

Daily Devotions for Home and Family
For the Week of the Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 15 through March 21

FAITH

Chapter 106. The Grace of God Was Necessary to Man's Salvation Before the Fall as Well as After It.

The former immortality man lost through the exercise of his free-will; the latter he shall obtain through grace, whereas, if he had not sinned, he should have obtained it by desert. Even in that case, however, there could have been no merit without grace; because, although the mere exercise of man's free-will was sufficient to bring in sin, his free-will would not have sufficed for his maintenance in righteousness, unless God had assisted it by imparting a portion of His unchangeable goodness. Just as it is in man's power to die whenever he will (for, not to speak of other means, any one can put an end to himself by simple abstinence from food), but the mere will cannot preserve life in the absence of food and the other means of life; so man in paradise was able of his mere will, simply by abandoning righteousness, to destroy himself; but to have maintained a life of righteousness would have been too much for his will, unless it had been sustained by the Creator's power. After the fall, however, a more abundant exercise of God's mercy was required, because the will itself had to be freed from the bondage in which it was held by sin and death. And the will owes its freedom in no degree to itself, but solely to the grace of God which comes by faith in Jesus Christ; so that the very will, through which we accept all the other gifts of God which lead us on to His eternal gift, is itself prepared of the Lord, as the Scripture says.

Chapter 107. Eternal Life, Though the Reward of Good Works, is Itself the Gift of God.

Wherefore, even eternal life itself, which is surely the reward of good works, the apostle calls the gift of God. *For the wages of sin, he says, is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Wages (*stipendium*) is paid as a recompense for military service; it is not a gift: wherefore he says, the *wages* of sin is death, to show that death was not inflicted undeservedly, but as the due recompense of sin. But a gift, unless it is wholly unearned, is not a gift at all. We are to understand, then, that man's good deserts are themselves the gift of God, so that when these obtain the recompense of eternal life, it is simply grace given for grace. Man, therefore, was thus made upright that, though unable to remain in his uprightness without divine help, he could of his own mere will depart from it. And whichever of these courses he had chosen, God's will would have been done, either by him, or concerning him. Therefore, as he chose to do his own will rather than God's, the will of God is fulfilled concerning him; for God, out of one and the same heap of perdition which constitutes the race of man, makes one vessel to honor, another to dishonor; to honor in mercy, to dishonor in judgment; that no one may glory in man, and consequently not in himself. ~ *Enchiridion*, Chapters 106-107

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

*Pray and confess out loud as much from this order as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate.
Learn by heart the catechism and hymn each week.*

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.

Psalm – 142

The Catechism – *Christian Questions With Their Answers*

1. *Do you believe that you are a sinner?*
Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.
2. *How do you know this?*
From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.
3. *Are you sorry for your sins?*
Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

Daily Readings:

Sunday, March 15 – Mark 11:20-33

Monday, March 16 – Mark 12:1-12

Tuesday, March 17 – Mark 12:13-27 (*Commemoration of Patrick, Missionary to Ireland*)

Wednesday, March 18 – Mark 12:28-44

Thursday, March 19 – Mark 13:1-23 (*Feast of St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus; suggested add'l reading: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23*)

Friday, March 20 – Mark 13:24-37

Saturday, March 21 – Mark 14:1-11

Meditation (*If you are using another devotional tool, such as Portals of Prayer, this would be an appropriate place to insert it*)

Prayers

Let us pray...Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

O Lord, turn your eyes in mercy towards us...behold, visit, and relieve all Your servants who stand in need of prayer:

St. John's Lutheran Church; The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; The Rev. Matthew Harrison; The Atlantic District; The Rev. Dien Ashley Taylor; Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne; The Rev. Jon Bruss; Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; The Rev. Thomas Egger; The Concordia University System; Lutheran Parochial Schools; Our Sister Churches; All Pastors, Missionaries, and Church Workers; The Rev. Eric Stinnett & Family; The Rev. Dr. Tom Park; The United States of America; President Donald Trump; The U.S. Congress and Senate; The Supreme Court Justices and all judges and magistrates; Governor Kathy Hochul; All State and locally elected officials; U.S. Military Personnel; All Fire, Police, and EMS workers and volunteers; Emily Arrasate; Rob Arrasate; Jim Baum; Jackie Blydenburgh; Roseann Carrano; Roy & Ingrid Chopping; Dean Clemente; Ed Doepp; Anne Grant; Don Mack; Dorothy Mistler; Rudy & Julie Morgenfruh; Dot Rigaud; Joanne Roland; Alice Ryan; Judy Smith; Gertrude Sutorius; Arlene Uhl; Ingrid Vessie; Jack Whitehouse

Armed Forces: Gregory D'Alessandro; Emma Levine; Phillip Rappe; Brian Williams; Michael John Young

Look upon them with your grace and favor; grant them comfort and a sure confidence in You; defend them from all danger and keep them in perpetual peace and safety; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Morning or Evening Prayer

(Morning) 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.

(Evening) 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.

Hymn for the Week – *Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing*

LSB #421, st. 5

O my God, my rock and tower,
Grant that in Your death I trust,
Knowing death has lost its power
Since You crushed it in the dust.
Savior, let Your agony
Ever help and comfort me;
When I die be my protection,
Light and life and resurrection.

Closing Blessing

- L** Let us bless the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**
- L** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ † and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.
- C** **Amen.**

† Look Ahead for Next Week:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Romans 8:1-11

John 11:1-45