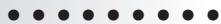




His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



In last month's article I began my series on the Lord's Prayer with a summary of what Scripture teaches about prayer in general. We learned that prayer is God's gift to us. **God** does not need our prayers, but **we** need to pray. First of all, God wants us to pray to Him regarding our physical and spiritual needs not because He is not aware of those needs (see Matthew 6:8) but because we need to learn that all we have and need comes from God alone. Second, we learned that Christian prayer is offered in submission to God's will, which

means that prayer teaches us to trust that God will always give us what we **need** but not always what we **want**. Finally, we learned that godly prayer is performed only by those who trust in the One God who has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The guide for all Christian prayer is The Lord's Prayer which is found in Matthew 6:9-13. Today we will focus on the introduction, which reads: **"Our Father in heaven."** In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther offers the following explanation to this introduction: **"God would by these words tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may with all boldness and confidence ask Him as dear children ask their dear father."**

When Jesus tells us to pray "Our Father" we learn that only those who are brought to faith in Jesus by the Holy Spirit can pray to God as Father. Scripture teaches that ever since the rebellion of Adam and Eve all

humans are conceived as enemies of God and are by nature children of the devil (see John 8:42-44, Acts 13:10, Romans 5:6-12 & 8:7, Ephesians 2:1-3, 1st John 3:8-10). **However, the Good News is that God promised a Savior immediately after the rebellion of Adam and Eve! (See Genesis 3:15, Romans 16:20 & 25-27)** *Jesus, the Son of God*, is the promised Savior who saves us sinners and makes it possible for us to become children of God (see Matthew 1:21, John 1:10-18 & 29-34, John 3:3-18, Romans 3:19-28, 2nd Corinthians 4:3-6, Galatians 3:26-29, Ephesians 2:11-13, 1st Thessalonians 1:4-10, 1st John 3:1-3). In John 14:6 we read these words of Jesus: **"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."** *People who are saved by Jesus the Christ can address God as "Father." We are God's children through faith in Jesus and all He has done for our salvation by His life, death and resurrection for us.*

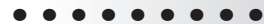
Jesus also says that the Father is "in heaven." The words "in heaven" teach us two things. First, the words "in heaven" refer to the fact that God is the Creator of all things and He is in control of His creation. The words "in heaven" mean that God exists everywhere. Nothing in all creation can separate us from His love that is ours through faith in Jesus (see Romans 8:28-39). Second, the words "in heaven" remind us that **we** are on **earth** – but NOT the perfect earth God created "in the beginning." Instead, we live on an earth that is in bondage to decay because of our sin against God (see Genesis 3:17 and Romans 8:20-21). However, we who are children of God through faith in Jesus have the peace of knowing that we are secure in the hands of our Heavenly Father. *We have His comfort even when we are not comfortable! (See 2nd Corinthians 1:3-11)*

The God who puts His Name on us in the waters of Holy Baptism (see Matthew 28:19) also gives us His Teaching (see

Matthew 28:20) – *and part of that "Teaching" includes His instruction about prayer (see Matthew 6:5-13).* The Lord's Prayer is not the only prayer we pray, but it is a guide for all our prayers. All true prayer must be addressed to the One, True God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes us children of the Father by calling us to faith in Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Father, our Lord and Savior. As Jesus says in John 15:26, **"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me."**

In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus says: **"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will opened to you... If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"** By these words Jesus does not mean that

the Father will give us anything we want and ask for in prayer. Instead, Jesus is teaching that our Father will give us whatever He thinks is best for our present and eternal good. In other words, we should pray to "Our Father in heaven" knowing He will meet our needs as He sees best (see 2nd Corinthians 12:7-10 and Philippians 4:4-7).



Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, March 17th! Pastor Eckstein will continue his series on The Lord's Prayer with the following petition: "Holy be Your Name."

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's webpage: www.concordiajt.org

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