

Lutheran Confessions

Thus Daniel teaches us in praying to lay hold upon mercy, *i.e.*, to trust in God's mercy, and not to trust in our own **332]** merits before God. We also wonder what our adversaries do in prayer, if, indeed; the profane men ever ask anything of God. If they declare that they are worthy because they have love and good works, and ask for grace as a debt, they pray precisely like the Pharisee in Luke 18, 11, who says: *I am not as other men are.* He who thus prays for grace, and does not rely upon God's mercy, treats Christ with dishonor, who, since He is our High Priest, intercedes **333]** for us. **Thus, therefore, prayer relies upon God's mercy, when we believe that we are heard for the sake of Christ, the High Priest,** as He Himself says, John 14, 13: *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.* In My, name, He says, because without this High Priest we cannot approach the Father. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, IV. 331-333)

17] In a propitiator these two things concur. **In the first place, there ought to be a word of God from which we may certainly know that God wishes to pity, and hearken to, those calling upon Him through this propitiator.** There is such a promise concerning Christ, John 16, 23: *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.* Concerning the saints there is no such promise. Therefore consciences cannot be firmly confident that by the invocation of saints we are heard. This invocation, therefore, **18]** is not made from faith. Then we have also the command to call upon Christ, according to Matt. 11, 28: *Come unto Me, all ye that labor,* etc., which certainly is said also to us. And Isaiah says, 11, 10: And Ps. 45, 12: And Ps. 72, 11. 15: And in John 5, 23 And Paul, 2 Thess. 2, 16. 17, says, praying: (All these passages refer to Christ.) But concerning the invocation of saints, what commandment, what example can the adversaries produce from the Scriptures? **19]** **The second matter in a propitiator is, that his merits have been presented as those which make satisfaction for others, which are bestowed by divine imputation on others, in order that through these, just as by their own merits, they may be accounted righteous.** As when any friend pays a debt for a friend, the debtor is freed by the merit of another, as though it were by his own. Thus the merits of Christ are bestowed upon us, in order that, when we believe in Him, we may be accounted righteous by our confidence in Christ's merits as though we had merits of our own.

20] And from both, namely, from the promise and the bestowment of merits, confidence in mercy arises [upon both parts must a Christian prayer be founded]. Such confidence in the divine promise, and likewise in the merits of Christ, ought to be brought forward when we pray. For we ought to be truly confident, both that for Christ's sake we are heard, and that by His merits we have a reconciled Father.

He Himself says, John 14, 13: *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.* In My, name, He says, because without this High Priest we cannot approach the Father. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XXI. 17-20)

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.

Prayer

O God our Father, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, Your humble servants, that by Your holy inspiration we may think those things that be right and by Your merciful guiding may perform them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.** (*Collect for Rogate*)

Word of God: St. John 16:23-33 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

1. "In that day" speaks of the time in the future after the second "little while"(v.17). "In that day" will begin after the resurrection, but come to completion after the ascension and giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. When Jesus says, "In that day you will no longer ask me anything..." of what difference is he speaking?
2. Though things will be different, what promise does Jesus give the disciples in verse 23? (Note: a promise made even more sure by "Amen, amen, I say to you" translated in the NIV by "I tell you the truth.")
3. What does it mean to ask or receive "in my(Jesus') name"?
4. If not in Jesus' name, how had the disciples been praying up until now? When and where did they pray? Upon what promises were their prayers based?
5. What do we learn about prayer from verse 24b?
 - A. "Ask..." (keep asking) – What is this?
 - B. "...and you will receive,..." --What is this?
 - C. "...and your joy will be complete." – What is this?
6. Prior to his death, Jesus speaks figuratively. Why? (Jn 16:12-13)
7. How is the normal activity of believers described in verse 26a?
8. What reasons does Jesus give that his disciples(believers) will not need to have their prayers brought by Him, but can pray directly to the Father "in Jesus name"? (verse 26a-27)
9. What does this say about the status of believers before the Father?
10. What is the description of those who can pray in this way? (verse 27)
 - A. "you have loved me" --
 - B. "and have believed that I came from God." --
11. Verse 28 is a summary statement of Jesus' work. What 4 things does Jesus describe?
12. When they mean by "you know all things...This makes us believe that you came from God?"
13. In verse 32, Jesus tells them what is to come. Jesus' leaving is not to desert the disciples, but they will desert Jesus for their own benefit. Is Jesus alone?
14. How will the disciples experience peace when Jesus says they will be scattered and have trouble in this world?

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn "Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above" ASBH #34

Table of Duties: To Wives: Eph 5:22,

John 16:33

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses

"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise

"Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia." p.225

Reading

St. John 16:23-33 (back)
Easter Responsory p. 227-228

Hymn

"Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above"
(Augustana Service #34, insert)

Catechesis on... (back)

St. John 16:23-33

Liturgy

Catechism

--prayer based on reading

+ Lord's Prayer (sung) p.284

+ Responsive Prayer for Catechesis (insert)

Ten Commandments

Lord's Prayer

Apostles' Creed

Psalm 73

Collect of the Day

A Prayer for Peace

Benedicamus

Benediction

Catechesis on St. John 16:23-33

“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24“Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

25“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. 26“In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; 27“for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. 28“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” 29His disciples said to Him, “See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! 30“Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.” 31Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? 32“Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

The Five Requisites Of True Prayer

From a Sermon by Martin Luther

I. THE PROMISE OF GOD TO MAN

The first is, that we have from God his promise or his permission to speak to him, and that we remember the same before we pray and remind God of it, thereby encouraging ourselves to pray in a calm and confident frame of mind. Had God not told us to pray, and pledged himself to hear us, none of his creatures could ever, with all their prayers, obtain so much as a grain of corn. From this, then, there follows that no one receives anything from God by virtue of his own merit or that of his prayer. His answer comes by virtue of the divine goodness alone, which precedes every prayer and desire, which moves us, through his gracious promise and call, to pray and to desire, in

order that we may learn how much he cares for us, and how he is more ready to give than we are to receive...

II. FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISE

In the second place, it is necessary that we never doubt the pledge and promise of the true and faithful God. For even to this end did God pledge himself to hear, yea, commanded us to pray, in order that we may always have a sure and firm faith that we will be heard; as Jesus says in Mt 21, 22: "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Christ says in Luke 11, 9-13: "... Ask, and it shall be given you...." With this and like promises and commands we must consolingly exercise ourselves and pray in true confidence.

III. FAITH THAT OUR PRAYER WILL BE HEARD

In the third place, if one prays doubting that God will hear him, and only offers his prayers as a venture, whether it be granted or not granted, he is guilty of two wicked deeds. The first is, that he, himself, makes his prayer unavailing and he labors in vain. ... Ja 1,6-7.

The other wicked deed is, that he regards his most true and faithful God as a liar and an unstable and doubtful being; as one who cannot or will not keep his promise; and thus through his doubt he robs God of his honor and of his name of truth and faithfulness....

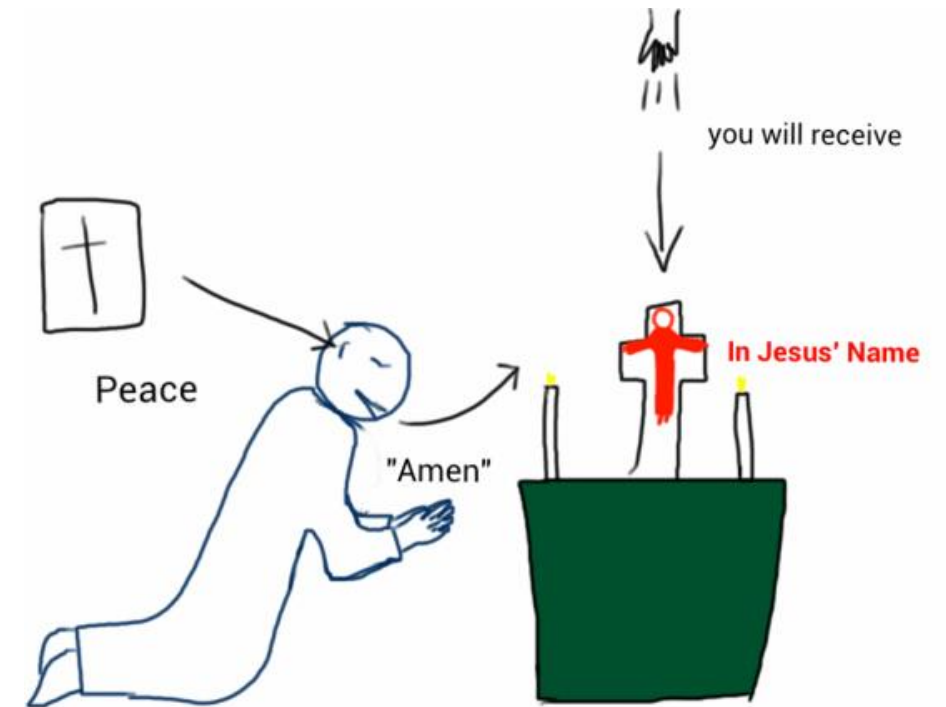
IV. A SENSE OF OUR UNWORTHINESS

...If you do not pray until you know and experience that you are fit, then you will never need to pray. As I have said before, our prayers must not be founded nor rest upon ourselves or their own merits, but upon the unshakable truth of the divine promise.... The very reason we do pray is because of our unworthiness; and just through the fact that we believe we are unworthy and confidently venture upon God's faithfulness to his Word do we become worthy to pray and to be heard.... Your worthiness does not help you, but your unworthiness is no barrier. Disbelief condemns you, and trust makes you worthy and sustains you.

V. THAT WE DO NOT LIMIT GOD IN ANY WAY

In the fifth place, one should so act in this confidence of prayer as not to limit God and specify the day or place, nor designate the way or measure of the prayer's fulfillment; but leave all to his own will, wisdom and almighty power. Then confidently and cheerfully await the answer, not even wishing to know how and where, how soon, how long, and through whom. His divine wisdom will find far better ways and measures, time and place, than we can devise, even should we perform miracles....

Catechesis On St. John 16:23-33



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