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## THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

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*Daily Devotion at Zion + October 25, 2020 AD + **Reformation***

### **This Week: The Lutheran Difference**

Does being Lutheran change how our devotion looks?

It does! Before the Lutheran Reformation (starting in 1517), the Roman church had started thinking of devotion as something that *we* do for God so that we may advance in holiness on the way of salvation. The idea was that we would use prayer, song, and sacraments to open our hearts more and more to God, and thus become holier and more righteous in His sight, so that God would be increasingly pleased with us and on the last Day resurrect us. You might say that devotion had become a ladder that the Church used to climb up to heaven.

Then came Luther, crashing down the ladder!

Or, better, then came the Gospel that Luther taught and preached. That Gospel proclaims that God has come to earth in Jesus Christ to deal with our sin *for* us, granting us holiness, righteousness, and the future resurrection as a pure gift, purchased by His blood. For such a God, devotion now plays a very different role, indeed! Now, devotion is one of the ways that God comes *down* the ladder, *to* the sinner. Through the use of Scripture, song, and remembrance of the sacraments, God assures the sinner of His salvation, and through prayer, He comforts sinners with His listening ear. Being Lutheran reverses the direction: no longer is it *us* coming to God, but *God* coming to you!

### **About the Cover Art**

*Painted in 1852 by Norwegian painter Adolph Tidemand (1814-1876), this scene depicts a group of Christian believers (from a specific Christian movement in Norway called pietism) for prayer and mutual study in one of their rustic homes. A man stands on a short table to address the small group, among which we find a variety of responses: thoughtfulness, sorrow and repentance, doubt, and rapt attention. Notice in particular how the shape of the Scriptures, held in the speaker's hands, is copied in the angle and shape of the ceiling, as if Tidemand is hinting that the true shelter in this room is provided by the Word of God.*

## **The Importance of Home and Personal Devotion in the Lutheran Church**

When Martin Luther published his *Kleine Katechismus* (Small Catechism) in 1529, it first appeared as a series of large posters for families to hang in their kitchen by the table. One of the first posters to be published, before any teaching of the creed or sacraments, was a poster with the Household Prayers: evening, morning, and mealtime. Later, when someone published the first book form of the Catechism, it lacked these prayers, and many people believe that Luther's speedy issuing of his own book version was done to correct this omission. Luther not only wanted people to know the Gospel, but also to eat, drink, bathe, live, and pray with it—that is, he viewed the Gospel as the very fabric of home and the personal life. His witness stands as an example for us still today, not only to teach and learn the Bible and doctrines of the Church, but also to cherish them through prayer, song, and personal and household contemplation.

### **Daily Readings for the Week of Nov. 1 (Pentecost 22)**

<b>S</b> Hosea 11:1-11 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 Matthew 15:21-28	<b>Th</b> Hosea 13:4-8 Acts 27:27-44 Luke 9:18-27
<b>M</b> Hosea 11:12—12:1 Acts 26:1-23 Luke 8:26-39	<b>F</b> Hosea 13:9-16 Acts 28:1-16 Luke 9:28-36
<b>T</b> Hosea 12:2-14 Acts 26:24—27:8 Luke 8:40-56	<b>Sa</b> Hosea 14:1-9 Acts 28:17-31 Luke 9:37-50
<b>W</b> Hosea 13:1-3 Acts 27:9-26 Luke 9:1-17	

*These readings correspond to pages 1044-1084 in Vol. IV of For All the Saints. To acquire For All the Saints or other devotionals, please contact the church office.*

## **Some Lutheran Contributions to Devotional Practice**

In general, we could summarize the Lutheran reformation of home and personal devotion in this way: Luther took the habits of monks in the monasteries and formed them into an accessible piety for individuals and families in their home. Also, devotion shifted from a focus on *sacrifice* (“Let us please God with our prayer”) to a focus on *promise* (“Here God speaks His good Word to us”). Here are some specific ways that these changes took place—and they still endure today:

1. **Renewed Focus on Faith.** Rather than emphasizing *habit*, or the mere doing of devotion, Lutheran devotion emphasizes the importance of *trust*. More important than saying a certain number of prayers (whether many or few), and more significant than using a certain style of prayer (whether memorized or original), is that we trust God to speak to us in His Word and hear us in any and all our prayer.
2. **Renewed Focus on Baptism.** Lutheran devotion stands firmly on the promise that the Holy Spirit unites us with Jesus Christ through Baptism, placing our sin on Him and His holiness on us. Here is why Lutheran devotion retains use of the sign of the cross and invocation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and why Luther often counseled those afflicted with sin or doubt to say to themselves, “But I am baptized!”
3. **A Simplified Catechism.** Medieval catechisms could be quite involved, as are the catechisms of other churches still today. Lutheran devotion simplifies things and revolves around these basics: Commandments, Creed, Lord’s Prayer, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, Holy Communion, and Daily Prayer.
4. **Devotion to the Lord’s Prayer.** Lutheranism has always emphasized the prayer taught by Christ as the most reliable and precious prayer that we have.
5. **A Strong Christ-Center.** For Lutherans, home and personal devotion is undertaken in Christ’s name, trusted for Christ’s sake, authored by His Spirit, offered to His Father, and inspired by His teaching and promises.