



Holy Cross Lutheran Church

WARDA, TEXAS - LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

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God's Word for the Week

For the Fifth Week after Epiphany

February 9 - 15, AD 2025

For **Orders of Daily Prayer (Matins & Vespers)**, see *The Lutheran Hymnal* pp. 32-45, pg. 4 of *Portals of Prayer*, or the *Daily Prayer for Families and Individuals* tri-fold. An individual or family may choose to utilize part or all of what follows in their devotional life during the coming week. May God's Word richly bless us as we read and pray.

TIME IN THE SMALL CATECHISM: THE THIRD ARTICLE, EXPLANATION, PT. 1

What does this mean? I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

CATECHESIS NOTES FOR THE WEEK: We've come to that part of the Catechism again, folks. I just love the words of Luther's explanation for the Third Article of the Creed. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and He sanctifies us—in other words, He gives us the gift of *faith*. It sounds strange to say that "I believe that I cannot... believe" but it's true! Apart from God working in us through His Word and Sacrament, we cannot believe in Him or call Him Lord. "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit." *1 Corinthians 12:3* This is a statement that is unique to Lutherans. It sets us apart from those who say that salvation depends on our decision to accept Jesus ("For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." *Romans 8:7-8*) and, at the same time, sets us apart from those who would say that God saves apart from His means of grace. This second category espouses a view of God in which He saves us apart from faith. But the Biblical view of salvation insists that God does the saving—and He does this through His promise of forgiveness and life, which is received by faith. Furthermore, even faith itself is a gift, a work of God in us. That doesn't mean it's irresistible. It doesn't mean it can't be lost or thrown away. But if anyone is a Christian, it is because God called them to faith by the Holy Spirit.

The means by which He does this (Means of Grace) are summarized as the Gospel and His gifts. The Gospel, whether read, heard in a sermon, on the radio, over YouTube, or in conversation with another Christian is truly God's *Good News* for us! He is the author and He is the guarantor of all of the promises and goodness it contains. The Spirit's gifts include Baptism, Absolution, the Lord's Supper, even conversation with another Christian can be a means by which the Holy Spirit comforts and consoles our otherwise weary souls throughout this life. In the Third Article, we confess that the Holy Spirit continues the work of Christ by pointing others to Christ. His work was evident on the first Christian Pentecost, and ever since, He continues to call, gather, enlighten, sanctify, and keep Christians throughout the world in this Christian faith.

It can be easy for us, especially if we're life-long Lutherans, to just feel like we've "always been here..." but we do well to keep the Holy Spirit's work in our lives in clear focus—not that the Spirit Himself is the focus of our lives, but His work of always pointing us toward Christ is central to the life and faith of the Christian. God is at work in you when you hear His Word; when you eat Christ's body and drink His blood; when your sins are forgiven and when you are comforted with the hope of heaven and the resurrection on the last day! God be praised!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK: And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." *Isaiah 6:8*

COLLECT FOR THE WEEK: O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

PSALM FOR THE WEEK: *Psalms 138*

HYMN FOR THE WEEK: *Hail to the Lord's Anointed, TLH 59, LSB 398*

UPCOMING LESSONS FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jeremiah 17:5-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 12-20; Luke 6:17-26

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: *The following are taken from The Treasury of Daily Prayer. The readings form a continuous reading plan to read through the New Testament and nearly half of the Old Testament each year.*

Day	Daily Readings from <i>Treasury of Daily Prayer</i> , pg. 24ff.			
Sun	Job 6:1-13	<i>Job Replies</i>	John 3:1-21	<i>You Must Be Born Again</i>
Mon	Job 6:14-30	<i>Job Replies</i>	John 3:22-4:6	<i>John the Baptist Exalts Christ</i>
Tues	Job 7:1-21	<i>Job Continues: My Life Has No Hope</i>	John 4:7-26	<i>Jesus and the Samaritan Woman</i>
Wed	Job 8:1-22	<i>Bildad Speaks</i>	John 4:27-45	<i>Jesus and the Samaritan Woman</i>
Thurs	Job 9:1-35	<i>Job Replies</i>	John 4:46-54	<i>Jesus Heals an Official's Son</i>
Fri	Job 10:1-22	<i>Job Continues</i>	John 5:1-18	<i>The Healing at the Pool</i>
Sat	Job 11:1-20	<i>Zophar Speaks</i>	John 5:19-29	<i>The Authority of the Son</i>

The following Psalms are suggestions for daily prayer, taken from Treasury of Daily Prayer, pg. 1436.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning	44-46	50-52	56-58	62-64	68	71-72	75-77
Evening	47-49	53-55	59-61	65-67	69-70	73-74	78

IN ADDITION TO THOSE ON OUR CONGREGATION'S PRAYER LIST, PLEASE PRAY FOR:

BIRTHDAYS: *Out of respect for the privacy of our members, the Birthdays and Anniversaries not available in the online version of God's Word for the Week.*

MISSIONARIES: Rev. Dr. Quintin Cundiff, his wife, Lindsay, and their son, serving the Lord in Latvia. Dr. Cundiff (a classmate of Pastor Beck) is a professor at the Lutheran seminary in Riga, Latvia, training men to be pastors in the Latvian Lutheran Church. Pray for the Cundiff family as they serve the Lord abroad and as God continues to send forth laborers!

THOSE FACING PERSECUTION: Christians in Nicaragua. President Ortega (a dictator) is frequently criticized for his violent and unjust rule, and many Christians who oppose his cruelty have become victims to the very same violence. Pray that God rescues His people in Nicaragua who face death for their faith! Pray that all would come to saving faith!

THOSE IN ECCLESIAL AUTHORITY: Rev. Nate Hill, Circuit Visitor; Rev. Michael Newman, Texas District President; Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, Synodical President

What does this mean?

Can a pastor forgive sins?

Yes! Jesus Himself instructed His disciples to forgive sins in His name! They declare to the people what is true in heaven: *You are forgiven!* All Christians are capable of reminding their neighbor of the forgiveness that is ours in the name of Jesus! But pastors have been set apart for the formal, public declaration of the good news of forgiveness. That's why the words of the Absolution include: "I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto you, and in the stead (place) and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins." The pastor's job is to tell you what Jesus has said about your sin. You don't have to wonder if God loves you or just hope that you're okay. God has given you a pastor!

LUTHER'S 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.

LUTHER'S 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.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Agnus Day

THE LECTIONARY COMIC STRIP

ADDITIONAL DEVOTIONAL RESOURCES:

KFUO Radio

(www.kfuo.org)

The Word of the Lord Endures Forever Podcast

(www.thewordendures.org)

Issues, Etc.

(Issuesetc.org)

