



THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

*Daily Devotion at Zion + August 16, 2020 AD + **Pentecost Season***

This Week: the Lord's Prayer

One day, Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord teach us to pray, just as John taught His disciples."

He said to them, "Oh, it doesn't really matter, just talk to Him as you would anyone else"

Oops! Our Lord Jesus Christ didn't really say it that way, did He? Instead, in the real event recorded in St. Luke's gospel (see 11:1-13), our Lord teaches His disciples what we now call the Lord's Prayer or Our Father. "He said to them, 'When you pray, say'" Just as we learn how to speak to different people (we speak to our mothers differently than our spouses, our teachers differently than our friends), so do we learn how to speak to God.

The Lord's Prayer remains the example without equal. Given to us by the Lord Himself, it gives us a sturdy, trustworthy prayer to use as well as a dependable pattern of prayer to follow. As with the Creed, we may sometimes think of the Lord's Prayer as something that we only use "in worship" or "at church," but it is truly a gift that God has given you to use daily.

"Using it" doesn't necessarily mean simply reciting it in the same way every time. There are many ways that it can be used and bless us! Read on to learn more!

About the Cover Art

Jesus is not only God but also a man of prayer. He prayed daily during His earthly ministry (as we saw in the reading from Luke 11, above), and He even prays for us now at the right hand of God (Romans 8:34). In this detail of a painting by Morgan Weistling ("Thy Will Be Done"), we have one rendering of our Lord engaged in this prayer. His perfectly white clothing and abstract background blurs the lines between His prayer on earth and His prayer in heaven—it could be either one!—but it testifies beautifully to the promise that our Lord continually holds us, His Church, in His holy prayer.

Using the Lord's Prayer

The Household Prayers of the Lutheran Church appoint the Lord's Prayer for use when going to bed, waking up, and both before and after meals. Most people find this amount of usage excessive. But, then again, why not let the Lord's Prayer (the very prayer He gave you!) become as precious to you as your own words, even more so? Why not let it become part of your intimate, daily conversation with God?

Really, the key to using anything that the Lord gives us is to *trust it*, that is, to cherish and love the gift as we cherish and love the Giver. Some say that repeatedly using a prayer can render it meaningless. Yet the opposite approach (insisting on using *my* words) has a different temptation: pride. Why should God listen to my prayers more than the Lord's Prayer? Better to use both, and even to prefer the Lord's words over our own, trusting them to be the most sure and certain words on earth.

Daily Readings for the Week of August 23 (Pentecost 12)

S	Judges 6:1-24 2 Cor 9:6-15 Mark 3:20-30	Acts 4:1-12 John 1:43-51
M	Judges 6:25-40 Acts 2:37-47 John 1:1-18	F Judges 9:1-16, 19-21 Acts 4:13-31 John 2:1-12
T	Judges 7:1-18 Acts 3:1-11 John 1:19-28	Sa Judges 9:22-25, 50-57 Acts 4:32-5:11 John 2:13-25
W	Judges 7:19-8:12 Acts 3: 12-26 John 1:29-42	<i>These readings correspond to pages 394-429 in Volume IV of <u>For All the Saints</u>. To acquire <u>For All the Saints</u> or other devotionals, please contact the church office.</i>
Th	Judges 8:22-35	

Ways to Use the Lord's Prayer

1. Perhaps the best way is to use it simply, praying the words as He gives them to us with full trust in what they ask. But Jesus does not specify "rules" for its use. We may use the Lord's Prayer in all kinds of different ways, as "tinder" for fanning the flame of devotion. Consider these:
2. **Pray-and-Pause:** Pray just a piece of the Lord's Prayer, and then pause to let that one piece of it inspire your own prayer to Him. For example, you might simply pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven," and then pause to praise and thank God for all the ways that He is your Father and the Church's Father. Or, you might pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," and then pause and pray for all the things that you, your family and friends, and your enemies may need for the day. You may do something similar with "Forgive us our trespasses," pausing to confess your sins, or "Deliver us from evil," pausing to give Him your worries and pray against evil forces at work in this world.
3. **Pray-and-Ponder:** Similar to "Pray-and-Pause," Pray-and-Ponder takes one piece of the Lord's Prayer and lets that single part of it be a source of prayer for the whole week. Take a week, for example, simply to call God "Father" and speak to Him that way, etc. This could be a fruitful approach to organizing some spiritual journaling, also.
4. **Pray with the Catechism.** The Small Catechism divides the Lord's Prayer into Seven Petitions, plus an introduction and conclusion. This gives you one petition for each day of the week, plus two additional ones to use on Saturday (preparing for the Lords' Day) and Sunday (the Lord's Day). Spend time with the explanations in the catechism and let them deepen your love of this prayer and inspire more prayer.
5. **Pray with Others.** Let the Lord's Prayer become, not only your prayer and the Church's prayer, but also the prayer of your family, friends, coworkers, etc.