

The Congregation at Prayer  
The Whole Story

2025

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



Week #19-The Whole Story  
Third Week of Easter  
May 4-May 11, 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 Close of the **Commandments**

**What does God say about all these commandments?**

He says, “I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.” (Ex. 20: 5–6)

*What does this mean?* God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

VERSE: Matthew 16:16 ***“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”***

#### **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.



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.

### **707 OH, THAT THE LORD WOULD GUIDE MY WAYS**

- 1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways  
To keep His statutes still!  
Oh, that my God would grant me grace  
To know and do His will!
- 2 Order my footsteps by Thy Word  
And make my heart sincere;  
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,  
But keep my conscience clear.
- 3 Assist my soul, too apt to stray,  
A stricter watch to keep;  
And should I e'er forget Thy way,  
Restore Thy wand'ring sheep.
- 4 Make me to walk in Thy commands—  
'Tis a delightful road—  
Nor let my head or heart or hands  
Offend against my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.  
Text: Public domain

### **Sunday, May 4**

- Read **Psalm 120** (In my distress I called to YHWH, and he answered me.)
- Read **The Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 25-26**

**CHRYSOSTOM:** (Acts 26:8) Paul lays down two arguments for the resurrection. One of them comes from the prophets. He does not bring forward any prophet in particular but the doctrine itself as held by the Jews. The other argument, the stronger because it comes from facts, is that Christ conversed with him. He further prepares the ground for this with other arguments, describing his former madness accurately. Then, along with a praise of the Jews, “as they worship night and day,” he says, expecting “to attain.” “So even if I had not led an unblemished life, King Agrippa, I should not be tried for the belief that God raises the dead.”  
HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 52.<sup>1</sup>

### **Monday, May 5**

- Read **Psalm 121** (I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?)
- Read **Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 27-28**

**CHRYSOSTOM:** (Acts 28:7) Look, even after they were rid of the storm, they did not become negligent, and what a lavish welcome they received because of Paul. For three days they stayed there and

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, Francis, and Evan Smith, eds. 2006. [Acts](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

everyone of them was well-provided with sustenance.... It was for Paul's sake that all this took place, so that the prisoners, as well as the soldiers and the centurion, should believe. For even if they were made of stone, from the counsel they heard him give, from the predictions they heard him make, from the miracles they saw him accomplish and from the nourishment they enjoyed because of him, they would have thought him great. See how quickly sound judgment, when it is not overtaken by some emotion, delivers right decisions and discerning verdicts. HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 54.<sup>2</sup>

### **Tuesday, May 6**

- Read **Psalm 122** (I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of YHWH!)
- Read **Romans, Chapters 1-3**

**CHRYSOSTOM:** (Romans 1:3) Paul is here hinting that there is also a generation of Christ according to the Spirit. Why then did he begin from the flesh, and not from the higher principle? First, it was because that was where Matthew, Luke and Mark started from too. Anyone who wants to lead men by hand to heaven must lead them upward from below. This was the way the actual dispensation [of grace] was ordered. First, they saw Christ as a man on

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<sup>2</sup> Martin, Francis, and Evan Smith, eds. 2006. [Acts](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

this very thing obeying God, who commands us to do it, rather than men. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 72.<sup>7</sup>

### **Sunday, May 11**

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

### **End Every Day**

#### **Pray the *Collect for Third Sunday of Easter***

O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, 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

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<sup>7</sup> Bray, Gerald, ed. 1998. [Romans \(Revised\)](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

authorities, i.e., to the people who with some recognition administer human affairs. But as far as the spiritual side is concerned, in which we believe in God and are called into his kingdom, it is not right for us to be subject to any man who seeks to overturn in us the very thing which God has been pleased to grant us so that we might obtain eternal life.

So if anyone thinks that because he is a Christian he does not have to pay taxes or tribute nor show the proper respect to the authorities who take care of these things, he is in very great error. Likewise, if anyone thinks that he ought to submit to the point where he accepts that someone who is his superior in temporal affairs should have authority even over his faith, he falls into an even greater error. But the balance which the Lord himself prescribed is to be maintained: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's but unto God the things which are God's." For although we are called into that kingdom where there will be no power of this world, nevertheless, while we are on the way there and until we have reached that state where every principality and power will be destroyed, let us put up with our condition for the sake of human affairs, doing nothing falsely and in

earth, and then later they understood that he is God. His disciple therefore followed the same order in which Christ himself had framed his teaching. Thus the generation according to the flesh comes first, not because it was first in actual fact but because he was leading his hearers upward from one thing to the other. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 1.<sup>3</sup>

### **Wednesday, May 7**

- Read ***Psalm 123*** (To you I lift up my eyes)
- Read ***Romans, Chapters 4-6***

**AMBROSIASTER:** (Romans 6:3) Paul says this so that we might know that once we have been baptized we should no longer sin, since when we are baptized we die with Christ. This is what it means to be baptized into his death. For there all our sins die, so that, renewed by the death we have cast off, we might be seen to rise as those who have been born again to new life, so that just as Christ died to sin and rose again, so through baptism we might also have the hope of resurrection. Therefore, baptism is the death of sin so that a new birth might follow, which, although the body remains, nevertheless renews us in our mind and

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<sup>3</sup> Bray, Gerald, ed. 1998. [\*Romans \(Revised\)\*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

buries all our old evil deeds. COMMENTARY ON PAUL'S EPISTLES.<sup>4</sup>

### **Thursday, May 8**

- Read **Psalm 124** (If it had not been YHWH who was on our side)
- Read **Romans, Chapters 7-9**

**AMBROSIAS**: (Romans 8:18) This exhortation relates to what we have just read, in which Paul shows that the things which we might suffer at the hands of the wicked here below are small in comparison with the reward which awaits us in the next life. Therefore we ought to be prepared for every eventuality, because the rewards which are promised to us are so great so that our mind may be consoled in tribulation and grow in hope. COMMENTARY ON PAUL'S EPISTLES.<sup>5</sup>

### **Friday, May 9**

- Read **Psalm 125** (Those who trust in YHWH are like Mount Zion)
- Read **Romans, Chapters 10-12**

**ORIGEN**: (Romans 12:10) It happens that we hate things we ought not to, just as we love things we

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<sup>4</sup> Bray, Gerald, ed. 1998. [Romans \(Revised\)](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>5</sup> Bray, Gerald, ed. 1998. [Romans \(Revised\)](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

ought not to. We are ordered to love our brothers, not to hate them. If you think that someone is ungodly, remember that "Christ died for the ungodly." And if you think that because your brother is a sinner you do not have to love him, remember that "Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners."<sup>13</sup> But if he is righteous, then he is much more worthy of love, for "God loves the righteous." COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>156</sup>

### **Saturday, May 3**

- Read **Psalm 126** (When YHWH restored the fortunes of Zion)
- Read **Romans, Chapters 13-16**

**AUGUSTINE**: (Romans 13:1) Most rightly, Paul warns against anyone who is puffed up with pride by the fact that he has been called by his Lord into freedom and become a Christian, and therefore thinks that he does not have to keep the status given to him in the course of this life or submit to the higher powers to whom the government of temporal things has been confided for a time. For because we are made of soul and body and as long as we are in this life we make use of temporal things as a means of living this life, it is fitting that, as far as this life is concerned, we be subject to the

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<sup>6</sup> Bray, Gerald, ed. 1998. [Romans \(Revised\)](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.