PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 86:1-3, 4, 6, 15-16

Bow down Your ear, O Lord, / hear me;*
You are my God: save Your servant who / trusts in You!
Be merciful to / me, O Lord,*
for I cry to You / all day long.
Rejoice the soul of Your / servant,*
for to You, O Lord, I lift / up my soul.
Give ear, O Lord, / to my prayer;*
and attend to the voice of my suppli- / cations.
You, O Lord, are a God full of com- / passion,*
oh, turn to me, and have mercy up- / on me!
Give Your strength to Your / servant,*
and save the son of Your / maidservant.

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

SAV THE 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 Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Morning. 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 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 kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this night 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.
THEME OF THE WEEK: The Confidence in God Wrought by the Spirit

We pray for God’s kingdom to come and for His will to be done. That is, we pray that His Word is taught in truth and purity, that He hinders the plans of any and all who would subdue it, and that we might, in faith, believe this Word proclaimed and live holy lives in time and in eternity. All of this is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is He who establishes in us faith in a God who for the sake of Christ, has promised that we are His children and that He will never forsake us. Our confidence is in the Lord: not in our own works, deeds, abilities, or actions, but only in the forgiveness of sins won on the cross and given through the Word. It is for God to do. He is faithful even when we are faithless. What greater confidence can there ever be?

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:24-34—Do Not Be Anxious

“Do not be anxious” simple words that are impossible to follow. We know that it is the Lord alone that we should fear. Our heavenly Father has promised to give us all things needed to support this body and life. We know that His goodness and mercy endure forever. Still we doubt, worry, and fret about money, school, work, retirement, health and everything else under the sun. We need not worry. Our Father in Heaven will provide for us. But still we worry, showing us that we are far from the perfect, Law-fulfilling person that we are called to be. And in that worry and doubt our Father is faithful, our Savior pleads for us. And the Holy Spirit speaks these words into our ears to strengthen our faith so that we may have confidence in the promises of God. Holy Spirit, may we trust in Your promises and have no fear. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:113-120—My Hiding Place

There will always be double-minded, self-righteous, evil-doers in this world. And they will constantly speak their own gospel and not the Gospel of the cross. They will set up themselves as holy and righteous through the thoughts of their own minds and the work of their own hands. Their constant desire is that God’s Word is never taught in truth and purity and that when it is, you are never there to receive it. Against all of this (which also includes our own sinful flesh) our Lord provides a hiding place and promises to be our shield against such false doctrine. His Word will be proclaimed: Law and Gospel. And we pray that it is proclaimed in purity among us as well that we might find a place of protection against all that is evil. Holy Spirit, hold me up, that I may be safe and have regard for Your statutes continually! Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5:25-6:10—Walking in the Spirit

To walk in the Spirit means to receive all of the promises of God for the sake of Christ alone in faith. Once this faith is given and these promises grasped we do nothing else but serve our neighbor. We bear our brother’s burdens, not just the easy stuff that takes no effort, but that which is an actual burden to us, and we do so for the good of our neighbor. We restore our fallen sister in gentleness, through forgiveness, just as we have been restored a million times. We do not grow weary of doing good works, for they are hardly even seen as such in our eyes any longer. They are the joyful service of our neighbor wrought by the Holy Spirit as He makes known to us that our sins are forgiven in Christ and therefore, he who has been forgiven much loves much. Holy Spirit, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 6:4-7—The Greatest Commandment

Jesus speaks of these words of Deuteronomy 6 when He is asked for the greatest Commandment. It sums up the First Table of the Law (Commandments 1-3). What then is to be done then to love the Lord with all that we have? We teach this to our children and ponder with our spouses and meditate on in the quiet of the night. For the Christian there is nothing we would rather do than keep this Commandment. For the sinner, there is nothing in the world more impossible to do than keep this Commandment. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, we turn to the Lord our God. We turn to the One who is faithful when we aren’t and who takes us into the Promised Land through the merits of Christ alone. Holy Spirit, may the Word of God forever be on our heart to accuse us and then forgive us. Amen.


Martha isn’t all that bad. To prepare a meal for a guest is a good thing: to prepare a meal for the Lord is infinitely better. But Jesus doesn’t want our service. Our service is meant for our neighbor. Our neighbors are the ones that need our service. They are the ones who require it for their good and their benefit. They are the ones whom God has placed in front of us to do these very things. But not Jesus. We don’t serve Him, He serves us. And this will never be taken away from us. He invites us to cast away all of that work and service, that climbing to heaven and making God happy stuff, and instead sit and listen to the fact that Jesus is the Servant of all, of you and of me. Jesus came to serve not to be served: and He still does so today in Word, water, bread, and wine. Jesus gives the gifts of service: we only receive. Holy Spirit, may we always choose the good portion. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 12:7-12—The Accuser Silenced (St. Michael and All Angels)

Satan can do nothing. His accusations are no longer heard as true and valid in the courtroom of heaven. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father and speaks on our behalf with the holes in His hands and feet as the proof that the devil’s words are false. Yes, Satan still attempts to accuse us: he can do no other. But now we are able to tell these accusations before our Creator, and we are able to disarm them. The Holy Spirit as He makes known to us that our sins are forgiven in Christ and there to receive it. Against all of this (which also includes our own sinful flesh) our Lord provides a hiding place and promises to be our shield against such false doctrine. His Word will be proclaimed: Law and Gospel. And we pray that it is proclaimed in purity among us as well that we might find a place of protection against all that is evil. Holy Spirit, hold me up, that I may be safe and have regard for Your statutes continually! Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 34—True Christian Humility

The only way to truly bless the Lord (v.1) is to truly recognize that we are sinful, that He alone is good, and that we are only made perfect for the sake of Christ. This is true Christian humility: acknowledging the free gift of salvation in Christ to poor miserable sinners. Anything else is self-justification and therefore is a curse against God and His salvation for us. To seek the Lord is to know that, as Luther says, “Our ugliness is God’s beauty, our blushing is God’s glory, our shame is His dignity, our sin is the excellence of His grace” (AE 10:162). And it is only through this true humility, granted by God through faith, that the Holy Spirit may then use us to, “Turn away from evil and do good: seek peace and pursue it.” It is all and only the work of God in us for the sake of Christ. Holy Spirit, be near to the brokenhearted and save the crushed in spirit. Amen.

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