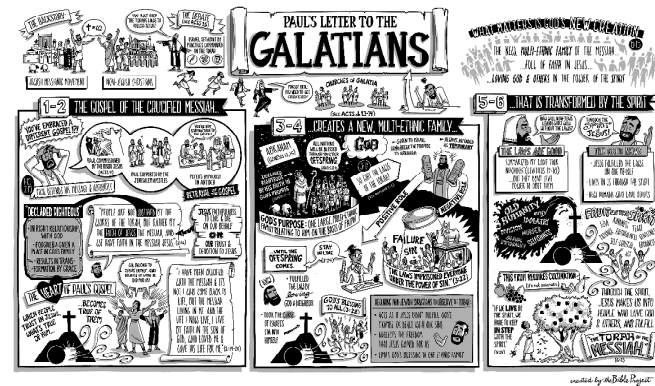




The Congregation at Prayer
The Whole Story

2025
 A Daily Devotional
 St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



Week #20-The Whole Story
Fourth Week of Easter
 May 11-May 18, 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, Part 1**

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: John 20:23 ***“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”***

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

reprieve—

You opened heaven’s kingdom to all who would believe.

- 4 You sit in splendid glory, enthroned at God’s right hand,
Upholding earth and heaven by forces You command.

We know that You will come as our Judge that final day,

So help Your servants You have redeemed by blood, we pray;

May we with saints be numbered where praises never end,

In glory everlasting. Amen, O Lord, amen!

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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.

941 WE PRAISE YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOU, O GOD

- 1 We praise You and acknowledge You, O God, to be the Lord,
The Father everlasting, by all the earth adored.
To You all angel powers cry aloud, the heavens sing,
The cherubim and seraphim their praises to You bring:
“O holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
Your majesty and glory fill the heavens and the earth!”
- 2 The band of the apostles in glory sing Your praise;
The fellowship of prophets their deathless voices raise.
The martyrs of Your kingdom, a great and noble throng,
Sing with the holy Church throughout all the world this song:
“O all-majestic Father, Your true and only Son,
And Holy Spirit, Comforter—forever Three in One!”
- 3 You, Christ, are King of glory, the everlasting Son,
Yet You, with boundless love, sought to rescue ev’ryone:
You laid aside Your glory, were born of virgin’s womb,
Were crucified for us and were placed into a tomb;
Then by Your resurrection You won for us

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 11

- Read **Psalm 127** (Unless YHWH builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: Galatians 1-3**

CHRYSOSTOM: (Gal. 3:27) Since he has said something great and remarkable, he also explains how one is made a son. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Why didn’t he say, “All you who were baptized into Christ have been born of God,” since that is the inference from showing that they were sons? Because what he says is more awe-inspiring. For if Christ is the Son of God and you put him on, having the Son inside yourself and being made like him, you have been made one in kind and form. HOMILY ON GALATIANS 3.27.¹

Monday, May 12

- Read **Psalm 128** (Blessed is everyone who fears YHWH, who walks in his ways!)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: Galatians 4-6**

¹ Edwards, M. J., ed. 1999. [*Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

CHRYSOSTOM: (Gal. 4:4-5) Here he states two objects and effects of the Incarnation, deliverance from evil and supply of good, things which none could compass but Christ. They are these; deliverance from the curse of the Law, and promotion to sonship. Fitly does he say, that we might “receive,” “[be paid,]” implying that it was due; for the promise was of old time made for these objects to Abraham, as the Apostle has himself shown at great length. And how does it appear that we have become sons? he has told us one mode, in that we have put on Christ who is the Son; and now he mentions another, in that we have received the Spirit of adoption.²

Tuesday, May 13

- Read **Psalm 129** (Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth.)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 1 Corinthians 1-3**

² John Chrysostom. 1889. [“Commentary of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Galatians.”](#) In *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, edited by Philip Schaff, translated by Gross Alexander with Anonymous, 13:30. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series. New York: Christian Literature Company.

- Read **Psalm 134** (Come, bless YHWH, all you servants of YHWH, who stand by night in the house of YHWH.)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 1 Cor. 15-16**

End Every Day

Pray the *Collect for Fourth Sunday of Easter*

Almighty God, You show those in error the light of Your truth so that they may return to the way of righteousness. Grant faithfulness to all who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ’s Church that they may avoid whatever is contrary to their confession and follow all such things as are pleasing to You; 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

by admission to which you have become one body and blood with Christ.... When the Master himself has explicitly said of the bread, "This is my body," will anyone still dare to doubt? When he is himself our warranty saying, "This is my blood," who will ever waver and say it is not his blood?... With perfect confidence, then, we partake as of the body and blood of Christ. ON THE MYSTERIES, FOURTH LECTURE 1.2.⁶

Saturday, May 17

- Read **Psalm 133** (Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 1 Cor. 13-14**

AUGUSTINE: (1 Corinthians 13:8) Use your knowledge as a sort of tool to build the edifice of charity, which remains forever, even when "knowledge passes away." For knowledge which is used to promote love is useful, but in itself and separated from love it turns out to be not only useless but even harmful. Letter 55.⁷

Sunday, May 18

⁶ Bray, Gerald Lewis, ed. 1999. [1-2 Corinthians](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁷ Bray, Gerald Lewis, ed. 1999. [1-2 Corinthians](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

CHRYSOSTOM: (1 Corinthians 1:18-20) Now observe: when I say, "He was crucified;" the Greek saith, "And how can this be reasonable? Himself He helped not when undergoing crucifixion and sore trial at the moment of the Cross: how then after these things did He rise again and help others? For if He had been able, before death was the proper time." (For this the Jews actually said.) (St. Matt. 27:41, 42) "But He who helped not Himself, how helped he others? There is no reason in it," saith he. True, O man, for indeed it is above reason; and unspeakable is the power of the Cross. For that being actually in the midst of horrors, He should have shewn Himself above all horrors; and being in the enemy's hold should have overcome; this cometh of Infinite Power. For as in the case of the Three Children, their not entering the furnace would not have been so astonishing, as that having entered in they trampled upon the fire;—and in the case of Jonah, it was a greater thing by far, after he had been swallowed by the fish, to suffer no harm from the monster, than if he had not been swallowed at all;—so also in regard of Christ; His not dying would not have been so inconceivable, as that having died He should loose the bands of death. Say not then, "why did He not help Himself on the Cross?" for he was hastening on to close conflict with death himself. (See Hooker, E. P. v. 48. 9.) He descended not from the Cross, not because He could not, but because He would not. For Him

Whom the tyranny of death restrained not, how could the nails of the Cross restrain?³

Wednesday, May 14

- Read **Psalm 130** (Out of the depths I cry to you, O YHWH!)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 1 Corinthians 4-6**

ORIGEN: (1 Corinthians 4:1) There is a big difference between being a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God. Anyone who has read the Bible can be a servant of Christ, but to be a steward of the mysteries one must plumb their depths. Paul was acting as a steward of the mysteries when he commissioned Luke, for example, to write his Gospel, and when he sent Timothy to sort out the Ephesian church. I would even dare to say that in Corinth Paul acted like a servant of Christ, whereas

³ John Chrysostom. 1889. [“Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians.”](#) In *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, edited by Philip Schaff, translated by Hubert Kestell Cornish, John Medley, and Talbot B. Chambers, 12:17. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series. New York: Christian Literature Company.

in Ephesus he became a steward of the mysteries of God.² COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 2.18.10–16.⁴

Thursday, May 15

- Read **Psalm 131** (O YHWH, my heart is not lifted up)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 1 Corinthians 7-9**

AMBROSE: (1 Corinthians 8:6) It is written: “Go baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” “In the name,” he said, not “in the names.” So there is not one name for the Father, another name for the Son, and another name for the Holy Spirit, because there is one God, not several names, because there are not two gods, not three gods. THE HOLY SPIRIT 13.132.⁵

Friday, May 16

- Read **Psalm 132** (Remember, O YHWH, in David’s favor, all the hardships he endured)
- Read **Pauline Epistles: 1 Cor. 10-12**

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM: (1 Corinthians 11:24) The teaching of the blessed Paul is of itself sufficient to give you full assurance about the divine mysteries

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

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