

POSSIBLE Prayer of the Church 🕊️ **1st Sunday after Trinity June 7th 2026**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

LORD God, Heavenly Father, You promise us an inheritance not because of Your law but because of Your promise to Abraham and to us. In Your grace, nourish us in the faith unto life eternal. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O LORD God, You have given our ELS synod president; our circuit visitor; and our pastor so that we may hear Moses and the prophets and be convinced by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Make their proclamation fruitful among us in repentance and faith, that we may not fall into the torments of hades but be carried by the angels to Abraham's side in Heaven. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O LORD God, be the defender and shield of all in need: the poor, the hungry and those without homes or proper employment. Provide for their needs, and give them hope in the face of their trials. Stir up in us fervent love for one another, that we would be charitable to bring care and comfort to those around us, since You have shown us perfect charity in Your Son. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O LORD God, have mercy on those who desire the gift of children and yet remain childless. Help them to trust Your unfailing promises and, if it be Your will, satisfy the longing of their hearts with offspring to raise up in the fear and knowledge of You. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O LORD God, Your Word teaches that a great army cannot save the king and a war horse is a false hope for salvation. Grant that our nation would not put its hope in the strength of our warriors, but in You. Bless and keep those who serve in our military, and use them as Your arm to guard and deliver us from all our enemies. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O LORD God, give to Your servants all that is needed for this body and life. Heal, strengthen and comfort the sick, the suffering, the sorrowing and the dying, and hear the prayers of all who call upon Your saving name [*especially Your servants Faith & Our Savior Prayers*] ... and all those we each name and keep in our hearts in personal prayer. Teach us to pray so that our hearts may not be undone by anxiety and fear but rejoice in Your grace sufficient for our every need. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O LORD God, give repentance and faith to all who come to Your altar. Grant that we would not come seeking earthly food, but instead discern Your body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and receive it in the unity of a true confession. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Into Your hands, O LORD, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our LORD. **Amen.**

TRINITY-1 Luke 16:19-31 POOR LAZARUS: WHOM GOD HELPS 6.7.26 F.OS.L

SIMPLE PARABLE?! To read the Gospel **Parable** before us today, you might think that it is simply about economic status, the rich vs. the poor. The filthy rich are sent packing off to hell while the common lower class folks are the ones who make it to heaven. **Paul** does say in **1 Timothy**, "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

RICH ABRAHAM \$\$\$ However, the Bible reports that Abraham was very wealthy, the equivalent of a millionaire in his day. And in the Gospel, **Abraham is in Heaven**. So possessing worldly wealth does not automatically condemn you to hell. It's worth pointing out once again that it's not money but the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil – setting your heart on the pursuit of money, organizing your life around what you can get with your money, prioritizing your property and possessions above the Lord and His Word and His ways. Since you cannot serve both God and money, St. Paul directs those who have it to be "rich towards God."

NO FAITH **What really condemns the rich man to hell** is not what he has but what **he lacks**, namely **faith and trust in God**. Jesus describes the rich man's self-centered and self-sufficient life and his callous disregard for the beggar at his gate because those things show whom he was serving in his life: **not God, but himself**.

WE'RE NOT LOWER CLASS And there is a flip side to the sin of the rich man that we must also guard against, namely, **making a virtue out of the fact that we're not rich**, that we're just ordinary, working class people. That can open us up to falling into a similar sort of **pride and arrogance**. The fact of the matter, anyway, is that what **we** call lower class, many other countries call wealthy. Remember that greed is not limited to one economic group. The poor can have money as an idol just as much as the rich can. It's just that one sets his heart on the wealth he already has, whereas the other sets his heart on the wealth he yet wants to get for himself. Materialism is not a disease of the wallet but of the heart. It's not what you possess but what possesses you that counts.

MAKIN' IT The rich man in this Parable is not unlike those who, even though they aren't well off, still run around **waiting for the golden opportunity**. Their love is focused on "*making it*." And if you think that getting in with the right people or getting that **stock tip** or buying that **lottery ticket** can make life truly better for you and ease your troubles and solve your problems, then you've joined with them and their love. Then, with the rich man, you've put your love and trust not in God alone but in something or someone else.

POOR?- RICH IN HEAVEN **Being economically poor doesn't mean that you're going to Heaven**. Rather, Jesus put it this way, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." To be poor in spirit means to be humble and penitent before God, to trust not in yourself but in Him alone, to rely not on your own goodness but on His goodness. It means to look to the Lord for all that you need and to run to Him for help and comfort. This was the faith of Lazarus. It is written, "The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit."

LAZ. AND NO-NAME You'll notice that of the two main characters in this Gospel, **only one** has a **name**. The rich man has [or is a Mr.] **No-Name** because God will not remember the nameless in hell. The rich man wanted to live independently from God in life, and so he will have to live independently from God and all that is good in death. But the Good Shepherd knows His sheep and calls them each by name. Like Lazarus, God has given you a name, too – **in Holy Baptism**. There He claimed you for His own, **by name**. You are not nameless before God. You bear the saving Name of the Holy Trinity.

GOD HELP [US] The **NAME "Lazarus"** is one of the keys to understanding this account, understanding the real difference between the rich man and the poor man. For "Lazarus" means: **"The one whom God helps,"** or **"God is my helper."** He was sick, he was hungry, he was covered with sores, and the dogs licked his wounds. But he still penitently trusted in God and clung to the Lord's promise of life and salvation. Unlike the rich man who called Abraham his father, Lazarus was a true son of Abraham, who *"believed in the Lord, and the Lord accounted it to him for righteousness."* He believed what his name meant, "God is my helper," and he received the fullness of that help and comfort in Abraham's bosom.

THEY HAVE WHAT THEY NEED Abraham says to the rich man, *"[Your brothers] have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."* That reminds us of what Jesus did while he walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself." Moses and the Prophets all point to Jesus. Lazarus went to heaven **because he believed "Moses and the prophets."** That is to say, he believed **in the Messiah Whom they prophesied**, Who would **take the sins of the world upon Himself** and earn for him God's favor and a place in heaven.

HE DID IT FOR YOU That is what the **Messiah, Jesus Christ, has done for you too**. As Isaiah prophesied, *"Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. He was pierced for our transgressions, and by His wounds, we are healed."* You see, in order to rescue and deliver us, Jesus **"made Himself a Lazarus."** He put Himself at the mercy of the rich and powerful of His day so that He might take away the judgment of God from us on the Cross. In **Psalm 22** [=GF Psalm] Jesus says of those who accused and beat and crucified Him, **"Dogs** have surrounded me; a band of **evil men has encircled** me, they have pierced my hands and my feet." Though the dogs "licked" Jesus wounds, so to speak, by their mocking, yet the Blood that flowed from those holy wounds *bought our forgiveness and cleansed us* from our sin. That is why it is written, *"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, so that you, through His poverty, might become rich."* And now, like Lazarus, Jesus has **risen** and **ascended** to the bosom of The Father in heaven. He is vindicated and reigns over all things.

NO \$\$ BUT HAS FAITH So, Lazarus went to Heaven, **not** because of what he lacked, but **because of what he possessed: faith in the Lord**, the Messiah, who was his Helper and his Savior. **By that same faith in the merits of Christ, Heaven is yours as well!**

LAZ. LIKE US Lazarus is a **perfect example to us** that if our life on earth seems full of **trouble & pain**, we should not be offended at such

misery or try to seek comfort in temporary things, but hope in that which is future and eternal. **No Christian** should think **God has forgotten** him/her or is angry with him when bad things happen. For like a good father, God is always disciplining His children, so that they might be cautioned and kept from sin. Therefore, when we face difficulty, we should not be surprised, but instead be assured that God loves us, that He thinks of us and wants what is best for us. As it is said, "If a father really loves his son, he corrects him."

DON'T JUDGE GOD So don't judge God's goodness and grace by your temporal condition. It is true that **money** and **goods**, a **healthy body**, ...all these things are **gifts** and **blessings** of God. But these are blessings that **won't last forever**. For in the end everything must be left behind, as it is written, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can take nothing out of it." Besides, with these blessings comes the danger that, if we are not careful to live in the fear of God and pay strict attention to His Word, our sinful nature easily leads us into sin. So, we see that with material blessings God often lays various crosses and afflictions on us, because God desires to **guard us** and **keep us** in reverence and **faith** towards Him. Otherwise, were it not for these trials, we might very well **decrease** in prayer, in faith and in zeal for the Word of God and finally ...neglect them altogether.

TRUE ETERNAL BLESSING The true, highest, and best blessing, by which you can and should see the goodness of God, is **not** prosperity in this life, but the **everlasting blessing** that God has called you to Himself by the Gospel of His Son, in which He is merciful to you, forgives your sins, and saves you eternally from death and the devil. Whoever thinks rightly about these things will see how blessed they really are. Even if you have no money or property at all in this world, you are **still rich**, because you have Christ, and all things belong to Him, including your eternal life in the world to come.

IT'S ALL THERE... **The heart of this Parable**, then, is to be seen in **Abraham's response to the rich man's second request**. The rich man said, *"I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."* But Abraham replied, *"They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."* **And that's the point of this Parable**. It's all there in Moses and the Prophets, in the Holy Scriptures. For they all speak of Christ, who did all that was necessary to save us and give us eternal life. If people don't want to pay attention to the preaching of the Word of God, then they've rejected Christ, the only Savior, who is the heart of that Word. And if they reject Christ, then they won't even be convinced by a miracle, indeed, even if someone were to rise from the dead in front of their eyes.

WE GET THE BEST 4EVER But Jesus, **who did indeed rise from the dead in victory** over the grave for us, said this, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in Me will never die." The risen Christ now extends to you his Word of Life and His Holy Body and Blood for your comfort and your healing and your forgiveness – whether you're rich or poor or somewhere in-between. You don't simply get crumbs from the table; you are given to feast on the Bread of Life. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you—like Lazarus—shall be saved. Let us say with Lazarus, **"God is MY helper ...TOO."** "I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation." **I'N, Amen. SDG**