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Zion Lutheran Church – Kimball, NE

Lent V–Midweek (members of Immanuel Burns, St. John’s Kimball, Grace Pine Bluffs present)

March 24, 2021

Text: Lord’s Prayer; SC III, 6<sup>th</sup> Petition & Conclusion

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We have finally come to the end of our sermonic journey through the various petitions of the Lord’s Prayer and the Small Catechism’s explanations. My prayer and hope has been that all of you would be encouraged and strengthened in your prayer life. There is no greater work given to us as God’s children than to enter into the Father’s holy presence to bring our petitions and intercession before Him. The apostle Peter encouraged the Christians of His day, Christians who were suffering for their faith in Jesus, when he wrote:

“...<sup>5</sup>you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (I Peter 2:5, 9).

Through your baptism in Christ, you have been born again into the holy priesthood of the redeemed. Your spiritual sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving are acceptable to the Father. By the anointing of the Holy Spirit, all of you are brought into the royal priesthood that proclaims the excellencies of Christ who called you out of the darkness of the devil’s domain into the glorious liberty of the Father’s kingdom. Your intercessions are the bulwark that stops the devil’s rampage against Christ’s Church, the homes and families of the world, and the entire civic sphere; the three estates I introduced a couple of weeks ago (the church, the home, the civic estates).

It is no small gift that we Christians give to the world in our prayers and intercessions whether they be prayed at home, in private, or in public during our worship services. The world takes no note of our prayers. But God the Father does. He works through our prayers to accomplish His good purposes.

The devil and his evil horde despise and fear your prayers. He works to hinder them, to stop them outright through temptations to sin, by defiling your conscience with

your sins and the sins of others, and through the sloth and indolence of our sinful flesh which do not want to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come.

All of this emphasizes the importance of the 6<sup>th</sup> Petition of the Lord's Prayer which we are highlighting tonight. We can rightly say that in the 6<sup>th</sup> Petition "the entire substance of all our prayer is directed against our chief enemy (the devil). For it is he who hinders among us everything that we pray for: God's name or honor, God's kingdom and will, our daily bread, a cheerful conscience, and so forth" (LC III:113).

The 6<sup>th</sup> Petition of the Lord's Prayer is, "But deliver us from evil."

The Catechism question is "What does this mean?"

Answer: "We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven."

We pray this petition, the entire Lord's Prayer, and every prayer that arises from our hearts to the Father in heaven seeking His deliverance and rescue "from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation." The Father Himself is our only salvation. He is our deliverance from evil and the evil one, the devil. We cannot stand against evil in our strength; that would be folly. Instead, we look to the Lord who is our strength and shield, our very present help in the day of trouble. The devil seeks to destroy and corrupt everything good and worthy. We recognize that without the Father's protection, we would not be able to eat a single meal in peace. Our families and our country would be destroyed. Suffering and misery would be the common, everyday experience of every human being. Without the Father answering our prayers and delivering us from the evil of the evil one, there would be no Christian Church, no gospel, no proclamation of forgiveness preached or heard, no sacraments, no hope of the resurrection unto eternal life.

But we have the sure and certain confidence that our Father hears our prayer especially the Lord's Prayer for it is the prayer given to us by His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus. He is the foundation and certainty of our life and salvation from evil. Good Friday and Easter signal to all heaven and earth that the problem of sin and death is resolved. The apostle Paul wrote to the Roman Christians in Romans 8:1–2, "1There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

The Holy Spirit has released us from sin and death through Christ Jesus. When we pray the 6<sup>th</sup> petition, we are asking that our Father keep us safe and secure in the loving hands of Jesus as we journey through this valley of the shadow of death. And when physical death comes to us, that He would give us a blessed end, meaning a blessed death.

For Christians, a blessed death is not what we typically what people imagine. You know, going to bed at night and dying in peaceful sleep. There's nothing wrong with that. But an unbeliever can experience that kind of physical death, but his death is not blessed. No, a blessed death is one in which the person is a believer in Christ Jesus. When the believer dies, by whatever means physical death comes to him, he or she is taken immediately into the presence of Jesus. According to the psalmist in Psalm 116:15 and the apostle John in Revelation 14:13, precious and blessed is the death of every Christian believer. Everyday we are praying for the Lord's protection through every twist and turn of this earthly life as well as asking for a death that ushers us into Christ's loving presence. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we confess boldly and courageously that we need not fear death. Christ Jesus came to this earth to save sinners and to destroy him who has the power of death, the evil one, the devil (Heb. 2:14). To pray "but deliver us from evil" is to believe that Christ is risen from the dead and will return on the Last Day to take us to Himself in heaven.

Now we come to the Conclusion to the Lord's Prayer, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen."

The Catechism question is "What does this mean?"

Answer: "This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen means 'yes, yes, it shall be so.'"

Throughout the Bible we see this pattern of closing prayers, psalms, and thanksgivings with words of doxology and praise. For example, after David collected offerings for the construction of the Temple, he offered these words of thanksgiving and worship in I Chronicles 29:10–13. Listen to the similar language found in the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer:

<sup>10</sup>Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and

ever. <sup>11</sup>Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup>Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. <sup>13</sup>And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.

It is with joyful, heartfelt devotion we bring the Lord's Prayer to a conclusion. The kingdom, the power, and the glory are truly possessions belonging to our God and King. Each of the petitions serves the advancement of His eternal kingdom. God the Father is all-powerful and mighty. He has more than enough strength and wisdom to answer them even more abundantly than we could possibly imagine. His glory and majesty saturate the heaven and earth. It is most fitting that we who are created in His image and renewed after the likeness of Christ lead all creation in declaring God's glory.

The last word of the Lord's Prayer is "amen", that great word of faith. Amen doesn't mean the prayer is over though it typically comes at the end of prayers. Rather, it says we believe the prayer has been heard and will be answered as the Father has promised.

And so we come full circle to where we began over a month ago. The confidence and certainty of our prayer rests upon these things: 1) God has commanded us to pray, 2) He has promised to hear and answer our prayers, and 3) Christ Himself has given us the perfect prayer that we are to pray day by day until He brings us to Himself in heaven. But I have been holding out on you. There is a fourth factor that emboldens and strengthens our prayer. For not only has God commanded us to pray, promised to hear us, and provided us with the perfect prayer, but the Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Person of the Trinity, intercedes with us and for as we pray to the Father. Listen to these most encouraging words from Romans 8:26–27, 34:

<sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Dear saints of God, I rejoice and thanks for you all when I remember you in my prayers. For I know that God works through you as His royal priesthood. You are more precious than all the combined wealth of the world. The Lord bless you and strengthen you as you continue to serve one another in love through prayer to the glory of our heavenly Father.

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

Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.