

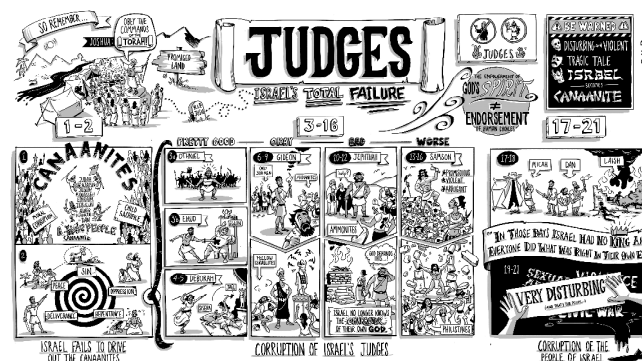


The Congregation at Prayer

The Whole Story

2025

A Daily Devotional
St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



Week #23-The Whole Story

Wee of Pentecost

June 8-June 15, 2025

Start Every Day

"In the Name of the Father, and + of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen"

recite **APOSTLE'S CREED**

Read **Catechism—The Apostles Creed: Third Article—What does this Mean?**

What does this mean? I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus

Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

VERSE: John 11:25-26 ***“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”***

PRAYER of the WORD

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, June 8

- Read **History Book: Judges 4-6**

AMBROSE: (Judges 4:21-22) So, then, Deborah foretold the event of the battle. Barak, as he was bidden, led

- 6 To Hannah, praying childless
Before Your throne of grace,
You gave a son and called him
To serve before Your face.
Grant us her perseverance;
Lord, teach us how to pray
And trust in Your deliv'rance
When darkness hides our way.
1 Samuel 1:1—2:10
- 7 For Ruth, who left her homeland
And ventured forth in faith,
Who pledged to serve and worship
Naomi's God till death,
We praise You, God of Israel,
And pray for hearts set free
To bind ourselves to others
In love and loyalty.
Ruth 1:8–18
- 3 O God, for saints and servants,
Those named and those unknown
In whom through all the ages
Your light of glory shone,
We offer glad thanksgiving
And fervent prayer we raise
That, faithful in Your service,
Our lives may sing Your praise.
- D 4 All praise to God the Father!
All praise to Christ the Son!
All praise the Holy Spirit,
Who binds the Church in one!
With saints who went before us,
With saints who witness still,
We sing glad Alleluias
And strive to do Your will.

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr., 1923–2007, alt.

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Luther's Morning 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.

Luther's Evening 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.

855 FOR ALL THE FAITHFUL WOMEN

1 For all the faithful women
Who served in days of old,
To You shall thanks be given;
To all, their story told.
They served with strength and gladness
In tasks Your wisdom gave.
To You their lives bore witness,
Proclaimed Your pow'r to save.

forth the army; Jael carried off the triumph, for the prophecy of Deborah fought for her, who in a mystery revealed to us the rising of the church from among the Gentiles, for whom should be found a triumph over Sisera, that is, over the powers opposed to her. For us, then, the oracles of the prophets fought, for us those judgments and arms of the prophets won the victory. And for this reason it was not the people of the Jews but Jael who gained the victory over the enemy. Unhappy, then, was that people which could not follow up by the virtue of faith the enemy, whom it had put to flight. And so by their fault salvation came to the Gentiles; by Jewish sluggishness the victory was reserved for us.

Jael then destroyed Sisera, whom however the band of Jewish veterans had put to flight under their brilliant leader, for this is the interpretation of the name of Barak; for often, as we read, the sayings and merits of the prophets procured heavenly aid for the fathers. But even at that time was victory being prepared over spiritual wickedness for those to whom it is said in the Gospel: "Come, you who are blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." So the commencement of the victory was from the fathers,² its conclusion is in the church.

But the church does not overcome the powers of the enemy with weapons of this world but with spiritual arms, "which are mighty through God to the destruction of strongholds and the high places of spiritual wickedness." And Sisera's thirst was quenched with a bowl of milk, because he was overcome by wisdom, for what is healthful for us as food is deadly and weakening to the power of the enemy. The weapons of the church

are faith, the weapons of the church are prayer, which overcomes the enemy.

And so according to this history a woman, that the minds of women might be stirred up, became a judge, a woman set all in order, a woman prophesied, a woman triumphed, and joining in the battle array taught men to war under a woman's lead. But in a mystery it is the battle of faith and the victory of the church. CONCERNING WIDOWS 8.47–50.¹

Monday, June 9

- Read **History Book: Judges 7-9**

BEDE: (Judges 7:5-7) Just as the six hundred years of life which Noah completed prior to entering the ark designate the perfection of faith and confession of those who approach the church's sacraments of heavenly grace and perpetual reward, so also does the three hundred and fifty years that he lived after the great flood¹⁹ typify the perfection of those who, having received the sacraments of life, zealously and faithfully serve the Lord until death. For we say that three hundred, because it is denoted in Greek by the letter *tau*, which is written in the shape of a cross, most aptly signifies those who resolve not to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence Gideon, at the Lord's command and with his assistance, conquered the innumerable army of the Midianites with three hundred men, thus teaching figuratively that by faith in the Lord's cross we will be

¹ Franke, John R., ed. 2005. [*Old Testament IV: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

and so should you," Ruth responded, "May it not befall me to leave you and to go back to my god, for wherever you go, I shall go, and I will dwell where you dwell. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God; I will die where you die and I will be buried where you are buried." Thus, the two of them went on to Bethlehem. When Boaz, David's great-grandfather, came to know her deeds, therefore, and her holiness in relation to her mother-in-law and her respect for the dead and her reverence for God, he chose her to be his wife. EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE 3.⁷

Sunday, June 15

- Read **History Book: 1 Samuel 1-3**

End Every Day

Pray the *Collect for Pentecost Sunday*

O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Personal Prayers

pray **LORD'S PRAYER**

⁷ Franke, John R., ed. 2005. [*Old Testament IV: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

holy apostle seems to sense when he foresees in the Spirit that the calling of foreign nations will be accomplished through the gospel, saying that the law was given not for the just but for the unjust. For how did Ruth, when she was a foreigner, marry a Jew? And for what reason did the Evangelist believe that this marriage, which was forbidden by the weight of the law, should be included in the genealogy of Christ? Did the Savior therefore descend from an illegitimate heritage? Unless you return to the apostolic principle that the law was not given for the just but for the unjust, then, his genealogy would seem to be deformed, given that Ruth was a foreigner and a Moabite, whereas the law of Moses prohibits marriage to Moabites and excludes them from the church, as it is written: “No Moabite shall enter the church of the Lord even to the third and fourth generation forever.” Hence, how did she enter the church unless because she was made holy and immaculate by deeds [*moribus*] that go beyond the law? For if the law was given for the irreverent and sinners, then surely Ruth, who exceeded the limits of the law and entered the church and was made an Israelite and deserved to be counted among the honored figures in the Lord’s genealogy, chosen for kinship of mind, not of body, is a great example for us, because she prefigures all of us who were gathered from the nations for the purpose of joining the church of the Lord. We should emulate her, therefore, who merited by her deeds this privilege of being admitted to his society, as history teaches, so that we also, by our deeds and accompanying merits, might be chosen for election to the church of the Lord.... When Naomi said to her, “Behold, your sister-in-law has already returned to her people and to her god,

victorious in the wars waged against us both by this world and by our own vices. ON GENESIS 2.9.²

Tuesday, June 10

- Read **History Book: Judges 10-12**

AUGUSTINE: (Judges 11:30-31) With these words [of his vow] at any rate Jephthah did not vow some kind of animal that he could offer as a whole burnt offering according to the law; it is neither customary now nor was it in the past that cattle would run to meet generals returning victoriously from war. As far as mute animals are concerned, dogs often run to meet their masters and sport with them in fawning servitude. But Jephthah could not have been thinking about dogs in his vow, because it would seem that he would have vowed not only something unlawful but also something contemptible and unclean according to the law. It would have been an insult to God. Nor does he say, “I will offer as a whole burnt offering whatever will come out of the doors of my house to meet me.” He says, “I will sacrifice whoever comes out of my house.” Thus, there can be no doubt that he was thinking of nothing else than a human being—not his only daughter, however. Yet who would have been able to surpass her in her father’s eyes except perhaps his wife? QUESTIONS ON JUDGES 49.6.³

² Franke, John R., ed. 2005. [*Old Testament IV: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

³ Franke, John R., ed. 2005. [*Old Testament IV: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Wednesday, June 11

- Read **History Book: Judges 13-15**

AUGUSTINE: (Judges 13:20) For if an angel is able to use air, mist, cloud, fire, and any other natural substance or physical species; and a person [is able] to use, face, tongue, hand, pen, letters, or any other means for the purpose of communicating the secret things of his own mind: in a word, if, though he is human, he sends human messengers, and he says to one, “Go,” and he goes; and to another, “Come,” and he comes; and to his servant, “Do this,” and he does it”; with how much greater and more effectual power does God—to whom, as Lord, all things are subject—use both angel and man in order to declare whatever pleases him? EXPLANATIONS OF THE PSALMS 78.5.⁴

Thursday, June 12

- Read **History Book: Judges 16-18**

AMBROSE: (Judges 16:10-17) Adam was beguiled by speech, and Samson was overcome by a word; in truth, nothing penetrates the soul so much as polished discourse and, on the other hand, nothing is so biting as discourse of a harsher tenor. Although they have overcome the torments that were brought to bear against them, many persons have not withstood harsh discourse. THE PRAYER OF JOB AND DAVID 2.3.8.⁵

⁴ Franke, John R., ed. 2005. [*Old Testament IV: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

⁵ Franke, John R., ed. 2005. [*Old Testament IV: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Friday, June 13

- Read **History Book: Judges 19-21**

BASIL THE GREAT: (Judges 21:25) After a long time spent in this state of indecision and while I was still busily searching for the cause I have mentioned, there came to my mind the book of Judges, which tells how each man did what was right in his own eyes and gives the reason for this in these words: “In those days there was no king in Israel.” With these words in mind, then, I applied also to the present circumstances that explanation which, incredible and frightening as it may be, is quite truly pertinent when it is understood; for never before has there arisen such discord and quarreling as now among the members of the church in consequence of their turning away from the one, great and true God and only King of the universe. Each person, indeed, abandons the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and arrogates to himself authority in dealing with certain questions, making his own private rules and preferring to exercise leadership in opposition to the Lord to being led by the Lord. PREFACE ON THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.⁶

Saturday, June 14

- Read **History Book: Ruth**

AMBROSE: (Ruth 1:1-4) If, therefore, we know that Tamar was included in the Lord’s genealogy on account of mystery, we ought also to conclude, without doubt, that Ruth was not omitted for a similar reason,³ which the

⁶ Franke, John R., ed. 2005. [*Old Testament IV: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.