

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!

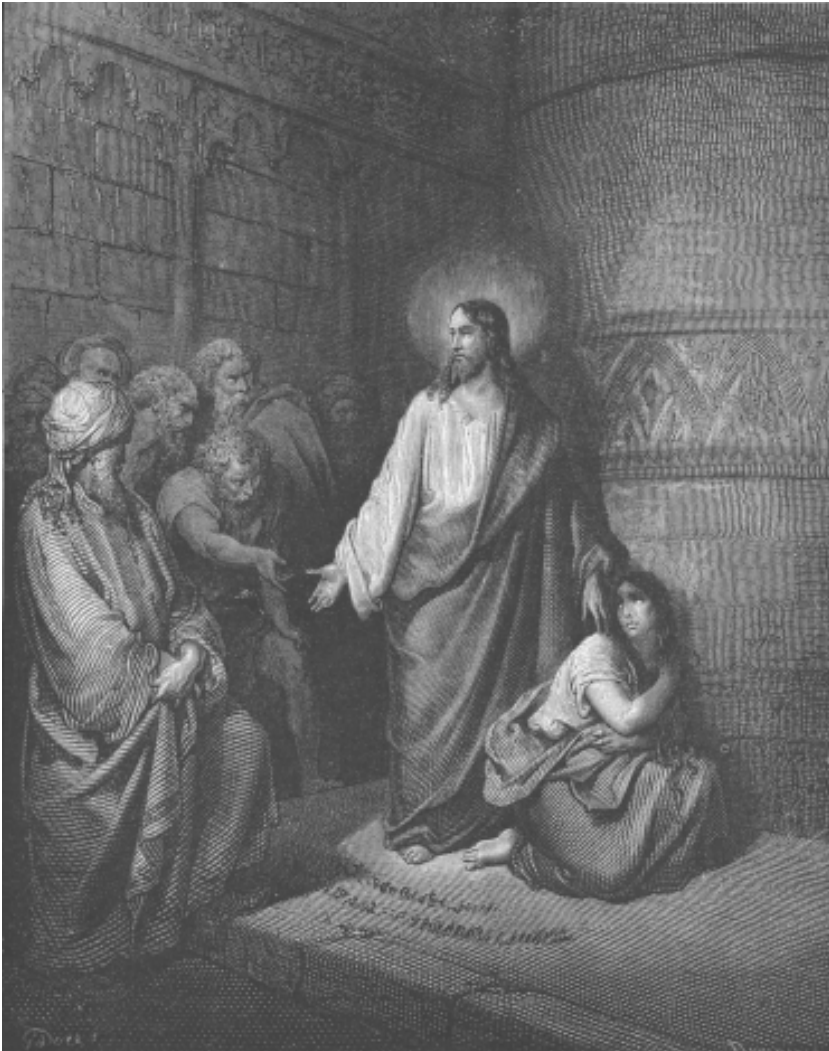


Illustration: Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery

A Devotional for the Week of the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

SUNDAY.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

– *Matthew 6:12.*

We daily sin much. This, surely, is certain. And we deserve nothing but punishment. And we do not deserve that God should accept and hear our prayers and petitions. But the Son of God, our merciful High Priest, who has atoned for our sin and guilt, bids us, after the manner of children, to go to our heavenly Father every day and pray: "Forgive us our trespasses." And our heavenly Father most assuredly forgives us, and does so with great loving-kindness. And He does not regard our sins, and does not charge them to us, and does not on their account deny our prayer, but graciously gives us all manner of good things.

And then our Savior teaches us to promise and to vow that we will also forgive those who trespass against us. If our heavenly Father daily and richly forgives us all our sins, and bestows all manner of blessings upon us, then, surely, we should also heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us. The knowledge of, and faith in, the grace of God, which makes new creatures of us, naturally effects this in us.

He that will not forgive his neighbor does not truly know and trust in the grace of God, or has wasted it, as it were, and forgotten it. Such a one cannot obtain forgiveness of God. And if, nevertheless, he prays the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, he thereby invokes upon himself the wrath of God. For the Fifth Petition reads: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

PRAYER. – Dear Heavenly Father, I pray, for Jesus Christ's sake and at His bidding, that You would not look upon my sins, nor on their account deny my prayer which I offer to You. To be sure, I am worthy of none of the things for which I pray, nor have I deserved them; for I daily sin much, and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. But graciously grant them all to me nevertheless. So

will I also heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against me, a poor sinner. So help me by the grace of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn 396, 6.

Lord, all our trespasses forgive,
That they our hearts no more may grieve,
As we forgive their trespasses
Who unto us have done amiss;
Thus let us dwell in charity,
And serve each other willingly.

MONDAY.

And lead us not into temptation. – Matthew 6:13.

There are two kinds of temptation, temptation for good and temptation for evil. Temptation for good is sent by God; temptation for evil comes from the devil, the world, and our flesh.

Temptation for good consists in this, that God tries His children in order to purify and strengthen their faith. Thus God tempted Abraham (Genesis 22:1-19), and thus Jesus tempted the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:25-30).

Temptation for evil consists in this, that the devil, the world, and our flesh would deceive or seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Thus the devil tempted Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-6), our Savior (Matthew 4:1-11), and Judas Iscariot (John 13:2). Through such temptation Cain and Judas fell into despair (Genesis 4:13; Matthew 27:4-5), and Peter into the grievous sin of denying his Lord (Luke 22:54-60).

What, now, should be our meaning when we say to our heavenly Father: "Lead us not into temptation"? We should then mean and pray that God would so guard and keep us that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into false faith, or into despair, or into great shame and vice, and that, though

we be sorely tempted, we may finally overcome and obtain the victory. And if we pray thus, we shall surely be heard. Hence this petition is for us a powerful and victorious shield and weapon in this poor life, which is so full of temptation.

PRAYER. – Dear Heavenly Father, I cannot in any way, by any power of mine, withstand the temptations with which I am assailed by the devil, the world, and my own depraved flesh. Very soon I am lost. but in the name of Your dear Son, my Savior, I cry to You, that You would guard and keep me in all temptation. And thus, by Thy grace, I am confident that I shall finally overcome, obtain the victory, and through true faith enter eternal life. Amen.

Hymn 396, 7.

Into temptation lead us not;
And when the Foe doth war and plot
Against our souls on every hand,
Then armed with faith, O may we stand
Against him as a valiant host,
Through comfort of the Holy Ghost.

TUESDAY.

But deliver us from evil. – Matthew 6:13.

Do you find it easy to bear cross and tribulation? Probably not. Cross and tribulation smarts. We groan beneath it. It seems to us to be an evil; and in itself it is an evil with which we are visited because of sin. And now our dear Savior Jesus Christ comes and bids us pray: "Deliver us from evil."

The meaning of the petition is this: First, we should pray that God would keep many evils of body and soul, property and honor aloof from us, though we have well deserved them. Oh, and He does it! Secondly, we should pray that by His Holy Spirit God would help

us to bear the cross which He imposes upon us for our benefit gladly and cheerfully, and that He would temper it, and soon take it from us, if such be His holy will. And, lastly, we should pray that finally, when our last hour has come, God would grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven. "There'll be no cross, no smarting, no death, no bitter parting." There we shall be fully delivered from every evil.

Thus fortify yourself with this petition, my dear Christian, against every trouble, against the devil, against every evil, against tribulation, against alarm and disgrace, against sadness, woe, and lamentation, against sickness, pain, dismay, against dejection, care, and trepidation, against every evil day. And may the Father's gracious acceptance of your prayer always cast a comforting light on your path, until the blessed light of heaven shall dawn on you.

PRAYER. – So then, O my Heavenly Father, deliver me from every evil, for Jesus' sake! Give me Your Holy Spirit, that I may know with the utmost certainty that every cross with which You do still afflict me is not an evil, but an eternal blessing, and grant me grace to bear it patiently. Ah, my God, in fatherly goodness have compassion on Your frail child, and deal mercifully with me! And lastly, O my Father, take me far, far away from every evil, into Your blessed mansions. Amen.

Hymn 396, 8.

From evil, Lord, deliver us!
The times and days are perilous;
Redeem us from eternal death;
And when we yield our dying breath,
Console us, grant us calm release,
And take our souls to Thee in peace.

WEDNESDAY.

*For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen. – Matthew 6:13.*

This is the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer. By adding these words we should mean to say to God in childlike simplicity that, being the Lord and King of the kingdom in, which we have obtained citizenship, it is He alone with whom we should seek help: that He alone has the power to grant our petitions; and that, likewise, all glory, honor, and praise accruing therefrom shall be His alone. And then we should say: Amen.

And this Amen we must not attach to the end of our prayer by force of habit, thoughtlessly, but it must be a conscious, strong, firm, believing Amen. For what is meant by the word "Amen"? Amen means: "Yes. yes, it shall be so." We should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven, and heard; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised to hear us. God says Amen to such petitions, and so we, too, should rejoice in faith and confidently say: Amen, Amen: yes, yes it shall be so.

– Dear Christian, study the Lord's Prayer, and learn and consider what God bids you to pray therein, and what He thus promises to give you. You will find therein an abundance of gifts for which you may ask, and which God will give to you, and which will make you truly happy and blissful in time and eternity. The Lord's Prayer is an open storehouse, full of treasures, and God shows you the treasures and says: Ask Me for them, and I will surely give them to you. There open wide your eyes, your heart, and your lips, and ask, and believe, and say: Amen, these treasures are mine! Amen.

PRAYER. – My dear Heavenly Father, I, a poor sinner, thank You through Jesus Christ, my Savior, that I may so address You. Write this Your name Father into my heart by Your Word and Your Spirit. Let me be in Your kingdom, here in time and hereafter in eternity. This is Your gracious and good will ; let this will be done in me. Also give me my morsel of bread. And graciously forgive all my sins, and grant me grace to gladly forgive those who sin against me. And let me not fall into temptation. And deliver me from evil at all times, and finally from each and every evil. Amen, my Father, You will surely do this. Amen.

Hymn 396, 9.

Amen! that is, So let it be!
Confirm our faith continually,
That we may doubt not, but believe
That what we ask we shall receive;
Thus in Thy name and at Thy word
We say: Amen; O hear us, Lord!

THURSDAY.

It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. – Romans 1:16.

Our Lord Jesus Christ by His holy, precious blood has purchased for us forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, and also the Holy Ghost to kindle faith in us. These treasures of His grace He has laid down in the *Gospel*; and through it they are given to us. Thus the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. And thus the Gospel is a *Means of Grace*, a means through which God gives us all His grace. And through faith, which God engenders through the Gospel, we enter upon the possession of the treasures of His grace which the Gospel contains. Thus the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

– As a treasure casket may contain three compartments filled with treasures, just so the Gospel has three parts by means of each of which the same gifts of grace are bestowed upon us. These three parts are the *Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper*. And so we may say that there are three Means of Grace. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are called *Sacraments*, or sacred acts. For Baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacred acts ordained by God, wherein, by certain external means connected with His Word, He offers, conveys, and seals unto men the grace which Christ has merited. The external means connected with God's Word in Baptism is water; in the Lord's Supper it is bread and wine.

Through these visible signs the Sacraments make it very plain and visible for you that God bestows on you, even on you, His grace, that is, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, and also the Holy Ghost. How lovingly concerned God is about us, and how much does He do to firmly convince us that He truly and actually bestows His grace upon us! Therefore, we should indeed freely take of it, and rejoicing in faith, we should thank Him with heart and word and deed.

PRAYER. – I thank You, my God, for Your Holy Gospel, through which You do reveal, give, and convey to me the saving grace which Christ has procured for me. And I thank You for Your holy Sacraments, through which You do deal with me in particular, and do seal to me Your grace by means of visible signs. I pray You, my gracious God, thus to make me firm and glad in faith, and altogether sure of Your grace. Amen.

Hymn 436, 6.

Lord, I believe in simple trust,
Strength in my weakness give me,
For I am naught but sinful dust,
Nor of Thy Word bereave me!
Thy Baptism, Supper, and Thy Word,
My consolation are, O Lord,
For they contain my treasure.

FRIDAY.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

– *Matthew 28:19.*

Hymn 403, 1. 2.

To baptize means to wash, to wash with water. But Christian Baptism is "the washing of water by the Word." (Ephesians 5:26.) Dr. Luther therefore says: "Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word." Christian Baptism has not been ordained by man, but by God. God has instituted it, God has commanded it. It is the water comprehended in God's command. The Lord said to His disciples: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them." And God has united His Word with the water of Baptism. It is water connected with God's Word. The Lord said: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." This Word shows what Baptism really is.

We lost and condemned sinners are baptized, or washed and bathed, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. We are washed and bathed in what the Triune God reveals that He has done for us. We are washed and bathed in the grace and love of the Father, who for Christ's sake receives us as His children. We are washed and bathed in the bloody merit of the Son, who has made us righteous and good in the sight of God. We are washed and bathed in the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, which kindles faith in us and makes new creatures of us. Thus Baptism brings us into the gracious communion of the Triune God.

– O Christian, you are baptized! Thank God for the wondrous grace, of which He has made you a partaker through this holy Sacrament!

PRAYER. – I thank You, Lord, Triune God, that You have delivered me from the power of darkness, and have translated me into Your Kingdom of Grace, and have made me a partaker of Your grace. Grant, O Lord, that to my dying hour, in true faith, I may comfort myself with this holy Sacrament, and thus obtain salvation. Amen.

NOW Christ, the very Son of God,
On sinners sends another flood;
It is the water which the Lord
Has comprehended in the Word.

This flood, to cleanse sin's leprosy,
Mere earthly water cannot be;
But water and God's gracious Word
Conjoined, this saving bath afford.

SATURDAY.

The washing of water by the Word. – Ephesians 5:26.

What does Baptism, the washing of water by the Word, give or profit?

– Just because it is the washing of water by the Word, it has a great and mighty power. It gives forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, and the Holy Ghost to kindle faith in us. Or, as Dr. Luther expresses it, "it works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare." And now let us show you such words and promises of God through which Baptism receives its great and mighty power.

The Spirit of God says: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." (Ephesians 5:25-26.) And: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38.) And: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." (Acts 22:16.) You see that Baptism works forgiveness of sins.

And Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) And the Apostle, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, speaks thus of Baptism: "Baptism doth also now save us." (1 Peter 3:20-21.) You see that Baptism gives eternal salvation.

And the Apostle writes by the Holy Ghost: "But after that the kindness and love of God, our Savior, toward man appeared, not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:4-7.) Here you see that Baptism saves us, and gives us the Holy Ghost to regenerate and renew us through faith, that we should be righteous before God and heirs of eternal life.

Take, therefore. O Christian, take the gifts of grace which God has given you through Baptism! Take them and keep them securely through the grace of the Holy Ghost, who likewise is given to you through Baptism.

PRAYER. – Help me, O God, help me that in true faith I may securely hold the great and saving treasures which You have given me through Baptism! Help me to do this through Your Holy Spirit, whom You have poured out abundantly in Baptism. Help me to nevermore lose forgiveness of sins and life eternal which You have given to me! Amen.

Hymn 400, 1. 2.

BAPTIZED into Thy name most holy,
O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
I claim a place, though weak and lowly,
Among Thy seed, Thy chosen host;
Buried with Christ, and dead to sin,
Thy Spirit now shall live within.

My loving Father, Thou dost take me
To be henceforth Thy child and heir;
My faithful Savior, Thou dost make me
The fruit of all Thy sorrows share,
Thou, Holy Ghost, wilt comfort me,
When darkest clouds around I see.

These devotions are adapted from *Crumbs* by C. M. Zorn (1914).
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