



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

Adopted from *The Lutheran Service Book* (p. 294)

July 14, 2024 A.D. The 8th Sunday after Pentecost

This brief service is intended as a simple form of daily prayer for individuals and families. When more than one person is present, the psalm and responses may be spoken responsively, with one person reading the words in regular type and the others responding with the words in bold type. The Creed and Prayers that are in bold type are to be said by all.

The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

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

Amen.

Psalm

(From Psalm 143)

For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life!
In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!
Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!
Enter not into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.
Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love,
for in you I trust.

For those with access to the internet, you may now play today's worship video, located at bethanycr.org/sermons and then continue with the Apostles' Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Ephesians 1:3-14)

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to

hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Sermon *(A copy is included at the end of this service.)*

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.

Bethany's Prayer List

Thanksgiving

- Ken Cook - recovered after surgery
- Kristi Montague - recovered after surgery
- Youth & Sponsors on the CO Mission Trip

Entrusting into God's Care

- Mickie Sjullie - employment search
- Nathan & Sarah Federwitz - Lutheran Bible Translators
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Angela Yuza - recovering after surgery
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Aaron Moffett - recovering after eye surgery
- Ron Prescott - health issues
- Kim Neuhaus - recovering after surgery
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment

Homebound

- Cindy Broadwater - at home

Mourning, friends and family of

- Merlin (grandfather of Dathan Hinrichs) - died 6/10

Serving Our Country

- Devon (friend of Hedtkes & Chitticks) - deployed to Korea
- Mallory (friend of Abi Clark) - IA National Guard
- Amber (daughter of Ann Balvanz) - US Army, stationed in RI
- Ben (son of Kroemers) - IA National Guard
- Devin (friend of Kroemers) - IA Army National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Siecks) - US Army, stationed in TX
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - IA National Guard

This Saturday, five youth and two adults depart for a YouthWorks mission in Denver. Please keep Camden Brusius, Charles Clark, Natalie Heller, Carter Kirkpatrick, Conner Kirkpatrick, Mark Holt and DCE Kierra Penney in your prayers as they live and share God's love with the people they encounter on their mission trip!

Collect of the Day

O Lord, You granted Your prophets strength to resist the temptations of the devil and courage to proclaim repentance. Give us pure hearts and minds to follow Your Son faithfully even into suffering and death; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, because of Your tender love toward us sinners You have given us Your Son that, believing in Him, we might have everlasting life. Continue to grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may remain steadfast in this faith to the end and finally come to life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Together we pray... **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.**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Grace, mercy, & peace from God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Most biblical scholars believe that when St. Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the letter that we now know as Ephesians, he was in prison. In our eyes he had done nothing wrong, in fact we might say that he was doing exactly what he supposed to do as an apostle and disciple of our Lord. But to those whose power seemed to be threatened by the message of the Gospel, St. Paul had to be stopped. So, through a series of trials and appeals, Paul ended up in Rome, under what we might call house arrest, and wrote to some of the churches that he had visited on his missionary journeys. More than just sending them some warm greetings however, Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus had a very real and urgent purpose.

It seems that some of the Christians in and around Ephesus were becoming discouraged. Life can be hard for Christians any time and any where, but the Christians in Ephesus were taking Paul's hardships to heart. He had spent a considerable amount of time with the Christians there, teaching and proclaiming to them the Gospel of Christ. He was so effective that a silver smith named Demetrius led the craftsmen in the city to riot, as people were no longer worshipping the false idols that were made with human hands. But even after all of this success in spreading the message of the Gospel, the Christians in Ephesus and the surrounding areas seemed to be getting discouraged.

Reading Paul's letters, it seems the Ephesians were wondering why Paul was in prison. It wasn't that they didn't understand that the Romans and the Jews and the craftsmen wanted to silence Paul because his message threatened their power or income or maybe even both. But rather they were disheartened because if what Paul said was true, they thought he shouldn't be in prison. They thought that if Paul was serving the true God, then this God should help Paul get out of prison. But as Paul was in chains, maybe this Good News he taught them wasn't true after all.

I think most of us can relate to what the Ephesians were feeling when they heard about Paul in chains. Whether we have been brought up in the church or are relatively newcomers in the body of Christ, all of us can get discouraged by the events that we see unfolding around us. At times they can be so overwhelming that we may begin to question whether or not our faith in Christ as our Lord and Savior is actually true and justified.

There used to be a time in this country when it seemed everyone understood that the "fear of the Lord was the beginning of all wisdom". The founding fathers and other political figures all appealed to the Almighty for guidance and help in governing the land He gave them. Scientists and innovators of industry all went about their work believing that God made the world a place of order, so they could study it and use its' laws to improve our life this side of heaven. But today things have changed. Anyone who questions the theories, not proven laws, but the theories of evolution and the big bang risks being mocked and ridiculed as being backwards. Anyone who asks if the unborn shouldn't have the rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness are marked and labeled as being against women's rights or scientific progress.

And those are just some of the things that can dishearten us on a broad scale. We all know there are day to day events in our personal lives that can shake us. If God, who loves us, is in control, we might ask ourselves why its' so hard to pay our bills or to put food on our table these days. Why our children or our parents give us problems. Why we struggle to enjoy our marriage. Why we and our love become sick and even die. With the constant attack on our faith by academia, the media, and popular culture in general, and then personal attacks on us and our loved ones, even the strongest believers among us can get discouraged and wonder why God allows Paul to be in chains.

But for Paul, and for all Christians, there is something that looms in the background that is larger than unjustly being in prison, being mocked, or even being sick and facing death. He writes in verses 7 & 8 of our Epistle, *“In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight...”*

St. Paul was aware, as we all should be, that he was a sinner. And the problems we face in this life are caused by sin, sometimes our own, sometimes the sin of others. And our sin makes us enemies of God. And so, for Paul the amazing thing about our faith was not that he was in chains, but that God graciously forgives him his sin. As John Chrysostom said, *“It is astonishing that [God] gave [his Son] for those who hated him. See how rightly he honors us. If even when we hated Him and were enemies He gave the Beloved, what will He not do for us now!?!”*

St. Paul always remembered, no matter what he suffered, that God was in control. And God did not use this power and authority to punish those who disobeyed Him, but rather to save every sinner through the shedding of His Son’s blood on the cross. God’s infinite wisdom and insight are used to save you, and not because you’re a good and decent person, but because God loves you and He has from the beginning of time. So why do we suffer? We don’t know! But those standing on Mt. Calvary looking at Jesus suffering on the cross must have asked the same question. And we know through God’s Word that the cross was His plan for our salvation and glory.

Paul reminds the Ephesians that despite what they see going on around them and in Rome, God is in control and He knows what He is doing. His plan for them and for us centers around Christ Jesus and is a greater blessing than anyone could ever hope for. Despite our suffering now, we have an inheritance that is nothing short of God’s own glory. The blood of Christ is the guarantee of this inheritance until we possess it.

Therefore when we suffer today, first remember your sin and the position that it puts you in before the Almighty. Then remember His wisdom and insight, that has not led to your punishment nor damnation, but led to His Son Jesus on the cross. As Christians we don’t minimize our suffering, but keeping this love of God through Christ in front of us, makes any chain that ties us down easier to live with. Amen.

