

”Lord, Teach Us to Pray... “

Each Wednesday at chapel with the school children; each Divine Service, and every Sunday matins; at weddings, and funerals, and then again at the gravesite; when you rise in the morning, and before you go to bed, we pray the prayer that Jesus has taught us—the Lord’s Prayer.

There is a great comfort in the first two words which He has given you to speak as you call on God: Our Father (Luke 11:2). God is our dear Father, and you are His dear child. With you He is well pleased. To you He gives all He has: His kingdom, His reputation, His only Son.

For God the Father to declare that you are worth the blood of His only Son is for Him to declare you to be the most valuable creation ever made. This Father adores you, which is why you may rest—completely safe—in His care.

This is not to say that you won’t be attacked, mocked, beaten and despised. Satan hates you. His allies in the world are offended by you and what you believe of Jesus and receive from Him in Baptism, in His preaching and Supper. So they study you in order to destroy you. Whatever you love that is good, that is what they will attempt to devour. They want to tear you from your Father by tearing you away from the things you cherish.

So Jesus arms you with this mighty prayer. Its seven short petitions contain what you need in this war zone—God’s Name, God’s Son, His Kingdom and His forgiveness, His Spirit, daily bread, and deliverance from evil. Each day (morning? evening? at meals? and always in the

weekly Divine Service!) Jesus offers the Baptized this preemptive strike before Satan can muster his forces arrayed against you. He prays this Prayer with you—His Word literally “opens your lips” as you pray! (Take time to read Luther’s meanings to the Petitions in the *Small Catechism*).

Before Satan can attack the Father’s pure Word, Jesus is protecting it through the 1st Petition. Before Satan can obstruct the Kingdom, Jesus is bringing it to you through His Word preached and administered at the altar. Before Satan can thwart God’s good and perfect will, Jesus is pouring out His Spirit to usher in His Kingdom through His Word.

And though Satan may take your “life, goods, fame, child or wife, he still has nothing won”—in the midst of these attacks you are preserved with enough bread to endure the day. Each day you have exactly what you need for that day. Your Father knows what He’s doing. He knows how to get you safely through this war zone until He has finally brought you home (triumphantly!) to live with Him forever. He has armed you with this prayer, the unique possession of all the Baptized from the 1st century to this one.

So continue to pray with Jesus what He gives to the Church of all times and places; pray just as He has taught us: ‘When you pray, say, “Our Father”’

Pastor Peter Cage