



THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

*Daily Devotion at Zion + July 19, 2020 AD + **Pentecost Season***

This Week: Prayer in the Morning

“Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

So it happens in God’s good grace, time and time again. In the morning, He sent angels to deliver Lot and his family (Genesis 19:15). Morning is a time for sacrifice and praise (Psalm 5:3), and in the morning, the Lord’s mercies are ever new (Lamentations 3:23). Jesus is the morning star (2 Peter 1:19), who rose from the dead early in the morning (Luke 24:22) just as He used to rise just before daybreak and pray (Mark 1:35). God uses morning as a time of deliverance, worship, and resurrection!

Why would we use it any differently?

Like a shepherd calling to His sheep at the crack of dawn, our Redeemer has awakened us from the sleep of sin and death. In Him, every moment is eternal morning, sweet daylight breaking upon us through the clouds of doubt and anxiety. Comfort, rescue, life—it all streams to us through the light of His Word. The daily return of sunlight becomes a time to immerse ourselves in this Word and to remember that we are children of the light. What light? The light that really will win, and indeed, it already has won, in the rising of the uncreated Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2), with full warmth and healing in His wings.

About the Cover Art

This more abstract work of art has a French origin, painted by Jacques Potgieter and entitled “Morning Prayer.” Using the creamy, soft tones of the dawn, it may look like a candle freshly lit, but upon closer scrutiny it also evokes the outline of someone rising from bed and stretching, or perhaps it is someone raising his or her arms in prayer. Either way, it tells the tale of how light stretches against darkness and turns the every night into morning, even as our Good Shepherd shines light into our darkness through His Word and prayer.

The Household Prayers: Waking Up

Martin Luther not only provided a small rite for prayer at bedtime (covered in last week's issues of The Shepherd's Voice), but he also provided one for waking up. Wisely, he made the two very similar, changing only a few words in each of the prayers, so that they would be memorable and reflect the different times in which they are prayed. This approach made the prayers suitable for children and adults alike.

The habit of praying upon waking welcomes a different approach to life from the fast-paced, gotta-go, gotta-go kind of day. It calls us to rise from sleep early enough to allow for a few minutes of prayer before dashing off for breakfast, checking our phones, or going to work. It purposefully begins the day with God and His gifts, the true "deep breath of life."

Turn the page for the full household rite of morning prayer.

Daily Readings for the Week of July 26 (Pentecost 8)

S	Numbers 27:12-23 Acts 19:11-20 Mark 1: 14-20	Th	Deuteronomy 3:18-28 Romans 9:19-33 Matthew 24:1-14
M	Numbers 32:1-6, 16-27 Romans 8: 26-30 Matthew 23: 1-12	F	Deuteronomy 31:7-13, 24-32:4 Romans 10:1-13 Matthew 24:15-31
T	Numbers 35: 1-3, 9-15, 30-34 Romans 8: 31-39 Matthew 23:13-26	Sa	Deuteronomy 34:1-12 Romans 10:14-21 Matthew 24:32-51
W	Deuteronomy 1:1-18 Romans 9:1-18 Matthew 23:27-39		

These readings correspond to pages 263-294 in Volume IV of For All the Saints. To acquire For All the Saints or other devotionals, please contact the church office.

Waking Prayer

I. The Name of God

In the morning when you rise, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

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

II. The Creed and Lord's Prayer *Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.*

III. The Morning Prayer *If you choose, you may also say this prayer:*

I thank you my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ Your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

IV. To Work

Then go joyfully to work, singing a hymn, like that of the Ten Commandments, or whatever you devotion my suggest.

Commentary

Making the sign of the holy cross in the morning marks the whole day with the cross's power. We go forth to die to sin and to live to newness of life.

Like honey on bread, the Creed and Lord's Prayer anoint the day with good and blessed speech, no matter what else we may hear in the course of our labors.

The morning prayer reminds us that God not only forgives our sin, but He also calls us to fight and resist sin. That battle is ultimately His to win through us in the power of His Spirit, and so we ask for Him to do so at the start of each new day. The morning prayer also strengthens us with the knowledge that we head into the day as we slept in the night: with angel hosts defending us.

What hymns do you have memorized? How might singing a hymn in the morning change your day?