5 PRAY THE **PRAYER OF THE WEEK**

Absolve, we implore You, O Lord, Your people from their offenses, that from the bonds of our sins which by reason of our frailty we have brought upon us we may be delivered by Your bountiful goodness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord 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 261 · LSB 655*

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word (Martin Luther)

1. Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word;
Curb those who fain by craft and sword
Would wrest the Kingdom from Thy Son
And set at naught all He hath done.

2. Lord Jesus Christ, Thy power make known,
For Thou art Lord of lords alone;
Defend Thy Christendom that we
May evermore sing praise to Thee.

3. O Comforter of priceless worth.
Send peace and unity on earth.
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.

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Scripture and devotions: pages 1–3

Around the Word Devotions

The 23rd Sunday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity

THEME OF THE WEEK

Resisting the Wicked World

The world is wicked. Through sin all of creation has fallen and therefore all of creation, the world and all who dwell within, have become enemies of God. But even knowing this, we can be certain that God has all these things, wicked or not, placed under His feet. He rides them like a lame horse: While they may swerve this way and that, they will inevitably achieve His desired purpose. And so we sit in the promises of God, knowing that we have overcome the world through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. "And take they our life, Goods, fame, child, and wife, Though these all be gone, Our victory has been won; The Kingdom ours remaineth."

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**

Psalm 85:1, 7, 9, 11; antiphon: Jeremiah 29:11a, 12

I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord,
plans for wholeness and not for evil.
Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me,
and I will hear you.
Lord, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.
Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.
Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.

Verse of the Week, Psalm 124:8: Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

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

SUN **Matthew 22:15-22** *Your Sinful Heart: It's Pernicious*

The Pharisees will use anything to catch Jesus in His words. They have tried the Scriptures. They have tried tradition. Now, they are trying government. Your sinful heart is pernicious like theirs. We will try to justify ignoring Jesus, resisting His word, working against His Will, in just about any way we are able. How many times have we been willing to throw the kitchen sink at God to keep from doing the one thing necessary: repenting of our sins and trusting in the Gospel? Jesus is not looking for a fight. He does not want your works of penance. He especially does not want your hard-headed unrepentance. He wants your death to sin and resurrection to life. Oh God, help me daily die well. Let there be less of me, and more of Jesus. Amen.

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

3 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION *Monday–Thursday*

MON Psalm 124 *If It Were Not for God…*

We would be done for, absolutely done for. All of our enemies would have already overtaken us. Our own sinful flesh would have sentenced us to destruction. The world would have caused us already to turn inward, looking to our own works for salvation. And the devil would have already brought us to the point of despair, making us believe that the forgiveness of sins was not for us. If it were not for God, all of this would have already happened; and indeed it should have, for this is what we deserve. Yet the Lord surprises us again and saves us from all of these horrible enemies. Through the death of Jesus that is given to us in time and space through Word and water and bread and wine, the snare is broken and we have escaped. Let all of Israel now say that our help is in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the Lord, Who has not given us over to our enemies! Amen.

TUE Philippians 3:17–21 *It Is All Subject to Him*

Even now, as we wait for the Lord, as the world wages war against us, as our sinful flesh desires earthly things and to glory in shame, and as the devil seeks to devour us through our sin, even now we have hope. For everything, even the work of the world, our sinful flesh, and the devil, is subject to God and placed under the feet of Jesus. We belong to God and have citizenship in heaven even as we live out our days here on this fallen earth. The promise and comfort is that these things will not last forever. And our earthly bodies will not have to endure them unto eternity. For Christ shall come and rescue us from them all and transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body. And that promise is ours right now, even if we don't experience it in fulness quite yet. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and save us from this fallen world. Amen.

WED Isaiah 32:1–8 *Until Then…*

Christ has already come and He will certainly come again. All the mouths of the haughty and foolish will be closed; perhaps some of them have already been. But not all of them, not for eternity, not yet. And so we wait. We wait for the return of our Lord Who has come once and has already won the victory over all of these ungodly foolish scoundrels. And He will come again to judge both the living and the dead. It will be done, for God has promised it. But until then, we hide away in the Lord and His Church. We cling on to the gifts given here, the "heaven on earth" type things of the Word and water and bread and wine. We cling to them, knowing that the fullness of those gifts are promised to us today, even as the stammering fools try to keep them all from us. Righteous King, grant us safety and protection in this world as we wait for the world to come. Amen.

THU Mark 12:41–44 *More than All*

Pastors don't typically keep tabs on which members give regular and generous tithes. This kind of knowledge could easily compromise their pastoral care by making them favor some while despising others. Christ, on the other hand, is without sin (1 John 3:5; Heb. 4:15). He isn't swayed by appearances. He shows no partiality (Eph. 6:9). He knows our hearts. To the eye, the widow gave next to nothing. Christ sees her giving the most. By faith she gave everything, knowing the Lord would continue to supply her needs. Lord, grant me the faith of the widow to give generously to the church and my neighbors in need. Amen.

Next: Friday–Saturday and step 4, page 3

3 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION *Friday–Saturday*

FRI Romans 13:1–7 *Good Government. Bad Government. Who Cares?*

Maybe it will be that our Government is favorable to us. Maybe it will be that our Government is not. Who cares? We have Jesus. Too much time and worry is spent on divining the future of the Church. Sometimes God gives Cyrus. Sometimes God gives Nebuchadnezzar. We are learning that our joys and our sorrows flow from the hand of our Father. So, if we are to take some chastisement for a time we will receive this as a good gift from our Father Who knows better. If we are to have a time of peace, we will thank God all the more for His care and providence. Ruler of the Stars of Night, on this celestial ball keep me planted in Your Son so that despite the many changes and chances of this world I remain steadfast in Christ. Amen.

SAT Psalm 31:25 *The Words of Jesus…*

We can call this Psalm our own, sing it in unison together in the Divine Service, and pray it aright only because Jesus already claimed it as His own, cried it out alone from the cross, and prayed for us despite ourselves. Jesus does this sort of thing. He claims Scripture as His own, fulfills it while bleeding and dying, and then grants all of the promises of it to us. We sinners, Christ died for us. "The steadfast love of the Lord endures forever" and He is never slow in fulfilling His promises, as we would often count slowness. He is true and faithful to His Word, true and faithful to you! Why? You are the righteousness of God because you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Father, may we in confidence, at the hour of our death, pray the prayer that is ours through Christ: Into Your hands I commend my spirit. 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.

Next: steps 5–6, page 4