

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! Summer's coming to a conclusion; and school has already begun for several of our students. Hopefully the summer has been a period of rest for you, or at least more rest than when the school year is going on. If you're like me, though, the summer passed way too quickly. That alone can make one feel worn out. But Luther encourages us in our study of the Lord's Prayer not to become weary of praying. Continue below to see why we must not get weary of praying to our God.



*Each Piece Put*

*On With Prayer*

Just recently we heard from Paul's letter to the Ephesians that we must put on the full armor of God—each piece put on with prayer. In continuing our study with Luther in his large catechism, he writes something similar to his fellow Germans. He begins: "Therefore from youth on we should form the habit of praying daily for our needs, whenever we are aware of anything that affects us or other people around us, such as preachers, magistrates, neighbors, and servants; and, as I have said, we should always remind God of his commandment and promise, knowing that he does not want them despised. This I say because I would like to see people learn again to pray properly and not act so crudely and coldly that they daily become more inept in praying. This is just what the devil wants and works for with all his might, for he is well aware what damage and harm he suffers when prayer is used properly (BoC, p.444)."

There are always plenty of people for whom to pray, as Luther points out. These certainly include your neighbors, and even your pastor. This may be done through any prayer used properly, but also by simply praying the Lord's Prayer. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray for all people and all their needs, including ourselves—and we pray for the best things for them: those things according to God's will.

As Luther has shown over the last several months, prayer is important because of both God's promise to hear and His command that we do it. But more than that, when prayer is used properly, Luther points out that the devil himself is damaged and suffers harm.

“This we must know, that all our safety and protection consists in prayer alone. For we are far too weak against the devil and all his might and forces arrayed against us, trying to trample us underfoot. Therefore we must keep this in mind and grasp the weapons with which Christians are to arm themselves for resisting the devil. What do you think has accomplished such great results in the past, parrying the counsels and plots of our enemies and checking their murderous and seditious designs by which the devil expected to crush us, and the gospel as well, except that the prayers of a few godly people intervened like an iron wall on our side? Otherwise they would have seen a far different drama: the devil would have destroyed all Germany in its own blood. Now they may confidently laugh and make their snide comments. But by prayer alone we shall be a match both for them and for the devil, if only we persevere and do not become weary. For whenever a Christian prays, ‘Dear Father, your will be done,’ God replies from above, ‘Yes, dear child, it shall be done indeed, in spite of the devil and all the world (BoC, p.444).’”

Not only has God given us the command to pray and the promise to hear us, but Luther has also shown that prayer is one of our mighty weapons against the devil and his ways. As ones who have been saved from our sin by the death of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, in our places, we are forgiven, but we’re not yet out of the world. Here sin continues to run rampant along with the devil himself. In defense of this, Jesus taught us to pray. This is not to say that praying saves us—we are already forgiven by His death on the cross. Rather, it is given as a way to keep our hearts and minds focused on Him alone so that we might not be led away into sin or Satan’s traps. As we’ll learn as we continue to study the Lord’s Prayer, when we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we ask to be saved from the devil, the world, and even the ways of our own sinful flesh.

Keep vigilant in prayer as ones forgiven by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh