PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 54:4-5, 1-3, 7

Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with those who uphold my life. He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth. Save me, O God, by Your name; and vindicate me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers have risen up against me, they have not set God before them. He has delivered me out of all trouble; and my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies.


“And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.”

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Let Your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please You: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK TLH 366, LSB 536

One Thing’s Needful, Lord, This Treasure Johann H. Schroeder

1. One thing’s needful; Lord this treasure
   Teach me highly to regard;
   All else, though it first give pleasure,
   Is a yoke that presses hard.
   Beneath it the heart is still fretting and striving,
   No true, lasting happiness ever deriving.
   The gain of this one thing all loss can requite
   And teach me in all things to find true delight.

6. Wilt thou find this one thing needful,
   Turn from all created things
   Unto Jesus and be heedful
   Of the blessed joy He brings.
   For where God and Man both in one are united,
   With God’s perfect fullness the heart is delighted;
   There, there is the worthiest lot and the best,
   My One and my All and my Joy and my Rest.

PRAY THE 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.
**THEME OF THE WEEK: Faithful Stewardship of Earthly Gifts**

Jesus frequently taught His disciples about the proper use of possessions. The sinful flesh desires to use goods and possessions for personal improvement. Despite the fact that we clearly cannot take any of it with us, we often fall prey to these sinful desires. Christ crucifies those sinful desires, and in the waters of Holy Baptism, fashions a new man. The new man desires to use his possessions for the good of his neighbor. He realizes that it’s of much greater worth to use earthly possessions to create eternal friends who will welcome him into heaven than it is to live in earthly luxury.

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**SUN**

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 16:1—9 — Eternal Friends

Jesus concludes the Parable of the Dishonest Manager telling His disciples to use their earthly possessions to make eternal friends. Your earthly wealth will fail you—if not during your life, certainly at its close. And when your Lord calls you home, it will not be your wealth that welcomes you. Your retirement will be left for your children to squabble over. The home will slowly decay. But eternal friends—those who through your use of earthly possessions were able to receive the Gospel—will welcome you into eternal dwellings with Christ.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for providing for our needs: help us to use our wealth to make eternal friends.*

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**TUE**

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 20:28 — Not be Served, but to Serve

Christ came to serve the least worthy of being served—you and me. He—who alone had every right to demand we serve Him—took upon Himself, servants great and small, instead. Made holy by His service and servanthood, we now desire what He desires. He calls us to serve those among whom He has placed us. He gives us earthly wealth that we might use it to serve our neighbors. For example, God blessed me with a wife and six children: I cannot simply do what I want with my possessions but must serve them, my nearest neighbors. He became a servant to me, making me holy, so I likewise might desire to serve my neighbors. *Thank You, Lord Jesus Christ for becoming the least and servant of all—even me.* Amen.

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**WED**

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 12:33b — Eternal Treasure

The return of Christ does not depend on your retirement packages. The Son of Man will come at an unexpected hour. Those who are His eternal friends He will welcome into eternal paradise. In a broad sense, we are faithful stewards when we set out the treasures God has given us in proper measure, as we use our resources to teach our children and grandchildren, as we serve our parents and siblings as they age or experience ill health. We make eternal friends when we witness to the hope we have in Christ Jesus to the world around us. *Heavenly Father, make us ready servants who use wealth not simply for our own amusement and pleasure, but also to serve our neighbor in need.* Amen.

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**THU**

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Chronicles 29:10—13 — All From the Hand of God

Everything—power, riches, might, greatness, etc.—comes from the hand of God. Grasping this truth leads us to our knees in two ways, first to confess our failure. We fail to use what He gives us in god-pleasing ways. We choose our own selfish desires rather than what makes eternal friends. For example, rather than teach our children the faith, we choose to watch TV or work a few more hours to advance a little further. Secondly, we give thanks to God, who gives us our possessions in spite of our sinfulness. Why? Because we are His children in Holy Baptism and He works all for the good of those who love Him. *Heavenly Father, thank You for providing for all my needs of body and soul.* Amen.

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**FRI**

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Timothy 1:13—14 — Guard the Good Deposit

We put our earthly money in banks so that the deposit might be guarded against theft and robbery. As Jesus reminded us yesterday, banks will ultimately fail also; the thief can always break in and steal. So also the good deposit given to St. Timothy. When it is not protected, Satan seeks to steal it or twist it. But when we faithfully guard and share this pure deposit—unlike bank deposits—the greater it grows. Faithful guarding of this deposit might mean imprisonment and persecution. But Christ promises that wherever this good deposit is guarded, it will not return to Him empty. *Almighty Father, thank You for the good deposit of Your Word which You have entrusted to Your church, and keep us, we pray, ever faithful to it.* Amen.

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**SAT**

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 139:23—24 — See if there by any Grievous Way in Me

How can we say that? Throughout the last week we reflected on our selfishness. The old man often tempts us to please ourselves and use our resources not for the eternal benefit of our neighbor, but for the fleeting momentary pleasures of this life. And yet, today we pray, “See if there be any grievous way in me.” You can pray that because you pray it in Christ. He made you His eternal friend. While your family and friends who died in the faith will welcome you to heaven, their presence pale in comparison with Him who made you not only His friend, but His brother—an eternal brother by His death for your sins. *Forgiving Father, thank You for making us Your children and fellow heirs of Christ Jesus through His death and resurrection for us.* Amen.