5 PRAY THE **PRAYER OF THE WEEK**

O almighty God, who has knit together Your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, grant us grace so to follow Your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that we may come to those unspeakable joys that You have prepared for those who unfeignedly love You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Then pray for ourselves and others, and close with Luther's 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.

6 SING OR SAY THE **HYMN OF THE WEEK** *TLH 466*

Christ, Thou Art the Sure Salvation (Unknown)

1. Christ, Thou art the sure Foundation,
Thou the Head and Corner-stone;
Chosen of the Lord and precious
Binding all the Church in one;
Thou Thy Zion's Help forever
And her Confidence alone.

2. To this temple, where we call Thee,
Come, O Lord of hosts, today;
With Thy wonted loving-kindness
Hear Thy servants as they pray
And Thy fullest benediction
Shed within these walls always.

3. Here vouchsafe to all Thy servants
What they ask of Thee to gain,
What they gain from Thee forever
With the blessed to retain,
And hereafter in Thy glory,
Evermore with Thee to reign.

4. Praise and honor to the Father,
Praise and honor to the Son,
Praise and honor to the Spirit,
Ever Three and ever One,
One in might and one in glory,
While unending ages run.

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Scripture and devotions: pages 1–3

Around the Word Devotions

The Week of All Saints

THEME OF THE WEEK

The Blessedness of the Saints of God

This week of All Saints' reminds us of three biblical truths. First, that God desires all men to be saved and invites us to communion with Him through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Secondly, that in this world of sin and unbelief, the Christian saint will have no lack of trouble. And thirdly, God will at last take His saints to Himself in heaven, where together with all who trust in His promises they will receive the fullness of the comfort and joy promised to them on earth. Lord Jesus, preserve us in these precious truths of Your Word until we see You face to face! Amen.

1 BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE **HOLY CROSS AND SAY:**

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

2 PRAY THE **PSALM OF THE WEEK**

Revelation 12:11; Psalm 33:1, 13–15

They overcame him by the blood / of the Lamb*
and by the word of their testi- / mony,
They did not / love their lives*
even / unto death.
Rejoice in the Lord, O you / righteous!*
For praise from the upright is / beautiful.
The Lord looks from / heaven;*
He sees all the / sons of men.
From the place of His dwell- / ing He looks*
on all the inhabitants / of the earth;
He fashions their hearts indi- / vidually;*
He considers / all their works.

Verse of the Week, Matthew 5:10: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

3 READ THE **SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION** *Sunday*

SUN **Matthew 5:1–12** *The Blessedness of the Christian Life*

Today, the Lord reminds us through His Word what true blessedness is. The world, and even our own tainted hearts locate blessedness in the things of this world – money, health, pleasure, a healthy family, friends, and the like. Jesus upends our expectations by locating blessedness for us in Himself alone. Those who are blessed will surely experience persecution and hardship for His sake, for the joy of the saint is not found in this world, which is ever at odds with the preaching of the Word, but in the only true God and His kingdom of grace. Lord Jesus, we are blessed in Your forgiveness alone. Keep us steadfast in Your Word and truth. Amen.

Scripture continues on pages 2–3 · Steps 4–6: page 4

3 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION *Monday–Thursday*

MON Psalm 125 *The Lord Surrounds His Saints*

"The scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous…" The reason for this reminder is that sometimes the rule of evil does indeed come upon God's people as they are put under foot, maligned, and persecuted for confessing Jesus. This psalm is a psalm of perseverance. Though the wicked rule often in unrighteousness, the Lord surrounds His saints like the mountains of Jerusalem. He stands guard over them. Jesus has already defeated evil at the cross and the battle is already won. The end is certain. Zion, that is, the Holy Church cannot be moved, and in His time, the Lord will bring her home at last. Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen.

TUE Revelation 7:2–17 *The Vision of Heaven*

Who we are in life will not be destroyed, but perfected. The Lord grants John a vision of what is going on in Heaven and oh, what a sight it is! John sees all the different peoples and languages and tribes and nations all confessing the Christ, waving palms of victory. Heaven therefore is not some egalitarian kingdom of sameness, where every saint looks, speaks, and acts just the same. That is boring. Instead God perfects our natures in Christ. John clearly recognizes distinct peoples and attributes. So it is that those attributes which so delight you in your Christian friends and family in this life, God will perfect in the resurrection and life everlasting. That is who they really are! God grant us by faith to be in that blessed number. Amen.

WED Isaiah 51:9–16 *Faith in the Midst of Fear*

When God speaks His Word to us, it has the force of an oath (V. Herberger). When God says to us "You are my people" (vs 16) He means it. We are His dear treasure. But how often our flesh forgets. We fear all manner of things. We fear men and what they can do to us (vs. 12). We forget that it is the Lord Who has redeemed us with His precious blood and will lead us to the Zion of our eternal home with singing, where sorrowing and sighing shall flee away (vs. 11). So the Lord reminds us. He speaks His Word to us "And I have put my words in your mouth" (vs. 15). His preached word comforts us in the midst of our trials that we would fear no evil. Lord keep us attentive to Your promises to us, that we would not despair. Amen.

THU Matthew 9:18–26 *Funeral Crasher*

A dirge plays in the background while mourners mourn in the foreground. That is a funeral in a nutshell, and tell me, what else is to be done at death? We sit and we weep and sing a song of lament for the dead. But then Jesus comes sweeping onto the scene and speaks of death as only "sleep." To us this is laughable, but to Him death is no more than an afternoon nap from which He wakes up His precious little children. It is quite the dichotomy, for Jesus weeps at death too. But He weeps as one Who still has the victory, Who hates this enemy that brings pain and sorrow, even though He has all authority over it. Perhaps that is how we should weep as well: not as ones who have no hope, but as ones who know that the victory is ours because the victory is His. Yes, death still stings, but the sting lasts but for a moment. Jesus, take us by the hand and raise us from the dead. Amen.

Next: Friday–Saturday and step 4, page 3

3 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION *Friday–Saturday*

FRI Colossians 1:9–14 *Spiritual Understanding*

Paul prayed for the Colossian saints that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." May God grant it to us. Spiritual wisdom knows what earthly wisdom cannot know: first, that we are sinners deserving the wrath of God. Second, that the Son of God has suffered in our place to win eternal righteousness. Third, that God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our heart, praying and helping us along in this troubled life. Fourth, that the best is yet to come. We will inherit the light of the glory of God, the peace of heaven which will give way to the joy of the resurrection and the new heaven and earth. O Lord, give us Your Spirit and a spiritual understanding of all things. Amen.

SAT Psalm 18:1–19 *The Lord is My Stay*

The Psalms remind us that we are surrounded by enemies and encircled with trouble. "In this world you will have tribulation." The world, our own sinful flesh, the devil with all the demons all attack, swiping away at our faith and our life. But the LORD has not left us alone. The LORD is on our side. He is our rock, our fortress, our deliverer, our strength, our trust, our shield, our helmet of salvation, our high tower, our help, our stay. His strength is our confidence. His goodness is our hope. I will love You, O LORD my strength. Amen.

4 PRAY THE COMMANDMENTS, CREED, LORD'S PRAYER

The Ten Commandments

1. You shall have no other gods.
2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not murder.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maid servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

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.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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