

Week 2

Luther's Evening Prayer

Arr. John A. Behnke

Oct. 4

I thank you, my heav'n-ly Father, through Jesus Christ,
Your dear Son, That You have kept me this day,
I pray that you for-give me for all the wrong
That I have done this day. For in-to Your hands
I commend my-self, my bo-dy and soul and all things.
Let You ho-ly angel be with me, that the e-vil foe
may have no pow-er ov-er me.

I thank you, my heav'n-ly Father, through Jesus Christ,
Your dear Son, That You have kept me this day,
I pray that you for-give me for all the wrong
That I have done this day. Keep me this night. Amen

There are many resources on prayer ~ too many to print here. Links are available on www.peacelutheranatl.org. A guide to prayer is also available in Luther's Small Catechism.

From the Small Catechism ~ How the head of the family should teach his household to pray morning and evening.

In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:

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.

Then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn, like that of the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion may suggest.

In the evening when you go to bed, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:

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.

Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer.

Questions:

1. Why is it important for the head of the family to teach the household to pray?
2. Tell briefly how each of the following relate to the everyday life of the believer.
 - A. Making the sign of the cross
 - B. Saying, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
 - C. Repeating the Lord's Prayer
3. Luther designed his Morning and Evening Prayers to open and close each day in close communication with our Father in heaven. How are the Morning and Evening prayers alike and different?

Joy

Our loving heavenly Father invites us to communicate with Him constantly. 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 records, "Pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Read Acts 16:25-34 these verses tell of a time when Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi for preaching the Gospel.

1. After talking to God the Father at the beginning and closing of the day, Luther suggests that the child of God can know joy and good cheer.

What evidence do we have that Paul and Silas knew joy because of God's love for them in Christ Jesus, even at the end of a day during which they had been arrested, flogged, and shackled (v. 25)?
2. What two opportunities did God give Paul and Silas to share their faith with unbelievers?
3. Under what circumstances might morning and evening prayers provide you with an opportunity to share your faith with others?
4. Identify the person experiencing joy and the source of joy during the early morning hours. (v. 34)
5. Relate the spiritual leadership of the jailer to that of the heads of all Christian families.

*Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail.
They are new every morning. Lamentations 3:22-23a*

Answers

1. God invites believers in Jesus to pray. Prayer is simply speaking to God in words and thoughts. God wants us to pray to Him in confidence and without fear because He loves us. The Head of the Household cares about the spiritual wellbeing of their family and wants them to know the one who created them, redeemed them, and keeps them in the faith. By teaching them to pray, the family will be going to the one who can help them in all things.

2. a. In the Baptism Liturgy the pastor makes the sign of the cross *“both upon the forehead and upon the heart”* to mark the candidate for Baptism as *“one redeemed by Christ the crucified.”* Hence the sign of the cross is a way of remembering one’s Baptism into Christ the crucified and the blessings that come through Him (Romans 6)

B. Jesus instructs us to baptize in the “Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” By saying these words, we remember our baptism and the work of the Triune God in our lives. God the Father created us for His purposes, sustains us and guards and protects us from all evil. God the Son redeems us through His dying on the cross for the punishment of our sins. God the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of our faith, sustains us in that faith, and helps us live out our faith.

C. It is good to say the Lord’s prayer because it is the prayer that Jesus teaches us to pray. We should pray regularly and frequently, especially I times of trouble. We should pray for ourselves and for all other people both for spiritual and bodily blessings. We should also praise and thank God for who He is and what He has done. In the Lord’s Prayer, God is giving us the words that we can say so that we don’t have to struggle in figuring out what we should say. We also end our prayers with Amen knowing that God will hear them and answer them as He has promised.

3. Scripture teach us to bring our needs to the Father in Christ’s name. Luther models this in both the morning and evening prayers with the opening sentence of “I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son.” Both prayers discuss God’s protection from sin and evil. The morning prayer asks God to help keep us from sinning by helping us seek God’s will and live a life pleasing to Him. The evening prayer asks God to forgive us for the times that day when we failed to seek His will and we sinned against Him and our neighbors. Both prayers encourage us to place our whole being into God’s care and protection and calls upon His holy angels to be with us so that Satan and his demons have no power over us.

Joy Answers

1. Paul and Silas even when they were in jail were worshipping and praising God. Their peace and joy were found not in this world but in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Even in suffering they can know joy because their sins are forgiven and they have the promise of eternal life.

2. Paul and Silas shared their faith with the other prisoners who heard their worship and with the jailer and his family. Through the preaching of the Word and the Sacrament of Baptism the message of salvation was brought to many people that night.

3. Our actions can be a witness to those around us.

4. The jailer. The Lord Jesus had turned the mans suicidal fear (having all his prisoners escape and have to take their punishment) to joy!

5. Like the jailer, the head of the household wants their family to know the Joy that is found in Jesus. The Head of the household would care for their families needs and be concerned for their spiritual welfare. They look for ways to help them grow in their relationship with God.