

“Singing the Faith – The Lord’s Prayer”

“O Lord open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise.” But what are we to say, or sing, or pray?

First, God must speak, and we must listen. God speaks, and then, in faith, we say back to Him what He has first said to us. Prayer begins with the Word of God – and then, the Holy Spirit, working in and through that Word – opens our mouths in prayer to God.

In the Large Catechism, Dr. Martin Luther writes: “This is the first and most important point, that all our prayers must be based upon obedience to God ... In the second place, we should be all the more urged and encouraged to pray because God has promised that our prayer will surely be answered ... Furthermore, we should be encouraged and drawn to pray because, in addition to this command and promise, God takes the initiative and puts into our mouths the very words we are to use.”

God’s Word says: “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” God’s Word says: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – “Our Father who art in heaven.” *What does this mean?* With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, SO THAT with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray.

[Please turn to LSB 766 – we sing the 1st stanza.]

God speaks, we listen. God says, “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name.” God’s Word says: “Let the one who has my word speak it faithfully.” God’s Word says: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – “Hallowed be Thy name.” *What does this mean?* God’s name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also. *How is God’s name kept holy?* God’s name is kept holy WHEN the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it.

Help us Father – to teach your Word faithfully to our children. Help us Father – to live according to your will, your commandments. Protect us Father – from all perversions of your Word of truth. Protect us Father – from living contrary to your Word.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we sing ... the 2nd stanza.

God speaks, we listen. God’s Word says: “The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.” Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.” God promises: “My Word ... will accomplish that which I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” God’s Word says: “The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom.”

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – “Thy kingdom come.” *What does this mean?* The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also. *How does God’s kingdom come?* God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, SO THAT by His grace we may believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

Jesus teaches us to pray that Our Father would give us His Holy Spirit – to rule our lives, to reign over us – so that we might hear and believe His Word – so that His Word might bring forth good works in our lives, and our neighbor be blessed.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we sing ... the 3rd stanza.

God speaks, we listen. Jesus says: “My Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” God’s Word says: “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful men, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” *What does this mean?* The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also. *How is God’s will done?* God’s will is done WHEN He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God’s name or let His kingdom come; and WHEN He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

We pray that Our Father would “break and hinder” our enemies – and that He would “strengthen and keep” us, His dear children, in His Word and faith.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we sing ... the 4th stanza.

God speaks, we listen. Holy Scripture says: “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.” God’s Word says: “Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” God’s Word says: “Give me neither poverty or riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.”

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – “Give us this day our daily bread.” *What does this mean?* God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to REALIZE this and to RECEIVE our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body ...

We pray that Our Father would give us eyes to see everything He does to support our lives – and that He would give us mouths that say “thank you” for all His gifts.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we sing ... the 5th stanza.

God speaks, we listen. God’s Word says: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” God’s Word says: “I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown to your servant.” Peter asks Jesus: “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered and said, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.’” God’s Word says: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” *What does this mean?* We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. SO we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

As Our Father has been gracious and forgiving to us – we pray that, by His grace, we too may be gracious and forgiving to others.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we sing ... the 6th stanza.

God speaks, we listen. God’s Word says: “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance ... When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.”

God's Word says: "If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – "And lead us not into temptation." *What does this mean?* God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us SO THAT the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

We pray as those who are surrounded by the temptations of evil – but are also surrounded by Our Father who is good, who guards us, keeps us, and gives us the victory.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we sing ... the 7th stanza.

God speaks, we listen. God's Word says: "The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one." In the Bible, God says: "If you make the Most High your dwelling – even the Lord, who is my refuge – then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent." God's Word says: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ... He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – "But deliver us from evil." *What does this mean?* We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

In this life, and for eternity – we live by faith – trusting that our Lord Jesus Christ has defeated the evil one by His own death and resurrection. We pray for the peace that only He can give ... and does.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we sing ... the 8th stanza.

God speaks, we listen. God's Word says: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you, and you will honor me." God promises: "The Lord is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous." God's Word says: "To Him who is able to do immeasurable more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

The Lord speaks, we listen – and therefore, we pray – "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen." *What does this mean?* This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has COMMANDED us to pray in this way and has PROMISED to hear us. Amen, amen means "yes, yes, it shall be so."

Such is the prayer of faith – a faith that lives from what Our Father has commanded and promised – a faith that lives, and prays, according to Our Father's life-giving Word.

God speaks, we listen – and therefore, we sing ... the final stanza.