

## *Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!*

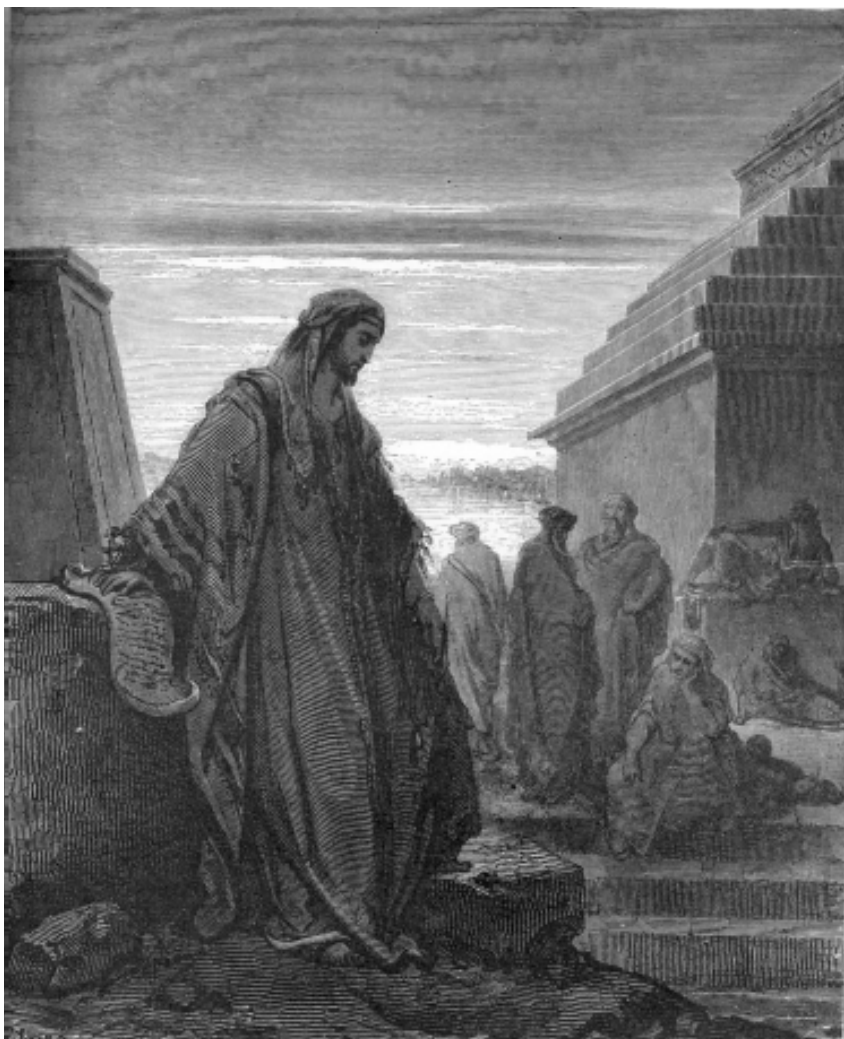


Illustration: Daniel

### A Devotional for the Week of the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

SUNDAY.

*Pray everywhere. – 1 Timothy 2:8.*

Yes, you may pray everywhere. Isaac had gone out to pray in the field at the eventide. (Genesis 24:63.) To publicly profess his faith, Daniel prayed at the open window of his house three times a day. (Daniel 6:10.) Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God, from out the fish's belly. (Jonah 2:1) Our Savior went up into a mountain apart to pray. (Matthew 14:23.) The first hundred and twenty disciples of Jesus continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. (Acts 1:14.) Paul and Silas prayed in prison at midnight. (Acts 16:25.)

You may pray everywhere. Only, "when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you," says the Savior, "they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:5-6.) Hence, your room is a good, a very good place for you to offer your daily prayer.

And when prayer is said in public worship or at family devotions, do not be inattentive or listless, but with all your heart join in the prayer, supplication, thanksgiving, and praise. There is a special promise attached to joint prayer. For Jesus says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:19-20.)

*PRAYER.* – Gracious God and father, wherever I may be, You are with me, and Your eye, O Father, sees me, and Your ear is inclined to hear what Your child desires of You. Should I then be mute, and should my heart be closed against You? Should I not speak to You and call on You as a little child speaks to its mother,

asking her for this thing and for that? O Heavenly father, who kindly does bow down to me, give me Your Holy Spirit, that in true childlike fashion I may lift up my heart to You through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn 42, 3.

Abide with me from morn till eve,  
For without Thee I cannot live;  
Abide with me when night is nigh,  
For without Thee I dare not die.

MONDAY.

*Pray without ceasing. – 1 Thessalonians 5:17.*

Scoffers would have this text say that Christians should do nothing but pray all the time. But let us tell you what is meant. When a little child is with its mother, and plays or learns its lesson, or does this or that, does it not always speak with its mother at the same time? Is its little mouth ever long silent? And are there not many things it asks for? Do you now understand what it means to "pray without ceasing"? Wherever a Christian, a child of God, may be, and whatever he may do, he always knows that he is with his God, and that his God is with him. And so his heart is ever with God, and he has something to say to God all the time or some complaint or some petition to bring before Him, or to give thanks for something. And so our kind and loving God would have us do. "Pray without ceasing."

– But a Christian must also have stated hours of the day for his daily prayers. He should say his morning and his evening prayer. He should say grace before and after meal. And once a day, at the very least, he should have private devotions, that is to say, he should read the Bible with devout attention, adding a prayer, or, perchance, a

hymn. For should a Christian merely desire to partake of bodily food and not of spiritual food as well, every day?

In every Christian household the father or the mother should see to it that family devotions are held every day. These devotions should be short and good, lest, on account of our sinful flesh, we be filled with tedium and disgust. But especially, my dear Christian, when cross and tribulation afflict you, remember the text: "Lord, in trouble have they visited You; they have poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them." – Isaiah 26:16.

*PRAYER.* – Lord God, my dearly beloved Father through Jesus Christ, my Savior, give to me, I implore You, Your Holy Spirit, that I may pray to You without ceasing as it becomes me, You beloved child. Grant me grace to nourish my poor, weak, and sinful soul with Your Word every day, that it may be kept unto eternal life, and that in this present life it may grow and wax strong in the fear and love of You. Amen.

Hymn 40, 6. 7.

I need Thy presence every passing hour:  
What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?  
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me!

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:  
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness,  
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me?

TUESDAY.

*Our Father who art in heaven. – Matthew 6:9.*

The Lord's Prayer is the best prayer there is, for it has been taught us by Jesus Himself. And Christ instructs us to address God by the name "Father": "Our Father who art in heaven." And what Jesus teaches God teaches. And 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. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!" (1 John 3:1.) The Father did this through Jesus Christ and for the sake of Jesus Christ, who is our Atoner. And He has given us poor sinners His Holy Spirit, who draws us to Him. And we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, as though we were still under the Law that damns us, but we have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry: "Abba, Father!" (Romans 8:1.)

Now what more do you want, or what more do you wait for, seeing that the most holy God Himself, the entire blessed Trinity, is so lovingly condescending to you, inviting and entreating you to pray? God desires to be your dear Father, and you are to be His dear child, and you must rely on Him and ask Him for all things.

Now, do not hesitate! Fall to! Take freely! Be not timid! God knows that you are a sinner. And still He would have you call Him Father. So, then, be His child! And if you lack many a thing that a child of God ought to have, then do not stand back shyly on that account, but hasten to your heavenly Father, and ask Him to give it to you. With your own power, to be sure, you can never acquire it. God must give it, and He will give it.

*PRAYER.* – O God, how gracious You are! You will be my dear Father, and I am to be Your dear child. And with all boldness and confidence I am to ask You for everything. So, here I am, O Lord! But always encourage me again, dear Lord, that I may ask You for every truly good thing in the name of Jesus Christ. Always draw me into Your fatherly embrace through Thy Holy Ghost! Amen.

Hymn 396, 1.

OUR Father, Thou in heaven above,  
Who biddest us to dwell in love,  
As brothers of one family,  
And cry for all we need to Thee: –  
Teach us to mean the words we say,  
And from the inmost heart to pray.

WEDNESDAY.

*Hallowed be Thy name. – Matthew 6:9.*

This is the first petition which we are to make. We should pray that God's name be hallowed among us. What name of God? Why, the name "Father." We should beg God to grant us grace to prize it as a sacred and as the very greatest boon there can be that God desires to be our loving Father, and that we may so address Him. We should pray God to write this name Father into our hearts with the fire of His Holy Ghost, so that this blessed truth may ever burn and glow in our hearts: God is my Father! God does this through His Word, His Word of Grace.

Therefore we should pray that the Word of God may be taught among us in its truth and purity. We should furthermore pray God to grant us His Holy Spirit, that we may be sincerely glad and rejoice and be grateful for the fact that we are His children, and that as the children of God we may also lead a holy life according to His Word. May God preserve us from false doctrine, which keeps us from learning to truly know God in His great mercy, and, consequently, from having childlike confidence in God! May God preserve us from leading an ungodly life, from leading a life unbecoming a child of God! By false doctrine and an ungodly life the name of God is profaned. "Hallowed be Thy name!"

This is and must be the First Petition. God comes to meet us poor sinners in Christ Jesus through His Word and Holy Spirit, and says: I wish to be, and desire to be called, your Father. Then each of us should answer above all things and pray: "Hallowed be Thy name!" Ah, yes, Lord, let me learn to know this, let me comprehend it, let me live and die trusting in this saying truth, that You are my Father, and that I am Your child!

*PRAYER.* – Lord God, our Father in heaven, we, Your children, who still are so weak and diffident, implore You to grant us Your grace, that Your ineffably sweet name may be hallowed among us, not only with our hearts, but in all that we say or do. Grant us Your Word in its truth and purity, that the light of Your great mercy may shine ever brighter on us. Graciously guard us against every false doctrine whereby Your name is profaned and desecrated, and all ungodly life whereby Your name is disgraced. Amen.

Hymn 396, 2.

Thy name be hallowed! help us, Lord,  
To keep in purity Thy Word,  
And lead according to Thy name  
A holy life, untouched by blame;  
Let no false teachings do us hurt,  
All poor deluded souls convert.

THURSDAY.

*Thy kingdom come! – Matthew 6:10.*

Not the Kingdom of Power is meant, for that comprises all creatures in heaven, earth, and hell. The Kingdom of Grace is meant, and the Kingdom of Glory. That the confines of the Kingdom of

Grace may include us, too, that the glory of the Kingdom of Glory may adorn and bless us also, this is what we pray in this Second Petition.

This should be our greatest concern and our most earnest prayer, that, while we live in this world, we may belong to the Zion of God, to the flock of Christ, to the one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, to the true Christendom which He who once was crowned with thorns, but now is crowned with glory, rules with His grace and with His Word of Grace, and the citizens of which are made most willing by the Holy Ghost to kiss His scepter; and we pray that when our earthly life is ended, the angels may carry us where we shall see our Savior's glory and partake of it, and where we shall bask in continuous and unending glory. This will be done when our heavenly Father will give us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word, and lead a godly life, here in time and hereafter in eternity.

We also pray that the Holy Ghost may dwell within us constantly, that we may abide steadfast in the true faith and in a holy life, in the fear and love of God, until we shall reach the goal where all the blessed perfections of eternity will adorn and surround us, and be our portion and possession within and without.

But we also pray that the Kingdom of Grace may be spread more and more here on earth, and that ever more souls may partake of the blessings of the Kingdom of Glory, and that it may appear soon, yes, soon.

*PRAYER.* – Lord God, dear Heavenly Father, I beg You, keep me in the Kingdom of Grace of Your dear Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, through faith in Him, and finally receive me into His blessed Kingdom of Glory. Bring also the wayward and the benighted, and the captives of Satan to the knowledge of true faith in Christ, complete the number of Your elect, and let the Kingdom of Glory dawn soon. Amen.

Hymn 396, 3..

Thy kingdom come! Thine let it be  
In time, and through eternity!  
O let Thy Holy Spirit dwell  
With us, to rule and guide us well;  
From Satan's mighty power and rage  
Preserve Thy Church from age to age.

FRIDAY.

*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. – Matthew 6:10.*

God's will toward us is a good and gracious will. God wants us to be His dear children and to obtain life everlasting. He wants us to live in His kingdom here in time and thereafter in eternity, and therefore to embrace Christ in true faith. Against this good and gracious will the evil counsel and will of the devil, the world, and our flesh rises in revolt. This evil counsel and will does not want us to hallow God's name, nor does it want to let God's kingdom come.

We should therefore cry and pray: Thy will be done on earth, O Lord, as it is in heaven! In heaven no evil will revolts against God's good will. Hence we pray in this petition that God would break and hinder every evil counsel and will, and strengthen us and preserve us steadfast in His Word and in true faith unto our end. We implore the almighty and faithful God and Father to come to our aid and oppose the devil, the world, and our flesh for us, so that despite their enmity we may remain His children and obtain eternal salvation.

How necessary is this petition! And God will grant it, most assuredly. He has promised to strengthen and preserve us steadfast in His Word and in true faith to our end. He has said to us: " Ye are kept

by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (1 Peter 1:5.) And what is more, He has Himself commanded us to pray thus.

– My dear Christian, when viewing the matter rightly, you must realize that your most dangerous enemy is your own depraved flesh. And when God breaks and hinders its evil counsel and will, it will hurt you, and you will be in tribulation. But be joyful then and patient, knowing that God is fulfilling His good and gracious will in you; and say: "Thy will be done."

*PRAYER.* – Dear Heavenly Father, faithful God, I pray You, by all means accomplish Your good and gracious will in me, and break and hinder the evil and contrary will of the devil, the world, and my own flesh. And give me, O Father, Your Holy Spirit, that at all times I may resign myself to this, Your will, that in all eternity I may praise and glorify You, O Father, for Your great faithfulness. Amen.

Hymn 396, 4.

Thy will be done on earth, O Lord,  
As where in heaven Thou art adored!  
Patience in time of grief bestow,  
Obedience in weal and woe;  
Our sinful flesh and blood control  
That thwart Thy will within the soul.

SATURDAY.

*Give us this day our daily bread. – Matthew 6:11.*

How tenderly mindful our heavenly Father is even of our poor body and its wants and needs! His Son, our dear Savior, bids us pray: "Give us this day our daily bread." By "daily bread" everything

is meant that belongs to the support and wants of the body. Hence God will give us this if we ask Him in the name of Jesus. Therefore we should not worry, as, alas! we are very prone to do, but we should pray. And we should pray for what we need each day, "this day"; we should not be uneasy about to-morrow.

We should become as little children. Do little children worry about their food and raiment? Do they not rather ask their parents for what they need? And have you ever heard a child say: Mother, give me something to eat to-morrow? Does a child trouble itself about to-morrow? O let us be artless children of God ! But remember, my dear Christian, that your Savior does not bid you ask for great abundance or for dainties, but for plain daily bread. This He promises to give you.

And if the thought occurs to you that even to the wicked, who never pray, God gives, not daily bread alone, but even riches and abundance, then note two things. In the first place, as a child of God, you surely wish to receive your daily bread from the hand of God with prayer and thanksgiving. And besides, may the wicked depend upon it that God will at all times give them their daily bread? By no means. But you may. Hence pray with a childlike heart: "Give us this day our daily bread." And share your bread with your needy neighbor.

*PRAYER.* – Dear Heavenly Father, give me Your Holy Spirit, that it may be my sole concern to be and remain Your dear child. Then let me diligently perform my duty as required by my calling and station, wherein You have placed me, and let me always look for my daily bread from Your fatherly goodness, in no wise burdening my heart with heathenish cares; for You are my dear Father, through Jesus Christ, my Savior. Amen.

Hymn 396, 5.

Give us this day our daily bread  
And all that for this life we need;

From war and strife be our Defence,  
From famine and from pestilence,  
That we may live in godly peace,  
Unvexed by cares and avarice.

These devotions are adapted from *Crumbs* by C. M. Zorn (1914).  
The hymn stanzas are from *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1918).  
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