit, give me ever, the faith to know and to trust that in Christ I am a forgiven sinner; that I am a child of God; that I am counted among the righteous; that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life. Hear my prayer and receive my thanks and praise through Jesus Christ, Your Son, my Lord, and My Savior. Amen.

2) A Prayer for Guidance when in a Hurry

"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
(1 Cor. 10:31)

O God in heaven, show me what I need to do, and then by Your Holy Spirit, with my life rooted in Christ my Savior, show me how to do it. Amen.

3) A Prayer for Patience (and perseverance)

“Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty ...’” (Gen. 17:1).

Blessed Lord, You called Your servant, Abraham, and You said to Him, “I am God Almighty” (Gen. 17:1). You gave Abraham the promise of a Son, while testing him to trust You. In Your timing, while Abraham waited, You also fulfilled Your promise to Abraham with the gift of the promised son, Isaac.

Blessed Lord, I don’t know if You are testing me right now, but I am waiting. While I’m waiting for Your answer, give me a faith to trust You, especially to trust You when things seem uncertain to me. Through Your servant, St. Paul, I am reminded that “tribulation brings about perseverance” (Rom. 5:3). O Lord, help me not only to trust Your leading and to trust Your timing, but to learn the lesson of perseverance while I wait. By Your Spirit, give me a patient faith and to learn the lesson and promise of the Psalm: “Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it” (Ps. 37:5). I pray, through Jesus Christ, my Lord, my Savior, my hope. Amen.

4) A Prayer when Confused (or Worried about God’s answer)

God and Father in heaven, I want to follow in the footsteps of the heroes of the faith. Yet, in my own weakness, I can’t seem to walk in faith as they did. I find myself praying for Your guidance, O Lord, only to take back into my own hands what I’ve already given to You in prayer, or still worrying about things I cannot change, or wondering what Your answer will be. Give me the faith that St. James talked about when he said we must “ask in faith without any doubting” (James 1:6). Give me the boldness of Abraham when he prayed for the righteous (Gen. 18). Give me, I ask, O Lord, the faith to trust that when I’ve given my concern to You that You will answer as You have promised when You said, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver You ...” (Ps. 50:15). I beg, O Lord, let me pray in the confidence of Jesus’ promise, “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” And now, I ask for _____ (include your own personal situation; or praying for another person). This I pray, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

5) A Prayer for Understanding or Accepting God’s Will

Jesus prayed, **“Yet, not My will, but Yours be done...”** (Lk. 22:42)

O Lord, in one of our hymns we sing, “The will of God is always best and shall be done forever ...” (LW, # 425, st. 1). I thank You, O God, for this reminder and for the thoughts of the composer who has shared his conviction and faith in these words of faith and hope. I thank You for Your constant leading and guiding by Your Holy Spirit. I thank You that even when I don’t know what is best for my life, You always know what I need and what is best for me. At times You bring things into my life that You intend to use for the good of others or for my own growth in

faith. Sometimes these things can seem overwhelming. At others times, by faith,, and by my life experience and Your faithfulness to me, I can weather these difficult storms. At others times, however, O Lord, I confess that I find myself like Elijah (1 Kgs. 19), hiding in my own spiritual cave and feeling sorry for myself. It is then that You come to me in Your grace in Christ Jesus, by the power and presence of Your Holy Spirit, reminding me of my special place in Your holy kingdom as part of this great, royal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2). And as You called Elijah from his confusion and disappointment and gave Him Your direction, so You call me, again and again, out of my own weakness and into Your strength. I pray, always give me the direction I need for daily life. Open doors and windows of opportunity to be Your servant, at work, at home, in my leisure time – wherever You place me in my coming and going (Ps. 121:8). When I might wonder about my life in Christ and about my place in Your kingdom, let me simply pray “Yet, not my will, but Yours be done.” I may not even see the results of Your blessed work in answering my prayer until I see You in glory. So, I pray, that though I may not see and know Your answer, I will trust that You will accomplish what You choose according to Your will, in my life, through my life, and in the lives of those for whom I pray.

As You cover me in the blood of Christ so that I am cleansed from all sin, let me joyfully serve in faith, trusting that Your will is always best. I pray, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, my Lord, and My Savior. Amen.

6) A Prayer When Awakened at Night (and perhaps troubled)

Like the psalmists, O Lord, I cry out to You. At times, when I have awakened at night, let me not forget that the faithfulness of the Your servant of the past who knew Your grace, who knew and accepted Your will for his life, and who also said,

“I cried with all my heart; answer me, O LORD!
I will observe Your statutes.
I cried to You; save me
And I shall keep Your testimonies.
I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I wait for Your words.
My eyes anticipate the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. (Ps. 119:145-148)

I confess, O Lord, that too often when I awaken at night it is to grumble about losing sleep. I confess also that I begin to think about those things that lie before me in the new day, or those things left undone from the past, or those things that You have called me to face and to deal with, but I’ve dragged my spiritual feet and the burden remains and I’m troubled about it.

I pray, O Lord God, at those times when the sounds of the night have awakened me, or when sleep seems to be far away, or when I’ve been troubled out of sleep, let me first thank You for the privilege of sleep and rest. Let me thank You for a safe place, a home, a roof over my head, a place of comfort, and a pillow on

which to lay my head. Let me thank You that even though it might be that I've indulged too late into the evening and now I'm suffering the consequences, that my bodily functions, as You, O Lord, designed them, are still working. I must, by Your Holy Spirit, imagine also that perhaps You had something that You wanted me to think about, to pray about, and perhaps to work through when I had nothing else to disturb my thoughts at a late hour of the night or early hour of the morning.

Therefore, when awakened at night, O Lord, I ask You to use that time in my life for my own good, that I might, like the psalmist, ponder and think about Your word. I ask also, that as You give me that opportunity, You would help me to be prepared, in my thoughts, and in my meditations, for something that lies ahead. Hear me, Father in heaven, as You have heard and as You have answered the prayers of Your servants of the past; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

7) A Prayer to Trust God in and to Accept a Difficult Time

(A prayer when experiencing a loss: the loss of health; the loss of a job; the loss of a loved one; or, when facing a difficult task that includes changes in one's life; or, when bearing up and trying to make sense of something that you had no control over).

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden,
The God *who* is our salvation. (Ps. 68:19)

"Listen to this, O Job, stand and consider the wonders of God" (Job 37:14).

Gracious God, Your servant Job was tested and tried. Through a young man named Elihu, You spoke and Your servant Job began to learn of Your working in and working through a difficult time

I must admit and confess that to me, O God, what I experience may be quite different than what Job experienced, and yet my circumstance might seem overwhelming and I wonder if I can bear up. I truly wonder, when the pain cuts to the heart, if I have faith enough to get through it.

How can I "consider the wonders of God" when I hurt so deeply that I can hardly think? How can I "consider the wonders of God" when the tears of my heart blur and vision of my soul?

Blessed Lord, I cry out to You. I confess my helplessness. I confess my confusion and lack of understanding. Like Job I wonder where You are in this difficult moment. Like Job I try to see beyond the moment to Your greater working in my life and the lives of others who agonize with me.

I come to You and I ask for strength of faith. I ask for courage to go on. I ask for patience. I ask also for those hurt with me and who encourage me. Give to them a confident faith also to turn to You, to accept what is real, even though painful. And together, may we walk in faith before You. May we trust that sin, death, hell,

the devil, and even the pain of this moment has been conquered by the life, death, and resurrection of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Then, O Lord, as I go on, may I see that the “wonders of God” are those things that You give me daily in my life: forgiveness of sins, faith to know my Savior, faith to trust You even when I’m in pain, the faith-filled conviction that You are the One who guides my day, and the confidence in faith that nothing can separate me (us) from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. In whose name I pray. Amen.

8) A Prayer of Thanksgiving

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”
(LW, # 461)

O Lord, we call the hymn the “common doxology.” It might be common to us in its use in our worship, but in the hymn we express our thanks and praise for all that You give us, all things that are *not* common at all, but are gifts of Your creation and Your grace. For these uncommon gifts, I thank You, O God. I thank You for the little things, too small to be seen by the human eye, yet are a part of Your glorious creation. I thank You for the great things, mountains that show Your glory and majesty as they rise high above the fields and plains and valleys. I thank You for all things in Your creation.

I thank You for my family and my extended family. I thank You for their special place in my life. I thank You for family members, who lived by faith and who are now with You in glory. I thank You also for their example of faith. I thank You for faithful friends whose lives are a blessing to me.

I thank You for all who serve in our community, for public servants, firefighters, police officers, for those who provide and maintain our utilities, for those who serve at times when we are asleep, for those whose work is travel. Lord keep them safe in their journeys.

I thank You for those whose training makes it possible to carry out tasks that are a benefit to me and to the community in which I live, engineers who plan for building and construction; doctors who do those things for which they have trained; nurses who do little and great things for our comfort and health; those who teach and train others so that they can be faithful citizens in our nation and in our community.

While I remember that my Lord and My Savior is the Great Physician of body and soul, I thank You, O Lord, for those who care for body and soul in our community – I thank You for all who work in the field of discovery, including the discovery on new ways to care for physical health and the mind. I thank You for those who give counsel, and for those who share the Good News of life and hope in Christ. I thank You for those elected and appointed to take care of and administer many things in our community. May they be faithful in their many responsibilities.

I thank You for the many gifts that You have given me: my life by Your creation; my new life in Christ by Your re-creation by Your Holy Spirit; for faith for each day; for the strength of faith to persevere; for the joys of living; for those that bring joy into my life; for the privilege I have, in Christ, to bring encouragement and joy to others.

I thank You for the gifts, talents, and abilities that You have given to me; may I use them to Your glory and for the good of others.

I thank You for Your blessed word, especially the Good News of the life in Christ. I thank You, O God, for the promise of life in glory, for the hope that this promise brings, and for the encouragement that this promise gives for each day of life.

I thank You, that while I walk this earth on my journey toward heaven, that You will never leave nor forsake me (Hebrews 31:5).

Hear me, O Lord God, in my thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

9) “Lord, Accept My Thanks” (a poem)

Lord, in the quietness of this moment

Make me thankful ...

For sparkling dew on sunny morning;

For soft rains on meadows of beauty;

For cattle grazing in contentment in fields of green;

For corn stalks stretching tassels to meet the sky;

For sunflowers, hanging their heads in abundant blessing, praising
God in humility;

For the furrow plowed in rich soil, giving growth by heavenly design;

For quiet evening, bespeaking the calm of heaven;

For life enjoyed in the comfort of love and family;

For the smile on the face of a child;

For the handshake in gratitude of life from the hand of the aged;

For mother’s joy as she touches her newborn;

For worship when hearts pray and praise;

For forgiving freedom in the Christ who stills the storms of life;

For the unending love which pours from the fountains of heaven, bestowing

Life-giving peace from the living God.

Lord, in my thanksgiving, give me greater joy...

A heart filled with contentment,

And a greater willingness to serve You in faith.

In Christ, so hear me. Amen. (Pastor Anderson; September 13, 1982)

10) A Prayer for Godly Guidance (when dealing with a problem)

“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and overflowing with gratitude.*” (Col. 1:6-7)

“Let no one seek his own *good*, but that of his neighbor. (1 Cor. 10:24)

O Lord, when David was running from King Saul, he sought Your help and gave Himself to Your will. When he could have avenged himself with Saul, even to take Saul’s life, he submitted to Your gracious will. Because I am rooted and established in Christ, by Your Holy Spirit, may I always submit to Your will, may I not seek to satisfy my own concerns and desires, but to keep my mind set on the things above, not on the things of this earth (Col. 3:1-2). Set my mind and heart to do those things which bring Your grace to others, to give comfort and encouragement to others, to forgive as I have been forgiven. When I am wronged, O blessed Lord, may I, by Your Spirit, exercise self-control, so that You can work good in me and through me. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

11) **A Prayer for My Neighbor**_(in illness)

Psalm 103:1-5 (A *Psalm* of David.)

- 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name.
- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget none of His benefits;
- 3 Who pardons all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases;
- 4 Who redeems your life from the pit,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;
- 5 Who satisfies your years with good things,
So *that* your youth is renewed like the eagle.

“But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.” (Ps. 73:28)

O Lord, _____(name) is struggling with the changes in health. I thank you for those who are giving him/her care. I ask that this care would be for his/her comfort and for better health. Give him/her patience during this time of treatment. And, O Lord, use this time in his/her life to teach him/her to know Your grace and Your blessing in Christ and to trust You even at this uncertain time in his/her health. Hear my prayer, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

12) **A Prayer for My Own Health**

O Lord, I am struggling with some uncertainties about my physical health. I thank You for those who are trained to give me care. May I receive the appropriate care for my comfort, and if it be Your will, for restored health and strength. Give me patience to trust You during this time. And I ask, use this time in my life to bring me closer to You, to strengthen my faith, and to help me more clearly focus my

heart, soul, and mind on the things above. Let me, a sinner, know that Your mercies are new every morning, and great is Your faithfulness (Lam. 3:22-23) I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

13) A Prayer for the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.”
(Romans 8:16)

God in heaven, by Your Holy Spirit You have brought Your grace to me. By Your Spirit I have received every gift that You bring to every believer by the life, death, and resurrection of my Savior. By Your Holy Spirit I also confess my faith in Jesus Christ. I pray, O God, give me Your Spirit that I be numbered among those who are led by the Spirit. As the Spirit leads, may I serve You and my neighbor; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

14) A Prayer in Remembrance of My Baptism

“Peter *said* to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38).

“In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

Gracious God, I give You thanks that in Holy Baptism You have given me new life in Christ, the presence and power of Your Holy Spirit, and the certainty that in Christ, my name is written in the Lamb's book of life. I ask that by this life-giving washing, through the power of the Spirit, You will keep me in Your grace, that by my life and words I can confess Christ Jesus my Lord, can be a faithful example to others, and finally, when You call me from this life, I will receive the crown of glory that awaits all who confess Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. In His name, receive my thanks and hear my prayer. Amen.

15) A Prayer for the Congregation

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and ^{1e}patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.” (Col. 3:12-14)

O Lord, You have brought me into Your Holy Church on earth and to fellowship in this Christian Congregation. I thank You for those who have gone before us. May

we follow in their footsteps. I thank You also for those with whom I walk in faith and with whom I can serve You now.

I pray that You would lead us to true unity in faith, to faithfulness to Your Word, and to faithful service to one another. May we respond to one another's needs, give encouragement, and support one another in word and deed.

I pray, may I also, with my brothers and sisters in Christ, hear and heed Your call on my life that I might serve You with my gifts and abilities; I pray, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

16) A Prayer for Christian Education

O Lord Jesus, You gathered Your disciples and You taught them. Hundreds and thousands of others came to You in so many places to learn of the blessings of Your kingdom. I ask, O Lord, by Your Holy Spirit, open Your word and bless all those who seek to learn where we, in our congregations throughout our country, and in our sisters Lutheran Congregations throughout the world, gather to hear and to learn of the blessings and gifts of Your holy word. I ask for grace and presence in the hearts of those who attend our Bible classes, our gatherings of young people; our Sunday School classes, our confirmation classes, our ladies groups, our men's group, our Lutheran Schools, all pre-schools, all places where our brothers and sisters in Christ care for children. I ask also, for other settings where we have opportunity to speak and to witness to Your name and Your Word. Draw hearts and lives by Your grace that our children might learn and grow in faith and to become God-pleasing citizens of our free land. May we all grow that we might stand together in Your grace when we see You face to face in glory. In Your Holy name, O Lord Jesus, for You are King of kings and Lord of lords. Amen.

17) A Prayer for Strength to Face and Resist Temptation

“ ... and lead us not into temptation ... ” (Lord's Prayer)

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

Dear Lord and Savior, You were tempted by the devil in the wilderness and You resisted these temptations and the devil left You. I thank You that by Your perfect and obedient life, by Your perfect suffering and death, and by Your glorious resurrection from the dead You have won the victory for me and for all believers. Because the devil, the world, and my own sinful flesh would tempt me and lead me away from You and Your grace, I pray by Your victory, give me the faith necessary to resist temptation and sin, and when tempted, to remember, by Your Holy Spirit, Your blessed word. I also know that I am not so strong in faith that I cannot be tempted nor will I always have the victory. When I fail, I ask, O Lord,

by Your Holy Spirit may I run to You, confess my sin, and in Your holy name, receive the forgiveness that You have won for me; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.

18) A Prayer for a Humble Heart_(and attitude)

“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart’” (1 Samuel 16:7)

O Lord, You chose Your servant David because he had a humble heart. I thank You, that when David left his humility and stumbled, he confessed his sin and You restored him. From David’s life and experiences, You inspired him to write and sing psalms. From these psalms I am strengthened in faith and led by the example of David and others to walk before You with a humble heart. I also know that humility is not the choice of the flesh but by Your Spirit. Guide me then by Your Spirit, that I not seek to puff myself up in any way, nor to have a false pride in my humility, but that I confess with David and with millions of other believers of the past and of the present:

“O Lord, open my lips,

That my mouth may declare Your praise ...

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” (Ps. 51:15, 17)

Through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Amen.

19. A Prayer for Perseverance in Faith

(for those who live with on-going physical problems, conditions, and who at times simply struggle to keep going)

Psalm 143:1-2, 4-8, 11 Prayer for Deliverance and Guidance.

[A Psalm of David]

- 1 Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications!
Answer me in Your faithfulness, in Your righteousness!
- 2 And do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no man living is righteous.
- 4 Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me;
My heart is appalled within me.
- 5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings;
I muse on the work of Your hands.
- 6 I stretch out my hands to You;
My soul *longs* for You, as a parched land.
- 7 Answer me quickly, O LORD, my spirit fails;
Do not hide Your face from me,
Or I will become like those who go down to the pit.

- 8 Let me hear Your lovingkindness in the morning;
For I trust in You;
Teach me the way in which I should walk;
For to You I lift up my soul.
- 11 For the sake of Your name, O LORD, revive me.
In Your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble.

Psalm 77:11-15

“I shall remember the deeds of the LORD;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
I will meditate on all Your work and muse on Your deeds.
Your way, O God, is holy; what god is great like our God?
You are the God who works wonders;
You have made known Your strength among the peoples.
You have by Your power redeemed Your people ...”

Blessed Lord and God, apart from You I am helpless, like a lost lamb without a shepherd; apart from You, O God, my life would be a mess, a ship tossed by the waves of every kind of storm. But You have called me out of the darkness of sin and death and have given me new life in Christ, my Savior (1Pet. 2:9). You have given me a name and have written that name in heaven. Therefore I rejoice! I sing Your praise! My life in Christ Jesus is secure and just as surely as Jesus assured the thief of the promise of life forever in paradise, so He gives me this same promise (Lk. 23:43).

Yet, O Lord, the challenges of my life are great. There are those moments when I am simply weary and tired. I find myself like Your servant who wrote the psalms, and my spirit feels “overwhelmed within me.” I know that nothing can separate me from Your love in Christ. I know that the end of this journey heaven is promised. But I’m hurting and I’m tired. Give me the faith of St. Paul who said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). Give me the faith of Your servant, Gideon, who faced a great enemy yet trusted Your guidance and won the victory (Jud. 6-8). Give me the faith of St. John, who saw Christ revealed in glory and was strengthened in the hope of all tears being dried (Rev. 7:17). Let me also know that every day that You give me, O Lord, is another day to celebrate and to live in Your grace and to rejoice in the salvation won for me by my Savior. Therefore, give me patience and perseverance in faith. Let me know that “Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning” (Ps. 30:5). Even though my body may be weary, let me faith and my soul exalt as described by Your servant Habakkuk,
“Though the fig tree should not blossom
And there be no fruit on the vines,
Though the yield of the olive should fail
And the fields produce no food,
Though the flock should be cut off from the fold

And there be no cattle in the stalls,
Yet I will exult in the LORD,
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.
The Lord GOD is my strength,
And He has made my feet like hinds *feet*,
And makes me walk on my high places.” (Hab. 3:17-19)

Lord, in Your mercy, hear my prayer. Amen.

20) ***“What is Prayer?”***

These thoughts on prayer are taken from Johann Gerhard’s Meditations on Divine Mercy. Gerhard lived 1582-1637. He is considered one of the greatest of Lutheran Theologians. This book with the original title, “*Meditationes Sacrae*,” “grew from his deep piety, fostered by his health difficulties and his extensive biblical and theological studies.”

If someone wants to describe adequately the usefulness of pious, earnest prayer, he will in my opinion, surely find a beginning more easily than a conclusion. Pious prayer offered in faith is familiar conversation with God. It is a salutary remedy to all the difficulties of life. It is the key to heaven and the door to paradise. It shows us how much we depend on God, and it is a ladder of ascension to God. It is a shield for our defense and a faithful messenger of the ambassador. It is refreshment in the heat of misfortune; it is medicine during illness. It is a winch, drawing us to heaven, and a vessel that draws water from the font of divine kindness. It is a wind that blows away evil and brings earthly benefits. It is a nurse that nurtures virtue and conquers faults. It is a great fortification for the soul and gives free access to God. It is a spiritual feast and a heavenly delicacy. It is a consolation for the dejected and a delight for the holy. It grants knowledge of the secret things of God and acquires His gifts. It upholds the world and rescues people. It is a joy for the heart and a jubilation for the mind. It follows God’s gifts of grace and it leads ahead into glory. It is a garden of happiness and a tree full of delights. It calms the conscience and increases our thankfulness. It sends demons running and draws angels close. It is a soothing remedy for the misfortunes of this life and the sweet smell of the sacrifice of thanksgiving. It is a foretaste of the life to come and sweetens the bitterness of death.

Whoever is truly a child of God through faith will, with childlike trust, address his or her heavenly Father every day in prayer. The one in whose heart the Holy Spirit has made His home will, as a spiritual priest, daily offer to God this incense of prayer. There are four immovable truths on which our confidence to pray rests. Because of these, we may be certain that our heavenly Father mercifully hears our prayers. The truths on which our certainty rests are: (1) God’s omnipotent kindness; (2) God’s unfailing truthfulness; (3) Christ’s intercession as our mediator; and (4) The Holy Spirit’s testimony.

1. *“God’s Omnipotent Kindness”*

How much has God given to us without our asking? He has given us body and soul. He has even given us His own Son. What will He give to us if only we ask Him? Because God has given us such great things, we can have courage and confidence when we ask Him for lesser things. Everything we ask for is insignificant compared to the fact that the Son of God willingly suffered and died for us. God’s goodness is boundless and infinite.

What can He deny to us? The love by which we hold fast to God, no matter how faint it may be, makes us eagerly desire to be subject to God's will in all things. Even so, we are much more sure of God's boundless love and goodness. Is not this the trust God wants? "He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him" (Psalm 145:19), says the psalmist, doubtless because God shows those who fear Him the purest and most perfect love. Indeed, perfect love gives itself totally to the one who is love and grants what he or she desires. God's goodness is omnipotent. Is there anything He cannot give to us? Nothing that God has promised is too hard or too difficult, much less impossible, for Him to do because He is the highest power (Luke 1:37).

2. "God's Unfailing Truthfulness"

God graciously promises us that He will listen intently when we pray. This promise is a word of eternal and immovable truth because God is truth itself (John 14:6). God cannot deny Himself of His word (2 Timothy 2:13). God promises that He will favorably hear our prayers. As if this were not enough, Christ also affirmed it by swearing an oath. He said to the apostles, and through them to anyone else who truly believes, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you" (John 16:23). If you do not believe God the Father's promise, believe Christ, who swears the oath. "You have said, 'Seek My face.' My heart says to You, 'Your face, Lord, do I seek'" (Psalm 27:8)

3. "Christ's Intercession as Our Mediator"

The third truth that assures us that God favorably hears our prayers is Christ's intercession as our mediator. He is "at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us" (Romans 8:34) and is our "advocate with the Father" (1 John 3:2). What will the heavenly Father deny to His beloved Son? What will our gracious Savior not obtain by the power and merit of His satisfaction accomplished for us? The shrine of heaven stands open to Him. Christ delivers our prayers to the secret council of God. Will the Father not hear Him? Will He not hear Himself? Will He refuse Himself anything? The Father and the Son "are one" (John 10:30). The Son is "at the Father's side" (John 1:18). And "the Father is in [Christ] and [Christ is] in the Father" (John 10:38; 14:10). Christ our intercessor says to the Father, "I knew that You always hear Me" (John 11:42). If Christ was heard by the Father while He walked the earth as God in the flesh, appearing in weakness in the state of humiliation (Philippians 2:7), the Father will certainly hear Christ now in all the glory of His majesty and as He exercises the full measure of His power.

4. "The Holy Spirit's Work"

The fourth truth that assures us that God favorably hears our prayers is the testimony of the Holy Spirit. "You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6). Surely God hears those groans, those wailings, those prayers, those sighs that the Holy Spirit works in us. If God did not, He would be despising and rejecting His own work. "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26). The Spirit does not intercede for us with human expressions. Instead, according to His nature, the Holy Spirit pours Himself

over our prayers to cover our lack of skill and forethought with His working and presence. In this way, He requests from God that which is beneficial for us.

On these four truths our hearts rest confidently and securely so we will not waver in prayer nor doubt that God favorably hears our prayers. “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). None of us should take our prayers lightly. Before they pass over our lips, He commands them to be written in His book. We must hope, without doubt, for one of two things: Either our heavenly Father will give to us what we ask, or He will give to us that which He knows to be most beneficial for us.

Furthermore, anyone with a sound mind and good judgment, anyone who considers the divine majesty of God and our weakness, understand how profitable and necessary it is to pray without ceasing and how difficult it is to do (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). When you stand before the Lord to pray, stand before Him with great fear and desire. Break the chains of earthly anxiety from your heart. Fight courageously so your speech may be holy, pure, and unstained, and the gates of heaven will open before your prayer. The angels will meet it with joy and carry it to the throne of the blessed Father. Rather than being like those who tempt the Lord, we can prepare our hearts and come before God our Father in prayer.



Soli Deo Gloria
GLORY TO GOD ALONE