

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 29, 2021

Rise! To Arms! With Prayer Employ You

Lutheran Service Book 668, Lutheran Worship 303, The Lutheran Hymnal 444



1 Rise! To arms! With prayer em-ploy you, O Chris-tians, lest the
2 Cast a - far this world's vain plea - sure And bold - ly strive for
3 Wise - ly fight, for time is fleet - ing; The hours of grace are



foe de-destroy you; For Sa - tan has de-signed your fall.
heav'n-ly trea - sure. Be stead-fast in the Sav - ior's might.
fast re - treat - ing; Short, short is this our earth - ly way.



Wield God's Word, the weap - on glo - rious; A - gainst all foes be
Trust the Lord, who stands be - side you, For Je - sus from all
When the Lord the dead will wak - en And sin - ners all by



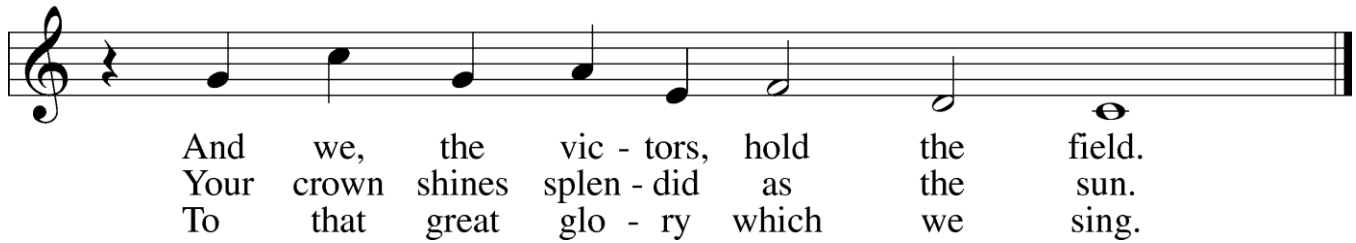
thus vic - to - rious, For God pro-protects you from them all.
harm will hide you. By faith you con-quer in the fight.
fear are shak - en, The saints with joy will greet that day.



Fear not the hordes of hell, Here is Em - man - u - el.
Take cour - age, wea - ry soul! Look for - ward to the goal!
Praise God, our tri-umph's sure. We need not long en-dure



Hail the Sav - ior! The strong foes yield To Christ, our shield,
Joy a - waits you. The race well run, Your long war won,
Scorn and tri - al. Our Sav - ior King His own will bring



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

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

(*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 51:7, 10–12; antiphon Psalm 51:2

L Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

C Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

L Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

C Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

L Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

Kyrie

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

- L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
- C** Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
- C** Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.
- C** For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: O God, the source of all that is just and good, nourish in us every virtue and bring to completion every good intent that we may grow in grace and bring forth the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 6–9

¹“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the just decrees that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ²You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you...

⁶Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and just decrees so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

⁹“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

- L** Fear the Lord, you his saints,
- C** for those who fear him lack nothing!
- L** Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
- C** but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

Psalm 119:129–136

- L** ¹²⁹ Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them.
C ¹³⁰ **The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.**
L ¹³¹ I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments.
C ¹³² **Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.**
L ¹³³ Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.
C ¹³⁴ **Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts.**
L ¹³⁵ Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.
C ¹³⁶ **My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.**

Ephesians 6:10–20

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Verse of the Day: Matthew 5:8

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Blessed are the pure in heart, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. for they shall see God. Alleluia.**

Mark 7:14–23

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7th chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹⁴[Jesus] called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” ¹⁷And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C 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.

By Grace I'm Saved Lutheran Service Book 566, Lutheran Worship 351, The Lutheran Hymnal 373



1 By grace I'm saved, grace free and bound-less; My soul, be-lieve and
2 By grace! None dare lay claim to mer - it; Our works and con - duct
3 By grace God's Son, our on - ly Sav - ior, Came down to earth to
4 By grace! This ground of faith is cer - tain; As long as God is



doubt it not. Why stag - ger at this word of prom - ise?
have no worth. God in His love sent our Re - deem - er,
bear our sin. Was it be - cause of your own mer - it
true, it stands. What saints have penned by in - spi - ra - tion,



Has Scrip - ture ev - er false - hood taught? No! Then this word must
Christ Je - sus, to this sin - ful earth; His death did for our
That Je - sus died your soul to win? No, it was grace, and
What in His Word our God com - mands, Our faith in what our



true re - main: By grace you too will life ob - tain.
sins a - tone, And we are saved by grace a - lone.
grace a - lone, That brought Him from His heav'n - ly throne.
God has done De - pends on grace— grace through His Son.

5 By grace to timid hearts that tremble,
In tribulation's furnace tried,
By grace, in spite of fear and trouble,
The Father's heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure
If grace were not my anchor sure?

6 By grace! On this I'll rest when dying;
In Jesus' promise I rejoice;
For though I know my heart's condition,
I also know my Savior's voice.
My heart is glad, all grief has flown
Since I am saved by grace alone.

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Devotional Thoughts:

When I turned 12, the cost of admission to the movie theater in Three Oaks, Michigan jumped from 25 cents to 35 cents because I had to pay adult prices! With this 40% increase, it's no wonder that I was tempted to lie about my age. If my memory serves me, I did not give in to the temptation.

On the other hand, the high price of admission did include one very important perk. Once you were in the theater, you were not required to leave! You were allowed to stay and watch the movie over and over if you wanted to. (The first movie that I ever sat through twice in a theater was 101 Dalmatians.) It also meant that if you were late and missed the beginning of the movie, you could stay and watch it again. We would leave when we got to the place where we walked in. For this reason, it wasn't uncommon to see people leave in the middle of a film. It even produced a familiar expression in English that I seldom hear anymore, "This is where we came in."

I thought of this as I began reading the Gospel lesson for this week. We find ourselves in the middle of the plot. Our lesson begins with Jesus explaining the meaning of His encounter with the Pharisees and scribes that we read about last week! (If you came in late, feel free to stay in church until this Gospel lesson comes up again in three years ;-). To refresh your memory, Jesus had been accosted for allowing His disciples to eat with unwashed hands.

Jesus begins this week with this explanation of the encounter. "Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." And then as if to say, "Let this suffice" (a favorite comment of my seminary professors), He left the people and entered the house with His disciples.

But that explanation was not sufficient for the disciples. They were confused by Jesus' statement and asked for clarification.

If you listen carefully, you can almost hear Jesus sigh when He asked, "Then are you also without understanding?" With the patience of a master teacher, Jesus spells out the meaning of His statement.

The Pharisees specialized in the mechanics of religion. They had every religious movement and activity perfected. They were worthy of a gold medal in pious behavior. Unfortunately, their reverent behavior was all an act. It was only sanctimonious theater for them. That is why in verse 6, Jesus had called them hypocrites. In classical Greek, hypocrite means a stage actor. You may recall that in ancient Greek plays, the actors wore masks. For the Pharisees, all of their religious activity was simply a mask used to cover their hardened hearts.

Eating ceremonially clean or unclean food with washed or unwashed hands could never enter and change the heart. What you eat cannot defile you! It will simply pass through your body and be expelled!

It might be wise to pause here and ask you to reflect on the almost religious significance our contemporary society attaches to food. We have not only elevated our human dietary choices to a moral imperative but we are also required to provide righteous food for our pets! There is a certain irony to be living in a society that requires us to put "clean" food into our mouths but celebrates the use of foul and vulgar language!

Jesus speaks to this very issue in our Gospel lesson for today. The problem is not with what we put into our mouths. The problem is with what comes out of our hearts! Jesus provides quite a list: "evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness."

Do you observe any of this in our society today? Are any of these things celebrated in the movies we watch? How about a quick look into your own heart? Do we find any of these there? Forgetting for a moment the rest of the list, how about just the first one, evil thoughts?

Now we've uncovered the real problem. It is not unwashed hands or ceremonially unclean food. The real problem is a heart overflowing with sin! If you need a more complete commentary on this, read Jesus' Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5-7.

Try as we will, there is no way for us to cleanse our hearts of these corrupt thoughts and activities. No dietary reform will ever bring health and healing to a sinful mind. There is only one solution. It is Jesus! He lived a clean and holy life for us. He suffered and died for our "evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness."

God in Christ gives us a spotless, unsoiled heart free from any moral stain. David writes about this in Psalm 51,

"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!"
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit."

You may recall a memory of a man I shared with you a while back. His life had been filled with these atrocious things mentioned by Jesus. Then, he learned about forgiveness and salvation that are offered freely to those who believe. It changed his life. From then on, singing these words from Psalm 51 filled his heart with joy.

Our hearts are changed, too, not by what we do but by what Jesus has done for us. Martin Luther puts it this way in his explanation to the second article of the Apostles' Creed:

"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true."

PS. At the movies, there are always coming attractions. This episode in the life of Jesus from the last two weeks is preparing us for next week when Jesus leaves Galilee and travels to the region of Tyre and Sidon. There He meets The Syrophoenician Woman.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

L Almighty God, we ask You to be near us with Your Word and Spirit. Guide and lead us, that we may not stray from the way of Your commandments nor forget the wonderful blessings that You have given to us. Direct us always with Your Word of truth.

G Amen.

L By Your Holy Spirit, protect us this day from the assaults of the devil. Equip us with the full armor of God, that we may be clothed in truth, righteousness, peace, faith and salvation, bearing the sword of the spirit, which is Your Word. Keep us all in safety and security from the forces of the evil one.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, preserve us from all that would defile us in heart and soul. Keep us from all evil thoughts, immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. Create in us a pure heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us, that we would be holy as You are holy.

C Amen.

L God of all knowledge and wisdom, grant us to know You and Your love. Bless all students and teachers, parents and grandparents, and all who teach the faith, that the Gospel may fill the hearts of your people. As students and teachers return to school, grant them safety and a wholesome environment for learning about the wonders of Your creation. Grant Your special blessings upon all Christian schools.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. We thank You for the protection granted to all who have attended to our needs during the pandemic. As we again experience an increase in infections, we ask for Your continued protection and grace.

C Amen.

C 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.

C 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.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

1 Lord, dis - miss us with Your bless - ing, Fill our hearts with
2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion For Your Gos - pel's
3 Sav - ior, when Your love shall call us From our strug - gling
joy and peace; Let us each, Your love pos - sess - ing,
joy - ful sound. May the fruits of Your sal - va - tion
pil - grim way, Let not fear of death ap - pall us,
Tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace. O re - fresh us;
In our hearts and lives a - bound. Ev - er faith - ful,
Glad Your sum - mons to o - bey. May we ev - er,
O re - fresh us, Trav - 'ling through this wil - der - ness.
ev - er faith - ful To Your truth may we be found.
may we ev - er Reign with You in end - less day.

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Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 30– September 4, 2021

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Introit Psalm 51:7, 10–12; antiphon Psalm 51:2

- L** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
C Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
L Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
C Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
L Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
L Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

Psalm 51:10-12 is sung in The Divine Service setting three following the sermon as the offertory. I grew up singing these words every Sunday. They are excellent words to remember and sing every day! They were written by David after Nathan the prophet confronted him with his sins of adultery and murder (2 Samuel 12:1-15).

Adultery and murder are significant offenses. Our human nature may wish to excuse ourselves by claiming to have never committed these sins. We are tempted to think that maybe we really don't need God's forgiveness. Jesus puts such foolish thoughts to flight in His Sermon on the Mount. Murder and adultery have a much broader definition than we would like to believe.

In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus helps us see that anger and insults are worthy of the same judgment as murder. He declares, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 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."

In Matthew 5:27, 28, Jesus shows us that lust is indistinguishable from adultery in God's eyes. He says, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

We have as much need for God's grace and forgiveness as King David. He recognizes that God alone can make our sinful hearts new. For this to happen, He must "Create in me a clean heart." He must "renew a right spirit within me." Without His divine activity, we are condemned to remain in our unclean and condemned condition.

Jesus came not to be a new Moses and a teacher of a more complete law. Jesus came to be our Savior. He came to restore the joy of our salvation.

L Let us pray. Heavenly Father, You do not wish sinners to die but to repent and live. According to Your great compassion be merciful to me. Take away my sin, deliver me from my guilt, and restore to me the joy of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

Tuesday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Matthew 5:8

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Blessed are the pure in heart, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. for they shall see God. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L Let us pray: O God, the source of all that is just and good, nourish in us every virtue and bring to completion every good intent that we may grow in grace and bring forth the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

In our Gospel lesson, Jesus gives us a catalog of evil thoughts and actions that flow from our sinful hearts. Our collect this week reminds us that all that is just, good, and wholesome comes from God. By His grace, we can grow in that which is good and honorable. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul gives us a list of what life looks like when we live in God's family by faith. He tells us, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

These are things that only the Holy Spirit can produce in our lives. Without Him, we are left drowning in our own sinful desires, thoughts, words, and deeds. Thanks be to God, He has brought us to faith in Jesus. Our sins are forgiven. Heaven is our home. Our lives now produce god-pleasing fruit.

Still, on earth, there never is a time when we are totally free from sin. We still are afflicted with corrupted minds. But that which is evil is taken away and all that is left is that which is good. For this reason, at the end of our days, Jesus will say, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

Let us pray: O God, the source of all that is just and good, nourish in us every virtue and bring to completion every good intent that we may grow in grace and bring forth the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Matthew 5:8

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Blessed are the pure in heart, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. for they shall see God. Alleluia.

Psalm 119:129–136

- L** ¹²⁹ Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them.
C ¹³⁰ **The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.**
L ¹³¹ I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments.
C ¹³² **Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.**
L ¹³³ Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.
C ¹³⁴ **Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts.**
L ¹³⁵ Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.
C ¹³⁶ **My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.**

Kyrie

- L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm. It consists of 176 verses! There are 8 verses for every letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Our psalm for this week consists of 8 verses. Each of them begins with the Hebrew letter Pe. Psalm 119 is an ode to the word of God! Reread Psalm 119:129-136 with this in mind.

The only way that we can live a pure and clean life is to live by God's statutes and precepts. Earlier, the psalmist writes, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word" (Psalm 119:9),

Without God's word, life is a journey through darkness. We injure ourselves on the obstacles of sin and wrongdoing. To avoid this, we would do well to remember, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

With this in mind, we join together in praying the words of Psalm 119:133, "Let no iniquity get dominion over me." We all have times of weakness. We all stumble and fall. However, as God's people, we daily return to God in repentance and forgiveness. But one great danger remains. It is the peril of allowing sin to have dominion over us.

Christ has defeated sin, death, and the devil. Still, Satan would like us to believe that we have no control over his domination. He would like to lull us into complacency. He would like us to allow evil to have dominion over us. May this never happen! May God in His mercy always send us His word to bring us to repentance. May we always be ready to receive His word of forgiveness, life, and salvation in Christ.

Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways

Lutheran Service Book 707, Lutheran Worship 392, The Lutheran Hymnal 416



1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways To keep His stat - utes still!
2 Or - der my foot - steps by Thy Word And make my heart sin - cere;
3 As - sist my soul, too apt to stray, A strict - er watch to keep;
4 Make me to walk in Thy com - mands—'Tis a de - light - ful road—



Oh, that my God would grant me grace To know and do His will!
Let sin have no do - min-ion, Lord, But keep my con-science clear.
And should I e'er for - get Thy way, Re - store Thy wan - d'ring sheep.
Nor let my head or heart or hands Of - fend a - gainst my God.

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Thursday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Matthew 5:8

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Blessed are the pure in heart, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. for they shall see God. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 6–9

¹“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the just decrees that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ²You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you...

⁶Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and just decrees so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

⁹“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.

As you have realized by now, one of the themes for this week is the justice of God’s decrees and commandments. They are a great gift from God. Without them, we wander aimlessly in the desert of moral relativism. Relativism is the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.

Fortunately, we know that God’s law is absolute. We know that God is a God of justice.

Critics of Christianity in our world constantly preach to us that our morality is not absolute. They want to redefine right and wrong on their own terms. They want to redefine marriage, gender, etc. Of course, what they conveniently ignore is that they are vulnerable to the same criticism. If they are free to reject the morality of the Bible, I am equally free to reject their new morality (immorality).

However, we know the truth of God’s word. We may not add to it nor take from it. We understand what Paul meant when he said, “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked” (Galatians 6:7). We ignore God’s commandments at our own peril. History is full of examples of Divine justice falling upon the arrogant and unrepentant.

As we read and understand the absolute nature of God’s law, we are struck by our own failure to love God and our neighbors as ourselves. We find ourselves under the condemnation of God’s justice. This is why we must turn to Christ. He suffered the consequence of God’s justice on the cross. He died that we may live. Now we find joy in occupying ourselves with well doing (Galatians 6:9).

O God, My Faithful God Lutheran Service Book 696, Lutheran Worship 371, The Lutheran Hymnal 395



1 O God, my faith - ful God, True foun-tain ev - er flow - ing,
2 Grant me the strength to do With read - y heart and will - ing
3 Keep me from say - ing words That lat - er need re - call - ing;
4 Lord, let me win my foes With kind - ly words and ac - tions,



With - out whom noth - ing is, All per - fect gifts be - stow - ing;
What - ev - er You com - mand, My call - ing here ful - fill - ing;
Guard me lest i - dle speech May from my lips be fall - ing;
And let me find good friends For coun - sel and cor - rec - tion.



Give me a health - y frame, And may I have with - in
That I do what I should While trust - ing You to bless
But when with - in my place I must and ought to speak,
Help me, as You have taught, To love both great and small



A con-science free from blame, A soul un - stained by sin.
The out - come for my good, For You must give suc - cess.
Then to my words give grace Lest I of - fend the weak.
And by Your Spir - it's might To live in peace with all.

5 Let me depart this life
Confiding in my Savior;
By grace receive my soul
That it may live forever;
And let my body have
A quiet resting place
Within a Christian grave;
And let it sleep in peace.

6 And on that final day
When all the dead are waking,
Stretch out Your mighty hand,
My deathly slumber breaking.
Then let me hear Your voice,
Redeem this earthly frame,
And bid me to rejoice
With those who love Your name.

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Friday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Matthew 5:8

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Blessed are the pure in heart, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. for they shall see God. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord,	C Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ,	C Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord,	C Have Mercy on us.

Ephesians 6:10–20

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the

flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

As this week comes to its conclusion, it is good for us to remember this portion of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Evil in the world is real. It afflicts each one of us. But God has provided a defense against evil. He has provided us with His own armor.

Satan wants us to fall in battle but with God's armor, we will stand firm! Truth and righteousness provide us with protection against lies and wickedness. The shield of faith and the helmet of salvation are invincible. We are able to boldly go on offense against evil in the world with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God! All the while we stand on the Gospel of the Prince of Peace (all other ground is sinking sand).

Don't enter the battle unarmed. Allow the Holy Spirit to work in your life through the word. Boldly trust God's promise of forgiveness and salvation! "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:12).

Prayer: Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of the devil and put upon ourselves the armor of God. Grant that we may be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

L Fear the Lord, you his saints,

C for those who fear him lack nothing!

L Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

C but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

Verse of the Day: Matthew 5:8

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Blessed are the pure in heart, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. for they shall see God. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Our verse for this week is indeed appropriate. As you may recall, we have visited Jesus' Sermon on the Mount a number of times. Our verse is one of the Beatitudes found at the beginning of His sermon.

In the Gospel, Jesus inventoried the evil that comes out of the human heart. These things ought not to be among us. Rather, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

There is no room in our hearts for the vulgar and profane. We ought never to be blasphemous, irreverent, and irreligious. We must never be disrespectful, wicked, or sacrilegious. Our hearts must be pure!

But our hearts are not pure. They are filled with sinful and evil thoughts. What are we to do?

We turn to Jesus. He came to make the impure, pure. He came to make the vulgar and profane, holy. He came to wash away our sins and restore to us the joy of salvation through forgiveness. He came to create in us clean hearts and minds. He came to place a right and pure spirit within us.

We end the week where we began with this prayer from Psalm 51:2, “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!”

Prayer: Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts. Let faith show itself in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, according to the image of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

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