

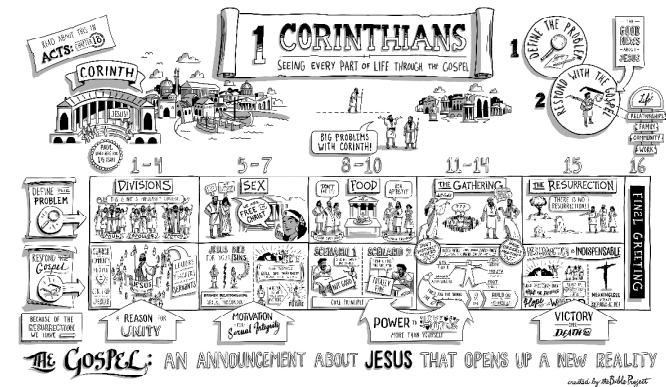


The Congregation at Prayer

The Whole Story

2025

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



Week #21-The Whole Story
Fifth Week of Easter
May 18-May 25, 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: First Article**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

VERSE: Romans 6:3-4 ***“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”***

7 Easter triumph, Easter joy!
This alone can sin destroy;
From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free,
Newborn souls in You to be.
Alleluia!

D 8 Father, who the crown shall give,
Savior, by whose death we live,
Spirit, guide through all our days:
Three in One, Your name we praise.
Alleluia!

Text: Latin, c. 5th–10th cent.; tr. Robert Campbell, 1814–68, alt.
Text: Public domain

633 AT THE LAMB'S HIGH FEAST WE SING

- 1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing
Praise to our victorious King,
Who has washed us in the tide
Flowing from His pierced side.
Alleluia!
- 2 Praise we Him, whose love divine
Gives His sacred blood for wine,
Gives His body for the feast—
Christ the victim, Christ the priest.
Alleluia!
- 3 Where the paschal blood is poured,
Death's dread angel sheathes the sword;
Israel's hosts triumphant go
Through the wave that drowns the foe.
Alleluia!
- 4 Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed,
Paschal victim, paschal bread;
With sincerity and love
Eat we manna from above.
Alleluia!
- 5 Mighty Victim from the sky,
Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath You lie;
You have conquered in the fight,
You have brought us life and light.
Alleluia!
- 6 Now no more can death appall,
Now no more the grave enthrall;
You have opened paradise,
And Your saints in You shall rise.
Alleluia!

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, May 18

- Read **Psalm 134** (Come, bless YHWH, all you servants of YHWH)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 1 Cor. 15-16**

CHRYSOSTOM: When Paul calls the Corinthian Christians his brothers, he establishes the basis for most of his subsequent assertions. For we became brothers through the work of Christ in his earthly life and death. After all, what is the gospel but the message that God became man, was crucified and rose again? This is what the angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary, what the prophets preached to the world and what all the apostles truthfully proclaimed. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.2.¹

Monday, May 19

- Read **Psalm 135** (Hallelujah! Praise the name of YHWH)

¹ Bray, Gerald Lewis, ed. 1999. [*1–2 Corinthians*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- Read **Pauline Epistles: 2 Corinthians 1-3**

AUGUSTINE: (2 Corinthians 1:19) And when we confess that we have lied, we speak the truth, for we are saying what we know, and we know that we have lied. That Word, however, which is God and more powerful than ourselves, cannot do this.... And of himself he does not speak, but of that Father is everything that he speaks, since the Father speaks it in a unique way. The great power of that Word is that he cannot lie, because in him there cannot be yes and no but yes, yes; no, no. For that is not even to be called a word if it is not true. On the Trinity 15.15.²

Tuesday, May 20

- Read **Psalms 136** (Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth.)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 2 Corinthians 4-6**

AMBROSIAS: (2 Corinthians 5:21) Christ did not have to be born as a man, but he became man because of sin. It was only because all flesh was subject to sin that he was made sin for us. In view of the fact that he was made an offering for sins, it is not wrong for him to be said to have been made "sin," because in the law the sacrifice which was offered for sins used to be called a "sin." After his death on the cross Christ descended to hell,

² Bray, Gerald Lewis, ed. 1999. [*1-2 Corinthians*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Almighty God, You show those in error the light
O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be
of one will. Grant that we may love what You
have commanded and desire what You promise,
that among the many changes of this world our
hearts may be fixed where true joys are found;
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**

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.

JEROME: (Ephesians 6:11) From what we read of the Lord our Savior throughout the Scriptures, it is manifestly clear that the whole armor of Christ is the Savior himself. It is he whom we are asked to “put on.” It is one and the same thing to say “Put on the whole armor of God” and “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Our belt is truth and our breastplate is righteousness. The Savior is also called both “truth” and “righteousness.” So no one can doubt that he himself is that very belt and breastplate. On this principle he is also to be understood as the “preparation of the gospel of peace.” He himself is the “shield of faith” and the “helmet of salvation.” He is the “sword of the Spirit,” because he is the Word of God, living and efficacious, the utterance of which is stronger than any helmet and sharp on both sides.⁵ EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 3.6.11.⁷

Sunday, May 25

- Read **Psalm 141** (Come, bless YHWH, all you servants of YHWH, who stand by night in the house of YHWH.)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: Philippians 1-2**

End Every Day

Pray the *Collect for Fourth Sunday of Easter*

⁷ Edwards, M. J., ed. 1999. [Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

because it was death, working through sin, which gave hell its power. Christ defeated death by his death and brought such benefit to sinners that now death cannot hold those who are marked with the sign of the cross. COMMENTARY ON PAUL’S EPISTLES.³

Wednesday, May 21

- Read **Psalm 137** (Out of the depths I cry to you, O YHWH!)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 2 Corinthians 7-9**

CHRYSOSTOM: (2 Corinthians 9:7) Paul’s purpose was not only for money to be contributed to the poor but for it to be contributed with great eagerness. Likewise, God appointed almsgiving not only for the nourishment of the needy but also for the benefit of the providers, and much more so for the latter than for the former. For if he considered only the interest of the poor, he would have commanded solely that the money be given, and he would not have asked for the eagerness of the providers. But now you see the apostle in every way ordering by will first and above all for the givers to be joyful: the suppliers to furnish in a cheerful manner. And at one time he says, “Everyone must do as he has chosen in his heart, neither out of grief nor necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver,” not simply a giver but the one who

³ Bray, Gerald Lewis, ed. 1999. [1–2 Corinthians](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

does this with pleasure. HOMILY 10.4.16: A SERMON ON ALMSGIVING.⁴

Thursday, May 22

- Read **Psalm 138** (O YHWH, my heart is not lifted up)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 2 Corinthians 10-13**

AUGUSTINE: (2 Corinthians 12:4) But, even if the angels, whose nature is simple and spiritual, are said to have tongues with which they sing praises to their Lord and Creator and give him unceasing thanks, much more must the spiritualized bodies of men do so after the resurrection. For all the members of their glorified flesh will have tongues in their mouths, and they will give voice to their speaking tongues, and thus they will utter divine praises, the outpouring in words of their love and of the joys that fill even their senses. Doubtless the Lord will add this to the grace and glory of his saints in the time of his kingdom, that the more perfectly they attain to this blessed condition of body by a happy transformation, the more fully will they sing with tongue and voice. Being established in their spiritual bodies, they may speak, perchance, not with the tongues of men but with

⁴ Bray, Gerald Lewis, ed. 1999. [*1–2 Corinthians*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

those of angels, such as the apostle heard in paradise. Letter 94.⁵

Friday, May 23

- Read **Psalm 139** (Remember, O YHWH, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: Ephesians 1-3**

JEROME: (Ephesians 2:8) Paul says this in case the secret thought should steal upon us that “if we are not saved by our own works, at least we are saved by our own faith, and so in another way our salvation is of ourselves.” Thus he added the statement that faith too is not in our own will but in God's gift. Not that he means to take away free choice from humanity ... but that even this very freedom of choice has God as its author, and all things are to be referred to his generosity, in that he has even allowed us to will the good. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.8–9.⁶

Saturday, May 24

- Read **Psalm 140** (Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: Ephesians 4-6**

⁵ Bray, Gerald Lewis, ed. 1999. [*1–2 Corinthians*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁶ Edwards, M. J., ed. 1999. [*Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.