

“The Lord’s Call to Faith in His Grace”



**5** PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 44:23, 25-26, 1-3, 7-8

Awake! Why do You | sleep, O Lord?\*  
Arise! Do not cast us off for- | ever.  
For our soul is bowed down | to the dust;\*  
arise for our help and re- | deem us.  
We have heard with our | ears, O God,\*  
our fathers have told us the deeds You did in | days of old:  
You drove out the nations | with Your hand,\*  
but you planted our fathers because you | favored them.  
You have saved us from our | enemies,\*  
and have put to shame those who | hated us.  
In God we boast | all day long,\*  
and praise Your name for- | ever.

**6** SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK 2 Corinthians 12:9

“But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

**7** READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

**8** PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK

O God, because You know that we dare not put our trust in anything that we do, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**9** PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

**10** SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK  
May God Bestow on Us His Grace

TLH 500, LSB 823  
Martin Luther



- 1. May God bestow on us His grace,  
With blessings rich provide us,  
And may the brightness of His face  
To life eternal guide us  
That we His saving health may know,  
His gracious will and pleasure,  
And also to the heathen show  
Christ’s riches without measure  
And unto God convert them.
- 2. Thine over all shall be the praise  
And thanks of every nation,  
And all the world with joy shall raise  
The voice of exultation;  
For Thou shalt judge the earth, O Lord,  
Nor suffer sin to flourish;  
Thy people’s pasture is Thy Word  
Their souls to feed and nourish,  
In righteous paths to keep them.

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

**2** SAY 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.

**3** PRAY 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.

**4** PRAY THE 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.

# Around the Word Devotions + the week of February 4-10, 2024

## THEME OF THE WEEK: The Lord's Call to Faith in His Grace

Sexagesima may rightly be called the "Lutheran Week" of Pre-Lent. Our utter dependence on the Word of God, and the faith it creates, rightly divided as Law and Gospel, is forcefully central in the readings. For only by the work of the Holy Spirit creating and sustaining faith is the Word rightly received and believed. By faith we hear the Lord Jesus' call. Through Word and Sacrament, faith causes us to believe on Him and rejoice in grace. Each of the readings gives full glory to God for salvation, and so, thankfully, pries away futile faith in ourselves and places it in the pierced hands of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

SUN

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 8:4-15 Pure seed and fruits of faith

Jesus makes clear the Word alone is what calls people to faith and keeps them in it. We might feel like we were planted along the path, the rock, or in the brambles. We may question if "we're getting Christianity right," especially when other churches grow fast. But the Sower only casts pure seed: no coffee shops or fog machines. Circumstances cause us to question faith, but take heart, the Word itself can never fail. Where it is believed sincerely it will bear fruit. The enemies of the Word, sin, death, the devil are powerful-true enough-but the Lord has conquered them. He calls and prospers us through His Word, away from faith in ourselves and gimmicks, to a fruitful faith in Him. *Lord, sow richly in me Your pure Word alone and bear in me the fruits of faith. Amen.*

MON

### SCRIPTURE: Psalm 24 God bids us look upon Him in faith

This Psalm has been called "King David's Advent hymn." It reminded Old Testament Christians of God's promised Messiah. How is one readied to greet the coming of the King of glory, the Lord of hosts? Verses 3-6 call us to confess our sins, that with pure hearts and minds, God may come to meet us. David is pointing to what John has us do every Lord's day: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He is faithful to forgive for Jesus' sake and also gives us the very faith He requires. Those who seek the Lord are blessed with righteousness and shall see the face of God, yes, even look upon Him and live. *O Lord God, make me ready for Your coming by the righteousness of Your Christ. Amen.*

TUE

### SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 11:19-12:9 All by grace

St. Paul lists opposition to the Gospel, but includes a story of survival and a glimpse of heaven. If Paul were a salesman convincing people of the Gospel's marketability, he surely would have sold out. But what does Paul do? He gives ALL glory to God whether he was opposed or saw a glimpse of heaven, putting no stock in what he's seen and heard. He tells the Corinthians to abandon any lick of trust they might have in their own humility and experience, even in the church, and depend completely on the gospel of grace in Christ Jesus. And the famous verse 9? It's like God is saying, "Quit asking me! I alone know what's best for you: more grace!" *O, grant me grace in Christ to cling to You alone. Amen.*

WED

### SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 55:10-13 Faith is reliable

When I lived in Beijing the government would regularly 'cloud seed.' Causing it to rain was one way to improve air quality. If it worked (pomp and circumstance for science and the trustworthiness of the government) always meant to instill faith and bolster loyalty from the public. If it didn't? Not a peep, and the sky remained a lovely brownish-gray. Isaiah's preaching leaves no doubt about the reliability of God's Word; no ifs, ands, or buts. This is pure Gospel: The Word is efficacious whether we believe or not. But thanks be to God, saving faith is created where the Word is preached. There and there alone is sure, reliable joy and peace in Christ, God's promised salvation. *O Lord God, all creation praises Your great and saving Name for You have caused Your Word to go forth and save by faith. Amen.*

THU

### SCRIPTURE: Mark 4:26-32 The Word does it all

Here we are beautifully and gracefully robbed of our inclination to do something to cause God's kingdom to advance. God rules His kingdom with His Word alone, plants it, and harvests it, all by His gracious giving and completely apart from our finest know-how; our vast knowledge is nothing. What an incredible relief! God will handle the creation of faith, the sustaining and nurturing of faith, and the completion of faith all in Christ Jesus. We preach, teach, listen to Jesus, and rest assured God is accomplishing what He desires doing. He can do no wrong, even when it seems small. What rest, what burden lifted, what true and only cause for joy! *O Lord God, sow Your word and accomplish Your kingdom. Amen.*

FRI

### SCRIPTURE: 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5 Faith in God's provision

Life lived in the Word is unashamed. It is gentle when opposed, but uncompromising. Paul explains what earthly life lived with faith in forgiveness looks like: faithful husbands and wives, worshipping in spirit and in truth, all in good order for the sake of the family and the Holy Church. Christ has redeemed it all and calls it holy. It is good and, in faith, Christ bids you receive it all with thanksgiving. Godliness is granted AND you are enabled to endure false teaching when it comes. Make no apologies for the Gospel or the Law-they are God's good will, and He has promised to keep them good among you even when enemies attack. *O Lord God, let me receive every good gift from above. Amen.*

SAT

### SCRIPTURE: Psalm 25 Good and Upright is the LORD

Bringing sinners to repentance is what God does, it is who He is. For Christ's sake we are justified-declared righteous-but God doesn't stop there. He listens to our prayers, instructs us in His statutes, guards and protects us from all enemies. He keeps turning us back to Himself and this lifts up our souls. He desires nothing more than to be the God who creates, redeems, and sanctifies because He is steadfast love. If He kept a record of sins, if He remembered sin, none could stand. So, He doesn't. Your sins are not counted against you, but against His Son. He remembers you and sends you Jesus so that by faith in His word of pardon heaven is opened to you. *O Lord God, consider my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins. Amen.*

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