

Catechism Third Chief Part: The Lord's Prayer

Rev. Adam Moline

The third chief part of Luther's catechism deals with the Lord's Prayer. In the Lord's Prayer, Christ teaches us both that we ought to pray as well as what the content of that prayer ought to be.

If left to our own devices, we think prayer should be us telling God what He ought to do for us – "Father God, just give me this. Just heal that. By the way, fix my spouse so they don't aggravate me so much. Oh, and it'd be nice to win the lottery, I'll give some to the church! I promise!" As a result, our prayer is focused mostly on us, rather than on God.

But in the catechism, we find that prayer is less about what we want, and more about holding God to the things He promises us: namely, forgiving us through Jesus and keeping us in the faith through the Holy Spirit. Our prayer should reflect our thanksgiving in the things He promises, and the Lord's Prayer walks us through His promises to us. It goes like this:

God promises that He is our Father, that He sends His Word in its truth and purity to our ears from our pastors, that by the Holy Spirit working faith in us we are citizens of His kingdom, that His will is that we have faith in Him despite all that leads us astray. He promises to provide us our daily needs (not wants) even when we are sick, weak or dying. No matter our station in life, He promises to forgive us all our sin. Only then, do we hear our duty – to forgive others in the very same way He forgives us. After all, God will not tempt us, and He will deliver us from evil, finally by taking us out of this sinful world to be with Him forever.



500 Years of the Lutheran Reformation
Southeast Circuit North Dakota District

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You see, prayer is all about God's promises to us. It is primarily concerned with what He is doing, and holding Him to His promises.

Yes, God promises to provide us with “all that we need to support this body and life.” But prayer is less about asking to get more of these things, and instead about realizing where gifts come from – God. Having learned this in the Lord’s Prayer, the rest of our prayer reflects that as well – that God is good, and fulfills his promises.

Luther’s “Starter” prayers for you to learn

Before all prayer, make the sign of the cross and say, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” You may also recite the Creed and Lord’s Prayer.

Morning 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.

Meal Prayer: 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)

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

Evening 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.

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