

PRAYING LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM – Lesson 8 -
“Give Us Our Daily Bread – Morning, Evening, Mealtime” 9-3-17
Trinity Lutheran Church Norman, OK. Pastor David Nehrenz

Scripture Texts:

**Ps. 4:8; Ps 31:5; Ps. 50:12,13; Ps 91:11; Ps. 121:3,4; Ps. 136:1,25; Ps 147:9-16;
Rom 12:12; 2 Cor 1:11; Eph 6:18; Php 4:5-7; Col 4:2; 1 Tim 4:4,5; 1 Pet 3:12;**

Morning and evening prayers were intended by Luther to serve as a liturgical pattern for how Christians might pray the catechism. This is indicated by the rubric “How the head of the family should teach his household to pray morning and evening.” The pattern itself begins with the invocation of the triune name and the sign of the cross and incorporates the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer to create a platform for the morning and evening collects. The personal *ordo* concludes with a rubric directed either toward the day’s work (“Then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn, like that of the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion may suggest”) or toward the night’s rest (“Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer”). The Ten Commandments hymn (“These Are the Holy Ten Commands,” *LSB* 581) directs us to our vocation where God’s Law governs our life and callings within creation. The admonition to go to sleep quickly and with good cheer expresses the confidence of Psalm 4:8: “In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.”

Behind Luther’s morning and evening prayers stands the traditional Daily Office, which was the backbone of monastic prayer. Robert Kolb observes:

Vital for [Luther’s] theological formation were the seven hours of prayer and other aspects of monastic devotional life. Daily repetition of its liturgies drilled psalms and other portions of Scripture into his head. The failure of these spiritual exercises to ease his unsettled, distressed conscience did not alter the fact that the psalmists’ cries of repentance and pleas for mercy sprang automatically out of the thesaurus of his memory for the rest of his life.²

MORNING PRAYER

**In the morning when you get up, 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.

**Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's
Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little 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.

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

EVENING PRAYER

**In the evening when you go to bed, 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.

**Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's
Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear
Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that
You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and
graciously keep me this night. 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.

Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer.

Heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, Your
name is to be praised from the rising of the sun to its going down. Guard and
bless our coming and going that our lives may be kept safe from sin and the
devil and that awake or asleep we may live in the confidence that our time is in
Your merciful hands; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.



Gracious Father, in Your bountiful goodness You open Your hand to satisfy the desires of every living thing. Teach us to reverence You alone as the Giver of our daily bread and so acknowledge You with thanksgiving and praise; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



ASKING A BLESSING



The children and members of the household shall go to the table reverently, fold their hands, and say:

The eyes of all look to You, [O Lord,] and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. (Ps. 145:15–16)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



RETURNING THANKS



Also, after eating, they shall, in like manner, reverently and with folded hands say:

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever. [He] gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love. (Ps. 136:1, 25; 147:9–11)

The language of commendation is inclusive, embracing “body and soul, and all things,” recalling the confession of the First Article that “God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul . . . and still takes care of them.” The commendation is into the hands of the Father who “defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.” This is the kind of commendation that Luther teaches under the Second Commandment in the Large Catechism as he instructs Christians to defy the devil by keeping God’s holy name on our lips:

For this purpose it also helps to form the habit of commending ourselves each day to God—our soul and body, spouse, children, servants, and all that we have—for his protection against every conceivable need. This is why the *Benedicite*, the *Gratias*, and other evening and morning blessings were introduced and have continued among us.⁵

Awake or asleep, at work or at rest, we live within God’s merciful providence as children whose times are in God’s hands. Prayer at the beginning and end of the day gratefully acknowledges this, even as we call upon God to guard and direct our lives according to His promises.