

## Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 18:17-33

<sup>16</sup> When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. <sup>17</sup> Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? <sup>18</sup> Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. <sup>19</sup> For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” <sup>20</sup> Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous <sup>21</sup> that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” <sup>22</sup> The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. <sup>23</sup> Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? <sup>24</sup> What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? <sup>25</sup> Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” <sup>26</sup> The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” <sup>27</sup> Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, <sup>28</sup> what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.” <sup>29</sup> Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.” <sup>30</sup> Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” <sup>31</sup> Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.” <sup>32</sup> Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.” <sup>33</sup> When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

**18:16** *Sodom*. See notes on 10:19; 13:10. (CSB)

WALKED WITH THEM – Hebrew implies that Abraham accompanied them for quite a while. (TLSB)

**18:17** Abraham was God’s friend (see v. 19; 2Ch 20:7; Jas 2:23; see also Isa 41:8, but see note there). And because he was now God’s covenant friend (see Job 29:4), God convened his heavenly council (see note on 1:26) at Abraham’s tent. There he announced his purpose for Abraham (v. 10) and for the wicked of the plain (vv. 20–21)—redemption and judgment. He thus even gave Abraham opportunity to speak in his court and to intercede for the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was later called a prophet (20:7). Here, in Abraham, is exemplified the great privilege of God’s

covenant people throughout the ages: God has revealed his purposes to them and allows their voice to be heard (in intercession) in the court of heaven. (CSB)

**18:19** God chose Abraham to establish true religion through him and to fulfill the messianic promises. (TLSB)

**18:18** *a great and powerful nation ... blessed through him.* See note on 12:2–3. (CSB)

God graciously promised that Abraham's descendants would become a great nation. From this nation would come the Messiah, from whom all nations can receive God's blessings through faith in Him. (TLSB)

**18:19** *chosen.* Lit. "known" (as in Am 3:2). (CSB)

**18:20** *outcry.* A cry of righteous indignation (cf. the blood of Abel, 4:10) that became one of the reasons for the destruction of the cities (see 19:13). (CSB)

Sodom's wickedness already well known, cried out for God's judgment. (TLSB)

The situation is altogether awful. Fifteen years had not yet gone by since the people of Sodom and their neighbors were defeated by the four kings and led away captive but were later freed by Abraham through a marvelous victory and were returned to their homes. Thus God revealed Himself to them in a twofold manner. By the captivity He showed that He hates sin and surely wants to punish it, but by the deliverance He showed that He wants to forgive and help the penitent. But neither the punishment nor the benefit had any effect. The very people who had seen these events with their own eyes forgot and relapsed into the awful abyss of sins, since they had completely discarded their fears of God. This was the beginning of their downfall, as Solomon says (Prov. 16:18): "The beginning of one's downfall is to be proud and fall away from the Lord." Where there is contempt for the Word and ingratitude toward God, there order also and good manners break down. These fruits result only from the seed of the Word of God. After the downfall of the church came the downfall of the government. (Luther's Works – Volume 3 Pages 226-27) – Finally some situations become so bad that everyone around raises objections and a cry of indignation over the disgrace that is taking place.

*Gomorrah.* See notes on 10:19; 13:10. (CSB)

*sin so grievous.* The sin of Sodom (and probably of Gomorrah as well) was already proverbial (see 13:13) and remained so for centuries (see Eze 16:49–50). (CSB)

**18:21** *I will go down.* The result would be judgment (as in 11:5–9), but God also comes down to redeem (as in Ex 3:8). (CSB)

see. Not a denial of God's infinite knowledge but a figurative way of stating that he does not act out of ignorance or on the basis of mere complaints. (CSB)

The concept of going down to look is also found in the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9). This is not to infer that God does not know all, but shows the great mercy and patience of God in that he does not act rashly. These sins like those in the Tower of Babel must have been especially bad to deserve such special attention.

**17:15–18:21** Divine messengers, on their way to Sodom to deliver judgment, visit Abraham and Sarah to announce that Sarah will bear the child of promise. Like Sarah, we may doubt and even laugh at God's purposes for us. Despite such moments of weakness, the Lord reassures His saints not only of His omnipotence but also of His forgiveness, as Sarah realized when she gave birth to Isaac in her old age. • Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, nothing is too hard for You. Thank You for patiently bearing with us and forgiving us when we are of little faith. Amen. (TLSB)

**18:22** *Abraham remained standing before the LORD.* The text and NIV text note both illustrate the mutual accessibility that existed between God and his servant. (CSB)

**18:23** The second time Abraham intervened for his relatives and for Sodom (see 14:14–16). (CSB)

Abraham correctly guessed that the Lord planned to destroy Sodom. He pleaded for mercy on behalf of the few righteous people there. (TLSB)

**18:24-31** WHAT IF THERE ARE – Abraham's requests do not seem to try the patience of God. So our frequent prayers also are not anointing to him.

**18:24** FIFTY RIGHTEOUS – Already a small number given that there were five cities associated with Sodom. Cf 14:8 (TLSB)

**18:25** Abraham believed there was greater injustice in destroying even 50 righteous people than in sparing a great multitude of the wicked. Abraham appealed to justice, knowing that the Lord is perfectly just. (TLSB)

*Judge of all the earth.* Abraham based his plea on the justice and authority (see NIV text note) of God, confident that God would do what was right (see Dt 32:4). (CSB)

Unlike other religions, whose tribal gods were limited in power or extent of dominion, Abraham confessed God as Lord of all. (TLSB)

**18:27** *Lord.* Abraham used the title "Lord," not the intimate name "LORD," throughout his prayer. He was appealing to God as "Judge of all the earth." (CSB)

*dust and ashes.* In contrast to God's exalted position, Abraham described himself as insignificant (see Job 30:19; 42:6). (CSB)

Abraham spoke with full realization of his sinful; his origin, dust; his destination, ashes. Gregory of Nyssa: “Dust and ashes seem to denote what is lifeless and barren; and so there arises a law of faith for the life to come, teaching those would come to God, by this history, that it is impossible to draw near to God, unless faith mediate, and bring the seeking soul into union with the incomprehensible nature of God” (NPN2 5:259). Luther: “Consider this example whenever you pray, and learn that persistence is needed in praying. It does not offend God; it pleases Him” (AE 3:236). (TLSB)

**18:32** *just once more*. Abraham’s questioning in vv. 23–32 did not arise from a spirit of haggling but of compassion for his relatives and of wanting to know God’s ways. (CSB)

*ten*. Perhaps Abraham stopped at ten because he had been counting while praying: Lot, his wife, possibly two sons (see 19:12), at least two married daughters and their husbands (see 19:14 and NIV text note), and two unmarried daughters (see 19:8). (CSB)

Perhaps considering that God had not spared the world from the flood for the sake of eight people (Noah’s household), Abraham did not press his defense further. (TLSB)

**18:33** *home*. To Mamre (see v. 1). The next morning Abraham went back to see what God had done (see 19:27). (CSB)

**18:22–33** Abraham begs the Lord to spare the wicked cities for the sake of the righteous. The evils of Sodom remind us of our own time, with evil that also cries out for divine intervention. Intercede in prayer for those who have not yet repented of their wickedness. Take comfort in the truth that God spares the wicked for the sake of one righteous man—Jesus Christ. • O Lord, spare us who live in this world of wickedness, for Jesus’ sake. Amen. (TLSB)

#### EPISTLE – Colossians 2:6-19

**<sup>6</sup>So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. <sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup>and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. <sup>11</sup>In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup>having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross, <sup>16</sup>Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. <sup>17</sup>These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in**

**Christ.<sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.<sup>19</sup> He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.**

**2:6 RECEIVED** – Recalls the earliest Christian baptismal confession (Rm 10:9; 1Co 12:3). (TLSB)

*live in him.* The believer's intimate, spiritual, living union with Christ is mentioned repeatedly in this letter (see, e.g., vv. 7, 10–13, 20; 1:2, 27–28; 3:1, 3). (CSB)

*walk.* Gk *stoicheo*, “be in line with” or “keep in step with” (also translated from other terms).(TLSB p. 1904)

Through baptism Christ lives in us. This is a spiritual living that shapes every aspect of our life in accordance with the will of God.

**2:7 rooted and built up.** Both metaphors, one from nature and the other from construction, point to something that is firm and enduring. God's Word makes this way of life in Christ possible. (TLSB)

Isaiah 11: “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.”

John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit.”

Ephesians 2:20 “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”

Matthew 7:24-29 “<sup>24</sup> “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” <sup>28</sup> When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.”

Luke 6:43-45 “<sup>43</sup> “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>44</sup> Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. <sup>45</sup> The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”

**2:8 HOLLOW AND DECEPTIVE** – Philosophy can help us with many questions but is powerless to explain God adequately. If we think it can, we are deceived. (TLSB)

As opposed to the “tradition” of Christian doctrine (1Co 11:2). (TLSB)

*basic principles of this world.* This term (which occurs also in v. 20 and Gal 4:3, 9) means false, worldly, religious, elementary teachings. Paul was counteracting the Colossian heresy, which, in part, taught that for salvation one needed to combine faith in Christ with secret knowledge and with man-made regulations concerning such physical and external practices as circumcision, eating and drinking, and observance of religious festivals. (CSB)

False teachings that are constructed from the basic elements of the fallen universe. Cf Gal 4:3, 9. In Col, they are closely related to fallen angels (vv 18–20). (TLSB)

**2:9 fullness of the Deity.** See note on 1:19. The declaration that the very essence of deity was present in totality in Jesus’ human body was a direct refutation of Gnostic teaching. (CSB)

A technical term among the Colossian heretics and later Gnosticism for a number of pseudo-divine beings that supposedly emanated from God (angels, rulers, authorities, thrones, dominions). Against this, Paul says everything that is of God dwells in Christ. We confess this in the Nicene Creed: “[Christ is] very God of very God, ... being of one substance with the Father.” “In this personal union the two natures have such a grand, intimate, indescribable communion that even the angels are astonished by it” (FC SD VIII 30). (TLSB)

*bodily.* Jesus of Nazareth is God in the flesh. Paul rejects the heretics’ principle that the flesh is evil. (TLSB)

**2:10 filled.** Completed. Christians have everything they need in Christ. (TLSB)

**2:11–12 circumcision ... baptism.** † In the Israelite faith, circumcision was a sign that the individual stood in covenant relation with God. While this is the only reference where circumcision is associated with baptism, the passage teaches that, for the Christian, water baptism is the parallel rite of the new covenant relationship. It, like the Lord’s Supper, is a means of grace. (CSB)

A sign of God’s covenant establishing the people of Israel (Gn 17:9; see p 127). But in Christ the purpose of the covenant with Abraham (to be a blessing to all the families of the earth; Gn 12:3) was fulfilled. The new covenant is established with a different circumcision, Baptism. Infant Baptism is also supported by this verse, since the Israelite circumcision was performed on the eighth day after birth. Lutherans reject the teaching that God regards children as innocent before the application of the Word and Baptism (FC Ep XII 6). (TLSB)

**6:11 CIRCUMCISION DONE BY CHRIST** – This is like our baptism. It is a means of grace. It works faith and brings us into the family of God.

**6:12** *buried ... raised.* The same powerful working of God that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in Baptism. Baptism puts to death the sinful nature (Rm 6:6) and resurrects us in faith to a new life in Christ. Baptism is not just a symbol of what God does through the teaching of God's Word. It is water combined with God's Word that makes it a washing of regeneration (Ti 3:5–7). "When Paul describes conversion or renewal, he almost everywhere designates these two parts, *making dead and making alive*" (Ap XIA 46). "Faith is powerful through the power of God and overcomes death" (Ap V 129). (TLSB)

Romans 6:4 "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Romans 7:4 "So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

Galatians 5:24 "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Ephesians 2:1-6 "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature <sup>a</sup> and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,"

**2:13** *dead.* All people are born spiritually dead. Though they bear God's image, they are separated from Him. (TLSB)

*forgiven us.* Trespasses bury those who are spiritually dead. But those who are made alive in faith are delivered from the condemnation of their trespasses. (TLSB)

**2:14** *written code.* A business term, meaning a certificate of indebtedness in the debtor's handwriting. Paul uses it as a designation for the Mosaic law, with all its regulations, under which everyone is a debtor to God. (CSB)

The debtor kept a handwritten bill of indebtedness; in this case, it is the record of all our violations of God's Law. This record is wiped away by Jesus' death on the cross. (TLSB)

Psalms 130:3 "If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?" (NIV)

Psalms 130:3 "if you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" (ESV)

**2:15** *having disarmed.* Not only did God cancel out the accusations of the law against the Christian, but he also conquered and disarmed the evil angels (powers and authorities, 1:16; Eph 6:12), who entice people to follow asceticism and false teachings about Christ. The picture is of

conquered soldiers stripped of their clothes as well as their weapons to symbolize their total defeat. (CSB)

*rulers and authorities.* These are created by God and yet often corrupted by sin. They can be personal (such as angels) or impersonal (such as governments, economic systems, educational institutions). They might also be demons masquerading as idols or false gods. Cf 1:16; 2:9. (TLSB)

*triumphing.* Paul had in mind the Roman custom of stripping defeated armies of weapons and armor and parading them in a triumphal procession. Christians should not allow these “rulers” either to tempt or threaten them. (TLSB)

Through Jesus’ death on the cross he not only canceled the debt but made a mockery of all that would oppose him and his will. It gives us landslide victory like that described in Romans 8:37.

*triumphing over them.* Lit. “leading them in a triumphal procession.” The metaphor recalls a Roman general leading his captives through the streets of his city for all the citizens to see as evidence of his complete victory (see 2Co 2:14 and note). That Christ triumphed over the devil and his cohorts is seen from Mt 12:29; Lk 10:18; Ro 16:20. (CSB)

**2:6–15** Seeking guidance and security from creation rather than from the Creator will end in disaster. We must not forget that all creation has been corrupted by sin. Created things, as good as they may be, are no substitute for God. He gives us the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. In Baptism, we have been raised up as a new creation. • “In Thee all fullness dwelleth, All grace and pow’r divine; The glory that excelleth, O Son of God, is Thine. We worship Thee, we bless Thee, To Thee, O Christ, we sing; We praise Thee and confess Thee, Our glorious Lord and King.” Amen. (LSB 527:3) (TLSB)

**2:16** *judge.* Though it is difficult to understand exactly what the Colossian heretics demanded, we can see that their demands included dietary rules (v 21), ascetic practices (vv 18, 23), and adherence to a cultic calendar (v 16). (TLSB)

*Sabbath.* Indicates that there was a Jewish element associated with the Colossian heresy. (TLSB)

**2:17** *shadow ... reality.* The ceremonial laws of the OT are here referred to as shadows (cf. Heb 8:5; 10:1) because they symbolically depicted the coming of Christ; so any insistence on the observance of such ceremonies is a failure to recognize that their fulfillment has already taken place. This element of the Colossian heresy was combined with a rigid asceticism, as vv. 20–21 reveal. (CSB)

Paul taught that OT events, practices, and messages have their full meaning and realization in Christ (Rm 15:4; 1Co 10:1–11). An engaged couple who must spend time apart might cherish each other’s photo. But after they are married and living together, it would be odd to devote the same attention to the photo. “Scripture itself has abolished the Sabbath Day. It teaches that since



the Gospel has been revealed, all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted” (AC XXVIII 59). (TLSB)

*substance*. Lit, “body” (see previous uses of the term at 1:22; 2:9, 11), which refers to Christ’s incarnation. (TLSB)

**2:18** *false humility*. Humility in which one delights is of necessity mock humility. Paul may refer to a professed humility in view of the absolute God, who was believed to be so far above man that he could only be worshiped in the form of angels he had created. Second-century Gnosticism conceived of a list of spirit beings who had emanated from God and through whom God may be approached. (CSB)

*asceticism*. False humility or abasement. “When people believe that they are pure and righteous because of such hypocrisy, they hinder the knowledge of Christ and the knowledge of God’s gifts and commandments” (Ap XXIII 46).

*disqualify*. This term pictures an umpire or referee who excludes from competition any athlete who fails to follow the rules. The Colossians were not to permit any false teacher to deny the reality of their salvation because they were not delighting in mock humility and in the worship of angelic beings. (CSB)

*disqualify*. Or, “cheat.” (TLSB)

*going on in detail*. Paul warns believers not to be deceived by those who claim special revelation. If it is not truly centered in Christ, it is not of the Holy Spirit; rather, it comes from the sinful nature. (TLSB)

*what he has seen*. Probably refers to professed visions by the false teachers. (CSB)

**2:19** *lost connection with the Head*. The central error of the Colossian heresy is a defective view of Christ, in which he is believed to be less than deity (see v. 9; 1:19). (CSB)

Christ is the head of all creation as well as the cause of our salvation (Eph 5:23). (TLSB)

**GOD CAUSES TO GROW** – All who are in Christ are growing, not because of their own self-imposed religious exercises, but because of the Word of Christ. They grow according to the growth God gives. (TLSB)

**2:20–23** “Paul says that traditions do not help with respect to eternal righteousness and eternal life, because food, drink, clothing, and the like are things that perish through use. Eternal life is worked in the heart by eternal things, that is, by God’s Word and the Holy Spirit” (Ap XXVIII 10). (TLSB)

#### GOSPEL – Luke 11:1-13

**One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his**

disciples.”<sup>2</sup> He said to them, “When you pray, say: ”“Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.<sup>4</sup> Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”<sup>5</sup> Then he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,<sup>6</sup> because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’<sup>7</sup> “Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’<sup>8</sup> I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.<sup>9</sup> “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.<sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.<sup>11</sup> “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?<sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?<sup>13</sup> If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

The transition from the previous passage makes sense when one understands that the story of Mary and Martha taught the proper way to worship. It is natural that Jesus should then teach the proper way to pray. Right worship begins with *receiving* the gift of grace from above; that is why Mary chose the better portion. The same is true of prayer. First God bestows sonship through Jesus, his Son, and with that gift comes holiness and righteousness. Only then can one call upon God as Father and hallow his name. Through this section, there is an emphasis on gifts and giving: God gives daily bread and forgiveness (11:3–4), the awakened friend gives provisions for the midnight guest (11:5–8), those who ask will receive (11:9–10), fathers give gifts to their sons (11:11–13a), and God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask (11:13b). In that way, prayer is placed in the context of right worship. Prayer begins with the Giver and his gifts and only then moves to the one who asks for the gifts. (CC p. 464)

**11:1** *Jesus was praying.* Not only on special occasions (e.g., baptism, 3:21; choosing the Twelve, 6:12; Gethsemane, 22:41) but also as a regular practice (5:16; Mt 14:23; Mk 1:35). (CSB)

προσευχόμενον—This general verb for “pray” occurs three times in 11:1–2. The verb usually denotes a liturgical prayer (as in 1:10; 18:10, 11) or a petitionary prayer (as in 18:1; 22:40–46). The Lord’s Prayer is primarily a petitionary prayer, rather than a “blessing” (εὐλογέω) or “thanksgiving” (εὐχαριστέω). Cf. αἰτεῖτε in 11:9. (CC p. 460)

Prayer is not giving something to God; it is asking for something. “A person who wants to pray must present a petition, naming and asking for something which he desires; otherwise it cannot be called a prayer” (Martin Luther, LC III 24; Tappert, p. 423]). One difference between the Pharisee’s prayer and that of the tax collector prayers in Luke 18:10–13 is that the Pharisee asks for nothing. The tax collector’s prayer is pure petition. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES – τις τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ—The audience for Jesus' teaching of the Lord's Prayer (11:1–4), the parable of the midnight guest (11:5–8), and the encouragement to persistence (11:9–13) is his disciples; this would include the Twelve and the seventy (-two) as well as the women (8:1–3) and other followers. (CC pp. 460-461)

Neither time, place, nor questioner are identified. (TLSB)

*teach us to pray.* The Lord's model prayer was given here in answer to a request, and is similar to Mt 6:9–13, where it is a part of the Sermon on the Mount. Six petitions are included in the prayer as given in the Sermon on the Mount by Matthew (combining the last two petitions into one), whereas five appear in the prayer in Luke. (CSB)

This is the only time in the Gospels when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them. Here Jesus teaches us to ask God the Father and for what to ask. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

Fixed forms of prayer were common in first-century Judaism. The people of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the followers of John the Baptist, and other groups used set prayers. (TLSB)

The Lord's Prayer itself is evoked by a request (11:1). This is the only occasion on which any of the disciples ask Jesus to teach them something. What "one of" them asks Jesus is to teach them how to petition God. Each rabbi had a particular way of petitioning God, and the disciples are aware that John had taught his disciples how to petition. While the Lord's Prayer is the most important teaching of Jesus on the subject, it is not Jesus' only teaching. In 18:1–8, for example, Jesus teaches the necessity of persistent prayer, and his example in passages such as 6:12 and 22:39–46 is also instructive. Luke's version of Jesus' petitionary prayer is shorter and more direct than Matthew's version, which is customarily followed in the church today. The Lukan form contains (1) the invocation of God as Father; (2) two petitions that refer to God (that his name be hallowed and his kingdom come); and (3) three petitions that deal with the needs of the petitioner. (CC p. 465)

**11:2-4** This version of the Lord's Prayer is substantially shorter than the one found in Mt. Jesus likely taught this prayer differently in a variety of settings. (TLSB)

**11:2 FATHER** – Since Jesus teaches us to call God "Father," then we are God's children. Jesus has put us in the same relationship He has with God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

- We say "Father" because the believers in Christ throughout the world are the children of one Father and therefore we pray for and with one another.

- With this name we likewise confess that we are the children of God, which again stirs his heart mightily; for there is no lovelier sound than that of a child speaking to his father. (LW V. 42 p. 22)
- Praying to Father who couldn't love us more.
- Abba – Is expressive of an especially close relationship. - Papa
- Not only an introduction, but primarily a relationship.
- Busy can always be reached. Hybals.. dad and private number.
- An Indian boy needs to walk through a forest by himself as a part of becoming a man. An Indian father is always stationed nearby.
- His care and concern and affection for us are not dependent upon his moods or our good behavior or our response to his overtures.
- This title teaches those who pray to examine themselves, as they are indeed the sons of God, members and brothers of Christ, one engrafted into the Father. For if they go without repenting of their sin and not seeking and embracing Christ by true faith, they cannot call God "Father" unless they believe that by Christ they are reconciled to God. (Chemnitz p. 29)
- Though the boy is willing to stop being a son, the father is not willing to stop being a father. – Of all his names, Father is God's favorite. We know he loves this name most because this is the one he used the most. In the Gospel of John alone, Jesus repeats this name 156 times. – This reminds us we are welcome in God's house because we have been adopted by the owner. I've heard of unplanned pregnancies, but I've never heard of an unplanned adoption. – You and I both know that an adoption is not something we earn; it's something we receive. To be adopted into a family is not a feat one achieves, but rather a gift one accepts. – Thank you for adopting me into your family. (Notes from "The Great House of God" by Max Lucado)

Πάτερ—This would be the Greek equivalent of Aramaic אבβα, which Jesus and the early Christians used to address God (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; cf. Lk 10:21). "Daddy," however, is not a good translation. R. Stein, *Luke*, 324, notes:

It was once popular to say that "Abba" or "Father" was the equivalent of "Daddy." The reason for this is that small children called their father by this term. In the Jewish Talmud (*Sanh.* 70b) we read, "An infant cannot say 'father' [Abba] and 'mother' until it has tasted wheat [i.e., until it is weaned]." However, adults also called their fathers "Abba," which indicates that "Daddy" is a less appropriate translation of "Abba" than "Father." (CC p. 461)

The connotation of Πάτερ is an intimate familial relationship between “Father” and his child, regardless of whether the child is young or a mature adult. (CC p. 461)

“Who art in heaven” and the Third and Seventh Petitions are not found in P<sup>75</sup> B and the Vulgate. (N has the Third Petition but not “who art in heaven” or the Seventh Petition.) The shorter version, not harmonized with Matthew or church custom, is the preferred text. Jesus gave a *model* for prayer; he did not include every petition that may be appropriate. The following stories and examples (11:5–13) encourage all kinds of frequent, persistent prayers. (CC p. 461)

Jesus begins in typical Hebrew fashion by calling on God. (Gen. 15:2; 28:20; 1 Sam 2:1; 1 Kg 8:23) In fact, several OT prayers address God as “our Father” (Is 63:16; 64:8 [MT 64:7]; 1 Chr 29:10). Jesus has already used “Father” for God in his prayer after sending out the seventy (-two) (Lk 10:21). By instructing his disciples to address God as “Father,” Jesus places them into the same relationship with God that he has. Throughout the gospel, the disciples will observe Jesus’ relationship to God the Father and come to realize that through the Son of God they are sons of God. (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5)

The Second and Seventh Petitions of the Lord’s Prayer (see Mt. 6:9-13) are not included in what are commonly considered the better texts. Jesus is not giving a rigid set of words that must be spoken, but rather a framework for prayer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

#### HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME –

- God’s name is hallowed when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity and when we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to the Word of God.
- In this petition we pray for exactly the same thing that God demands in the Second Commandment. (Book of Concord p. 426)
- To hallow means to praise, extol and honor in word and deed. (Book of Concord p. 426)
- The names of all virtues are also names given to God. And since we are baptized into these names and are consecrated and hallowed by them, and since they have thus become our names, it follows that God’s children should be called and also be gentle, merciful, chaste, just, truthful, guileless, friendly, peaceful, and kindly disposed toward all, even toward our enemies. (LW V. 42 p. 28)
- For by honoring God we bring him the first and the last and the highest offering within our power; nor does he seek and ask for more. Moreover, we cannot give God anything else, for it is he who gives us everything else. (LW V. 42 p. 36)

- This implies the title, person, power, authority, character, and the very reputation of God.
- We carry his name. Therefore his name, reputation, person and character are at stake in us.
- For Middle Easterners it is the person himself.

ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου—To sanctify (in Hebrew, the Piel or Hiphil of שׁוֹׁמֵר) is to revere and treat as holy, or in older English, to hallow. God commanded Israel to honor his name as holy. (Lev. 20:3; 21:6; 22:2, 32; Is 29:23) But Israel failed to hallow his name. (Ezk. 36:20-21; 43:7-8; Amos 2:7) God promised that his people would once again honor his name as holy. (Ezk. 20:39; 39:7 Ps. 145:21) The verb ἀγιασθήτω (as well as ἐλθέτω in the next petition) is a theological passive. It is hallowed among us only because of the work of God's Holy Spirit in us. God alone made the temple to be the dwelling place for his holy name. (1 Kg. 9:3, 7; 2 Chr. 7:16, 20; Ezk. 36:22-23; 39:25) Christians are the new temple, the ones who bear God's holy name. God's name is honored as holy by joyfully calling upon it for help and salvation. (Ps. 33:21; 103:1; 105:3; 106:47; 1 Chr. 16:10, 35)

Jesus first petitions the Father regarding who God is—his name—and what God does—his reigning as King. God's holy name and God's gracious rule in his (present) kingdom form the basis for the disciples to approach the Father confidently with their own petitions. By beginning with God-centered petitions, Jesus instructs the disciples that when they petition the Father, the gifts they receive come from the one who is holy and whose kingdom is coming. Jesus instructs his disciples to treat God's name as holy by calling on God as Father, trusting that he will respond graciously for the sake of his Son. (CC p. 465)

KINGDOM COME – His reign through the Gospel in the hearts and lives of believers.

- The kingdom of God is his ruling as king over whole universe (kingdom of power which is already present), the church on earth (kingdom of grace), and the church and angels in heaven (kingdom of glory).
- We pray, therefore, that the Holy Ghost may be given to us and that he may be powerful in us by the Word. (Chemnitz p. 48)
- Our prayer is that the kingdom of God may be within us (Luke 17:21). We also pray that this kingdom may continually be spread further abroad so that it may also come to other nations and countries/ (Chemnitz p. 49)

ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου—The coming of the kingdom is a present reality that is already being inaugurated now in Jesus and his disciples (9:1–6; 10:1–12). The kingdom comes in the preaching of Jesus (9:11, 27), the Twelve (9:2, cf. 9:60, 62), and the seventy (-

two) (10:9, 11; cf. 9:60, 62). Following this petition a few manuscripts and church fathers have “let your Holy Spirit come upon us and cleanse us” (ἐλθέτω τὸ πνεῦμά σου τὸ ἅγιον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς καὶ καθαρῖσάτω ἡμᾶς). The consensus is that this extra petition was derived either from the baptismal liturgy or the liturgy of the Lord’s Supper, since the early church used the Lord’s Prayer at Baptism and at the Eucharist. Communion liturgies, from the earliest church documents down to the present time, have included a prayer for the Holy Spirit to prepare the communicants for the sacred meal (F. Precht, ed., *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1993] 298). The prayer asking for the Holy Spirit in Divine Service II in *Lutheran Worship*, preceding the Lord’s Prayer in the Service of the Sacrament, retains a petition similar to the extra petition added to the Lord’s Prayer in a few manuscripts and church fathers (quoted above): “Send your Holy Spirit into our hearts that he may establish in us a living faith and prepare us joyfully to remember our Redeemer and receive him who comes to us in his body and blood” (*Lutheran Worship* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1982] 171; cf. B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 154–56). (CC pp. 461-462)

**11:3 OUR DAILY BREAD** – τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον—This is the most difficult phrase in the Lord’s Prayer. Widely divergent interpretations of the prayer as a whole appeal for support to their particular rendition of this petition. (CC p. 462)

The meaning of ἐπιούσιος is uncertain. This adjective only occurs in this phrase of the Lord’s Prayer, recorded in identical words by Matthew (6:11), Luke (11:3), and the Didache (8:2). Origen’s longstanding claim (De Orat. 27, 7) that the evangelists coined the word ἐπιούσιος has gained new credence since its one alleged occurrence in secular Greek has been discounted (BAGD). Because the context does not unambiguously clarify the word’s meaning, philologists resort to etymology and the meanings of similar words. (CC p. 462)

The Lukan petition for daily bread in the Lord’s Prayer is the first of the three petitions that focus on the needs of the petitioners. The petition for bread corresponds well to the Lukan theme of table fellowship. It contains the enigmatic ἐπιούσιος, leading to four main possibilities for the kind of bread requested: “bread essential for existence”; “bread for today”; “bread for the following day”; or “bread for the (more distant) future.” (CC p. 465)

The history of interpretation reflects all of those possibilities, and in various combinations. Two principal understandings predominate: (1) physical bread needed for life in this world now and (2) eschatological bread that provides the life of the age to come as spiritual sustenance even now. Rather than opposing those two possibilities, Luke’s overall theology suggests that they both may be in view. That would follow the pattern of the OT manna, which was physical, earthly food, but was provided miraculously and in abundance, pointing to the fullness of God’s gifts to come in Christ. Now in the gospel, the heavenly and eternal kingdom of God *has broken into this age in Jesus*. He grants the forgiveness of sins, heals, and raises the dead. Already now he is furnishing, at least in part, the life—both physical and spiritual—of the age to come. Therefore, in the prayer *Jesus* taught *his disciples*,

the bread for which we pray is *at the one and the same time* both earthly bread to meet the hunger and need of the present day, and also the future bread which will satisfy the elect in the eschatological kingdom and is already given to us in anticipation—miraculous feedings of the crowds were, in sign and reality, present experiences of the future messianic meal at which those who now hunger will be satisfied. (CC pp. 465-466)

G. Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, 34 (emphasis Wainwright). On p. 168, n. 113, he notes that J. Jeremias, *The Lord's Prayer*, 25–27, also argues for this interpretation. Jeremias' intent is to argue that “for Jesus, earthly bread and the bread of life are not antithetical” (p. 25). Jeremias also states:

The bread which he [Jesus] proffered when he sat at table with publican and sinners was everyday bread, and yet it was more: it was bread of life. The bread which he broke for his disciples at the Last Supper was earthly bread, and yet it was more: his body given for many in death, the gift of a portion in the atoning power of his death. *Every meal his disciples had with him was a usual eating and drinking, and yet it was more: a meal of salvation, a messianic meal, image and anticipation of the meal at the consummation, because he was the master of the house* (p. 26; emphasis added). (CC p. 466)

The earthly and physical necessities of life surely are included in this petition and should not be minimized, but they do not exhaust the significance of “bread” in the gospel. Before offering further support from Luke for this position, it may be helpful to note that it is consistent with the views of many fathers of the early church and Luther. The reformer saw “daily bread” as encompassing all of God’s gifts—spiritual and eschatological, as well as physical and temporal. The petition for “daily bread,” in Luther’s view, subsumes the following petitions for forgiveness and protection from temptation, much as all of the Ten Commandments are summed up in the First Commandment. Best known are Luther’s explanations in his catechisms, where he limits his discussion to benefits that would fall under the First Article of the Creed: “daily bread” signifies “everything that belongs to our entire life in this world,” such as “food and drink, clothing, house, home, and a sound body; ... a good wife, children, and servants; ... our work, craft, or occupation ... good friends, etc.” as well as beneficent government rulers and protection from enemies, tempest, war, famine, wicked people, and the devil. (CC pp. 466-467)

Yet particularly in earlier writings Luther emphasized God’s spiritual, eschatological, and sacramental gifts. Luther’s longest treatment of this petition is in *An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for Simple Laymen* (1519), where he says, “The bread, the Word, and the food are none other than Jesus Christ our Lord himself. Thus he declares in John 6 [:51], ‘I am the living bread which came down from heaven.’” God answers this petition for bread by sending faithful clergy, who supply “this Word daily and abundantly.” Luther explains that “daily bread” is given “in two different ways: first, through words; second, through the Sacrament of the Altar. ... In the sacrament Christ is received.” Luther goes on to stress the importance of Gospel-centered preaching to accompany the Sacrament, and he says that “faith is nothing else than the eating of this bread.’ In his *Personal Prayer Book* (1522) Luther has similar comments:



This bread is our Lord Jesus Christ who feeds and comforts the soul. Therefore, O heavenly Father, grant grace that the life, words, deeds, and suffering of Christ be preached. ... Help us through his death to overcome our own death with a firm faith and thus boldly follow our beloved Guide into the life beyond this one. ...

At our life's end do not let us be deprived of the holy and true body of Christ. Help all priests to administer and use the sacred sacrament worthily and blessedly. ... Graciously help us and all other Christians to receive the holy sacrament at the proper time.

And in brief, give us our daily bread so that Christ may remain in us eternally and we in him. (CC p. 467)

Exegetical support for a comprehensive understanding like Luther's is at hand in the gospel itself. The order of the Lukan petitions (as compared with the order in Matthew and the Didache) also strengthens the view that "bread" here may include spiritual and eschatological gifts of God as well as earthly and temporal ones. Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer has the three petitions for the kingdom, bread, and forgiveness one right after the other. The kingdom, bread, and forgiveness are three key elements in Jesus' table fellowship. Jesus' meals with sinners are a signal that God's *kingdom* has arrived through him (e.g., Lk 5:27–39). In the setting of such a meal with physical, earthly food, Jesus can extend the *forgiveness* of sins (e.g., 7:36–50). And the miraculous multiplication already now of physical *bread* is a sure sign of the abundance of the messianic age, which has already dawned with the advent of Jesus (9:10–17; cf. Amos 9:13). (CC pp. 467-468)

Two main groups of meanings are possible for ἐπιούσιος, depending on whether the second part (following the preposition ἐπί) derives from the verb εἶμι, "to be," or from εἶμι, "to come, to go." If it is from εἶμι, likely meanings of the phrase would be "bread essential for existence (οὐσία, from εἶμι)" or "bread for the present day (today)," leading to temporal and earthly interpretations of the petition. If the underlying verb is εἶμι, likely meanings of the phrase would be "bread for the following day (tomorrow)" or "bread for a coming day (the more distant future)," leading to interpretations that are more eschatological and other-worldly. For more on these and other possible meanings, see BAGD, 1–4; E. Lohmeyer, *Our Father*, 141–46; S. A. Falcone, "The Kind of Bread We Pray for in the Lord's Prayer"; J. Jeremias, *The Lord's Prayer*; J. J. Petuchowski and M. Brocke, *The Lord's Prayer and Jewish Liturgy*; B. Orchard, "The Meaning of *ton epiousion* (Mt 6:11 = Lk 11:3)"; J. Hennig, "Our Daily Bread"; A. Baker, "What Sort of Bread Did Jesus Want Us to Pray For?" *New Blackfriars* 54 (1973) 125–29; and M. Black, "The Aramaic of *ton arton hemon ton epiousion* (Matt vi.11 = Luke xi.3)." Perhaps the best treatment in depth and clarity is G. Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, 30–34. (CC p. 462)

This commentary sees validity in both lines of interpretation. As with the earlier petitions for the hallowing of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will, the gospel of Luke portrays the petition for bread as being answered partially here and now, but to be fulfilled completely only in the eschaton. The chosen translation, "our

bread for the coming day keep giving to us day by day” seeks to preserve this now/not yet tension of inaugurated eschatology. The petition has more of a forward-looking sense in Luke than in Matthew and the Didache because in Luke the second half is “keep giving [δίδου, present imperative] to us day by day” (extending into the future), while in Matthew (6:11) and the Didache (8:2) the second half is “give [δός, aorist imperative] to us *today* [σήμερον].” The meaning of “coming day” for ἐπιούσιος is supported by Luke’s use of participles of ἔπειμι (ἐπί + εἶμι) to indicate the “next” day and the “next” night (Acts 7:26; 16:11; 20:15; 21:18; 23:11). Luke is the only NT author to employ ἔπειμι. (CC p. 462)

The petition, then, is for bread that is to be received each day in succession in the present era. However, the forward-looking perspective of the petition also anticipates the age to come, when the yearning for bread will be satisfied completely. I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 460, emphasizes the future aspect well, but stresses spiritual food at the expense of earthly food instead of balancing the two: “The petition is then to be understood in the sense ‘Give us today the bread which we shall enjoy in the future in the kingdom of God,’ and ‘bread’ is to be understood not merely in terms of material sustenance but primarily (though not exclusively) in terms of spiritual food.” Luther interpreted “daily bread” to include the full range of necessities for bodily life in this world, as well as God’s provisions that grant spiritual life now and also eternal life in the age to come. (CC p. 463)

- This includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body.
- Give means that it is a gift and not something we deserved or earned and teaches us that God is the sole source
- We say “our” because we should ask for that bread only which is honestly our, and because we should also pray for our neighbor and share with him when he is in need.
- We are to say “daily” and “this day” because we should be satisfied with what we need each day, and because it is foolish and sinful to worry about the future.
- Luke says “each day” and “daily” to teach us that God takes care of us every moment. (Chemnitz p. 64)
- The children of Israel had manna for each day. And their shoes never wore out.

**11:4** *Forgive us our sins.* Mt 6:12 has “debts,” but the meaning is the same as “sins.” Jesus taught this truth on other occasions as well (Mt 18:35; Mk 11:25). The prayer is a pattern for believers, who have already been forgiven for their sins. Jesus speaks here of daily forgiveness, which is necessary to restore broken communion with God. (CSB)

Mt 6:12 has “debts,” which has the same sense. *indebted*. Just as our sins indebted us to God, so other people’s trespasses cause them to “owe” us. (TLSB)

The release of sins is an important theme in Luke. God's forgiveness is the foundation on which we are certain that our prayer is heard and on which we are enabled to forgive. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

- We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, but graciously forgive us for we are worthy of none of the things we pray for and deserve nothing but punishment), for Christ's sake forgive them. In response we will heartily forgive, and readily do good to, to those who sin against us.
- For the flesh in which we daily live is of such a nature that it does not trust and believe God and is constantly aroused by evil desires and devices, so that we sin daily in word and deed, in acts of commission and omission. Thus our conscience becomes restless; it fears God's wrath and displeasure, and so it loses the comfort and confidence of the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary constantly to turn to this petition for the comfort that will restore our conscience. (Book of Concord p. 432)
- In the case of a Christian such repentance continues until death, for all through life it contends with the sins that remain in the flesh. (Book of Concord p. 309)
- The word "forgive" will not allow the thought that it is our payment, our work, or our satisfaction, but only allows forgiveness to be considered as a free gift. The Greeks translate the Hebrew word "forgiving" as "to be gracious, merciful, and pardoning." (Chemnitz p. 70)
- Forgiveness is unconditional or it is not forgiveness at all.

καὶ ἄφεσις ἡμῖν τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν—See comments at 1:77 and 4:18. The forgiveness of sins has been a prominent Lukan theme thus far (e.g., 3:3; 5:17–26; 7:36–50; cf. also 24:47). Luke has "sins" (τὰς ἀμαρτίας) instead of "debts" (τὰ ὀφειλήματα [Mt 6:12]). Perhaps this difference is for clarity, especially in the use of Luke to catechize Gentiles, who might not understand "debts" as a metaphor for "sins." However, Luke uses the financial language of debts in the next phrase (παντὶ ὀφείλοντι). (CC p, 463)

Comments at 1:77 – The prepositional phrase "in the forgiveness of their sins" describes the content of salvation. Forgiveness of sins is a Lukan theme that is first announced here. To give salvation to the world is the essence of the ministries of John and Jesus. Salvation's significance is heightened by its association with the forgiveness of sins. The connection is first made by Luke in the ministry of John the Baptist (Lk 3:3–6). The proclamation of forgiveness reaches fulfillment in the messianic ministry of Jesus. It is a major thrust of the programmatic sermon in 4:16–30. Luke's use of "forgiveness" (ἄφεσις) in 4:18 and 24:47 links together the first and last proclaimed words of Jesus in the gospel and shows that forgiveness is essential to Luke's portrayal of the teaching of Jesus as a proclamation of salvation, "God's 'liberation' of men *from sin's bondage*"

Two comments on 4:18 – RELEASE THE OPPRESSED – ἄφεσις – Release has a wide range of meanings, frequently centering on the sense of forgiveness, and indeed this noun (like the verb from which it is derived, ἀφίημι) often refers specifically to the forgiveness of sins, as in 1:77; 3:3; 24:47. This release comes through the forgiveness of sins that Jesus himself brings. (CC p. 190)

The application of Isaiah 61 to Jesus highlights the essence of his proclamation as “release.” The word for “release” (ἄφεσις) is often translated “forgiveness,” and indeed in its three other occurrences in Luke (1:77; 3:3; 24:47), it specifically means the forgiveness of sins. Here it is rendered with the more general term “release,” meaning liberation from the bondage of sin, sickness, and Satan. At times this will involve physical healing, exorcism, and rebuking destructive forces of nature, in addition to forgiving sins; see comments below on this pericope. *Throughout, this commentary will continue to note how Jesus in his ministry carries out this programmatic fulfillment of prophecy by releasing creation from its bondage to sin and restoring it to its proper state of harmony with the Creator.* (CC pp. 192-193)

In worship, absolution and the table fellowship of the Lord’s Supper give further expression to this joining of heaven and earth in Christ. In absolution the human voice announcing forgiveness is at the same time a supernatural and eschatological announcement from Christ himself. In the Sacrament earthly bread is at the same time supernatural and eschatological bread, since according to Jesus’ words, the bread is his body. When a catechumen prays for bread according to Jesus’ instruction and remembers the recurring significance of bread in Jesus’ ministry throughout the gospel, the petitioner would likely include in mind the life-giving bread of the Supper—the God-given bread that is both earthly and heavenly. (CC pp. 468-469)

The forgiveness of sins, next in the Lord’s Prayer, balances the petition for bread. Just as bread is the essential staple of physical life, and the Supper provides bread that is both earthly and heavenly, so forgiveness is the essential sustenance of spiritual life, and the need for forgiveness is constant and ongoing, hence Jesus’ provision of the Supper as the regular Meal that provides forgiveness. It is only because of forgiveness that fallen humans may call on God as Father, and his kingdom comes through the forgiveness of sins. Jesus’ ministry has offered some dramatic examples of the coming of God’s kingdom through the forgiveness of sins (e.g., 5:17–26; 7:36–50). In fact, Jesus’ programmatic sermon about the purpose of his ministry centered on his mission to bring “release” or “forgiveness” (see comments on ἄφεσις in 4:18–19; cf. also 1:77). Just as “bread” involves both physical and spiritual nourishment, the forgiveness of sins brings release from the physical consequences of sin, as Jesus demonstrated in his healing in 5:17–26. In the Apostles’ Creed, the order is deliberate: “the forgiveness of sins” leads to “the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.” Disciples who pray the Lord’s Prayer may have to wait until the resurrection to experience physical healing, but the promise of that release is as sure as the forgiveness of their sins in Christ. (CC p. 469)

As Jesus moves from life before God to life in relation to other people, he shifts from “forgive” to “owe,” or “be in debt,” a term commonly used in human commercial and financial transactions. While ἀφίημι (twice in 11:4) is the most common verb that can mean “to forgive” (and the related noun occurs twice for emphasis in Jesus’ description of his ministry in 4:18), Jesus also uses the concept of a legal or financial debt metaphorically in some of his parables about forgiveness (e.g., 7:40–43; 16:1–13; cf. also 17:10). Like bread that is both heavenly and earthly, forgiveness involves people’s relation both to God and to fellow human beings. Later Luke will provide additional words of Jesus that speak to how his followers are to forgive without limits those who owe them—forgiving frequently (17:3–4) and, following his example, profoundly (23:34). (CC p. 469)

We are constantly forgiving individuals because individuals are constantly in need of forgiveness. It should be obvious from this text and many others in Scripture that what God forgives us is vastly more than what we forgive our fellowmen. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION – εἰς πειρασμόν—On πειρασμός/πειράζω, see 4:2, 13; 8:13; 11:4, 16; 22:28, 40, 46. (CC p. 463)

Both bread and the forgiveness of sins shed light on the final petition: “and do not bring us into temptation” (11:4). The Father who gives all good gifts allows even his Son to be tempted by Satan in the wilderness, and that temptation included the suggestion to put (physical, earthly) bread ahead of the Word of God and to seek worldly glory instead of properly worshiping God alone (4:1–13). Jesus will also speak of Satan’s desire to “to sift you [the disciples] as wheat” (22:31). Trials and sufferings come because of the preaching of the kingdom. The disciples will be rejected as Jesus was rejected. This opposition is a given with the coming of the kingdom. In his final teaching following the Lord’s Supper, Jesus will tell his disciples that they have shared in his trials (22:28), and immediately afterward, on the Mount of Olives, he will urge them to “pray not to come into temptation” (22:40; cf. 22:46). To pray not to be led into temptation is to pray not to succumb to that temptation. The disciples are praying that though they are assailed by the devil, the world, and the sinful nature, God would preserve them from falling into apostasy. Taken together, the petitions for bread, for forgiveness, and for keeping them from succumbing to temptation are petitions to help the disciples be kept in the one true, saving faith, so that they “may finally prevail and gain the victory.” (CC pp. 469-470)

Implicit in the petition, as Luther points out, is the fact that God indeed tempts no one. We acknowledge that God is the gracious Father who governs our life and has the power to lead us safely past all the invitations to sin. There are temptations within us and all around us. They are inevitable. But we pray that none of those will trap us. Jesus was tempted but did not yield. We are tempted but pray that God that we will not yield. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

- There are two meanings to temptation. One is an enticement to evil which only comes from the devil. The other is a testing which comes from God to make us stronger in our faith. In this petition the first is meant.
- The devil uses the following to tempt: (1) when afflictions last long and deliverance is slow in coming. (2) when the misery seems too great, very peculiar, and very strange. (3) when under the goal of doing some great good, he challenges some to try something very dangerous or something beyond their strength and vocation. (4) when he cloaks and covers evil under the name of virtue such as coveting being called guidance, cruelty called justice, pride called bravery, ignorance called simplicity, waste called liberality, and so forth. (5) when he uses peace, quietness, and rest to tempt into a feeling of false security. (Chemnitz p. 82)
- This petition brings to our attention the miserable life that we lead here on earth. It is nothing more than one great trial. He who seeks peace and security here acts unwisely (Road Less Traveled), for he will never find them. We do not say “spare us the trial,” but “do not lead us into it.” It is as if we were to say, “We are surrounded on all sides by trials and cannot avoid them; however, dear Father, help us so that we do not fall prey to them and yield to them, and thus be overcome and vanquished.” (LW – V. 42 p. 71)
- When the Law condemns you, then immediately lay hold upon the Gospel (Walther Law & Gospel p. 45)
- As soon as we notice this, we must quickly lift our eyes to God and pray, “O my God and Father, see how I am being tempted and lured into this or that vice and how I am hindered in doing this or that good work. Defend and help me, dear Father; do not let me succumb and be ensnared. (LW – V 42 p. 72)
- Dear brother, you cannot prevent the birds from flying over your head, but you can certainly keep them from building a nest in your hair. (LW – V 42 p. 73)
- Temptation is of three kinds: flesh, world and the devil. Just a few works of the flesh are: unchastity, laziness, gluttony, drunkenness, greed, deceit, acts of fraud and deception. The world assails us with hatred, envy, enmity, violence, injustice, vengeance, cursing, reviling, slander, arrogance and pride along with fondness for luxury, honor, fame and power. The devil especially exerts himself where the conscience and spiritual matters are at stake. His purpose is to make us scorn and despise both the Word and the works of God, to tear us away from faith, hope and love, draw us into unbelief, false security, and stubbornness, or to drive us into despair, atheism, blasphemy and countless other abominable sins. (Book of Concord pp. 433-34)

**11:5–13** Jesus now urged boldness (or persistence; see NIV text note on v. 8) in prayer (vv. 5–8) and gave assurance that God answers prayer (vv. 9–13). The argument is from the lesser to the greater (see v. 13).

**11:5 ONE OF YOU** – τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν—This phrase introduces a question that will expect a negative answer among the first-century hearers in view of the rules of hospitality: ordinarily, a friend would *not* answer that way. The rhetorical question encompasses 11:5–7. On τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν, see J. Jeremias, *Parables*, 103, 158, who suggests this be translated “Can you imagine that any of you would ...” The question in 11:5–7 uses verbs in both the future indicative and the subjunctive. Both are possible in “rhetorical questions of fact having reference to the future” (E. Burton, *Moods and Tenses*, § 169). (CC p. 463)

**MIDNIGHT** – At this hour, it would be impossible to go out and buy food. (TLSB)

The rules of hospitality in the first century required that the entire community assist in entertaining a midnight guest.

K. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, 122–23, notes that a guest must be served a full loaf or it would be an insult. Enough must be served to give the semblance of a full meal. To entertain a guest at one’s home is not only the responsibility of the individual, but of the whole village, even at the unusual hour of midnight. Even if the guest is not hungry, a meal must be set before him. Thus to find bread for the guest at midnight would involve the community, and it would be common knowledge who had recently baked and would have bread. The meal would consist of common dishes, and the bread would be dipped into these dishes and eaten, so that the bread would function as the utensils used to eat the meal. (CC p. 470)

The rhetorical question that opens the parable is a ridiculous one, and the first-century audience would recognize it as such. It would be hard to imagine any member of a village who would refuse the request of someone else in that village who needed to entertain a midnight guest. But even if you were to find someone who was so obdurate, and even if he did offer inane excuses, because of his desire not to be shamed by refusing hospitality, he would get up and supply what was needed for someone else’s midnight guest. The catechumen would recognize that Jesus is speaking about the hospitality of God, who, no matter what the circumstances, is honorable and generous, supplying what we need. (CC p. 470)

Marshall suggests: “Can anyone of you imagine that...?” That is worth pondering. Who would do such a thing? It is very striking and most unusual. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

**THREE LOAVES** – In a society where many baked goods were homemade, this was a significant request. (TLKSB)

**11:6 FRIEND OF MINE** – This was someone close enough to expect hospitality from the one requesting the bread. (TLSB)

**11:7 DON'T BOTHER ME** – Even if the flesh of that person is weak, he will eventually get up and give what is needed. Quilt usually gets the best of most people.

**WITH ME IN BED** – In small dwellings, entire families often slept near one another on the floor. Rising and granting this favor would likely awaken the whole household. (TLSB)

Even if someone were this unhelpful, he would finally help to avoid a bad reputation or at least to silence the neighbor at his door. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

The final sentence of this verse means: “I refuse to get up and give you anything.” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

**11:8 I TELL YOU** – On λέγω ὑμῖν, see comments at 4:24. This expression is repeated in the next verse (11:9), forming a connective between the second and third parts of this passage. (CC p. 463)

Comment on 4:24 – λέγω ὑμῖν—This will be repeated again in 4:25. These two references here in the Nazareth sermon are the first of numerous “I say to you” statements, in which Jesus speaks authoritatively as the enfleshed Word of God. Oftentimes, they are concentrated in a single discourse (see Lk 12:1–13:9 where it is used ten times). In Luke, this expression is often spoken by Jesus. (CC p. 191)

**OF HIM** – αὐτῷ ... αὐτοῦ ... αὐτοῦ—The antecedent of αὐτῷ is the person who is asking for bread. The subject of δώσει is the man in bed, who has also been called “friend” of the man who is asking (11:5). Thus in 11:8, “friend” is probably the man in bed and the antecedent of the αὐτοῦ with it is the man who is asking. The antecedent of the third αὐτοῦ (with ἀναίδειαν) is probably also the man who is asking, but it could be the man who is in bed. It depends on the interpretation of ἀναίδειαν. (CC p. 463)

**MAN'S BOLDNESS** – τὴν ἀναίδειαν—The interpretation of the parable depends largely on the understanding of this word. “Lack of shame” comes close to preserving the ambiguity between “impudence, shamelessness” (BAGD) and “avoidance of shame” (see K. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, 125–33). In the first case, it is a feature of the behavior of the man who is asking. In the second case, it is a characteristic of the friend inside the house who is being asked to assist in showing hospitality to a visitor—something that is a matter of honor according to the oriental hospitality code. (See also comments below at 18:1–18 and 20:9–19.) (CC pp. 463-464)

Fahling says: “With this shameless disregard of his neighbor’s private comfort and apparent indifference the importunate disturber succeeded in gaining his end.” Of course, the parable is no way means that we should act rudely and shamefully toward God. So deeply did friend #1 feel a need that, disregarding the situation of friend #2, he persisted until he acquired what he needed. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)



The Greek is *anaideia* which literally means “shamelessness” or “above reproach.” Rather than acting shamefully by failing to help his persistent friend, the man in the house will actually give more than his friend asked. (TLSB)

AS MUCH AS HE NEEDS – More than what he asked for. God operates on a different level and will first of all be glad to hear our petition and also be quick to respond with all that we need some of which he may not even have determined.

He only asked for three loaves (v. 5), but the man gives according to his need. This appears to emphasize that need drives prayer. “[Through this parable,] Jesus reveals to us a God whom we can bother, who welcome His children’s importunity” (Martin Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1971, 1979] 69). And our God never slumbers or sleeps (Ps. 121:4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

**11:9-10** Augustine: “Let then the slothfulness of men be put to shame; He is more willing to give, than we to receive; He is more willing to show mercy, than we to be delivered from misery” (*NPNF* 1 6:431). (TLSB)

**11:9** SO I SAY TO YOU – Jesus is urging a boldness in our prayer life.

ASK – *αἰτεῖτε*—This is a synonym for petitionary prayer (*προσεύχομαι*). The Lord’s Prayer is first and foremost a petitionary prayer in which the disciples are taught how to petition or ask the Father for their needs. This word will be used at 11:10, 11, 12, and 13. (CC p. 464)

SEEK...KNOCK – *ζητεῖτε ... κρούετε*—Seeking and knocking are also used by Jesus for those who desire entrance into the kingdom of God to sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the messianic table (13:24–28). (CC p. 464)

**11:10** EVERYONE – Believers. (TLSB)

**11:11-13** By using rhetorical questions to characterize the kindness of human fathers, Jesus heightens the contrast between the earthly parents and God the Father, whose goodness is infinite. Note how this passage reinforces the point of the parable in vv 5–8. *give the Holy Spirit*. The best gift of all. “The Holy Spirit dwells in the elect, who have become believers, as in His temple” (FC SD XI 73). *ask Him!* Jesus concludes this teaching by urging us to ask for that which God wants to give. (TLSB)

**11:11-12** FISH/SNAKE...EGG/SCORPION – *ἰχθύος/ὄφιν, ᾠόν/σκορπίον*—Mt 7:9 has bread/stone, fish/snake. Luke’s fish/snake, egg/scorpion recalls 10:19, where the seventy (-two) have been given “authority to tread on snakes and scorpions.” Some Lukan manuscripts have three pairs, i.e., bread/stone, fish/snake, and egg/scorpion, but this is no doubt an attempt to coordinate Matthew and Luke. K. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, 136–37, argues for all three and, in citing I. Sa’id, *Sharh Bisharat Luqa* (Beirut: Near East Council of Churches, 1970) 303, offers a fascinating explanation why Jesus

uses these various pairs: “Bread, fish, and eggs are the ordinary food of a common man. ... A round stone looks like a round loaf (Luke 4:3), and there is little outward difference between the snake of the sea which is kind of fish and a snake of the land which is an ordinary snake ... and the scorpion all folded up looks like an egg.” The point of all these contrasts is that the Father certainly will give good gifts, not evil representations of the devil. (CC p. 464)

**11:13** **THOUGH YOU ARE EVIL** – This little phrase teaches our fallen nature. Even fathers who give good things to their children are evil. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

The final section (11:9–13) affirms what the parable taught, namely, that God is a giver of good gifts (cf. Mt 7:11, “good things”). But it also urges persistence on the part of the petitioner, heightened by the parallelism in the structure. Why should the disciples ask, seek, and knock? Because God is not hard to rouse or reluctant to give (cf. Lk 11:7; 1 Ki 18:16–46). He is eager to give (Deut 30:9). If human fathers give good gifts, even if they are evil men, “how much more the Father from heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (Lk 11:13). This is the same Holy Spirit who rested upon Mary at the moment of Jesus’ conception and on Jesus at his baptism, who led Jesus into the wilderness and rested on him as he preached in Nazareth. And now, for the first time, the disciples are told that the Father will give to them too this same Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be promised again by Jesus to his disciples after the resurrection and will be given to them at Pentecost. Thus the Trinity comes to the disciples as a gift: through the Son, they call God “Father” and receive the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:15, 23). (CC p. 471)

*give the Holy Spirit.* Mt 7:11 has “give good gifts,” meaning spiritual gifts. Luke emphasizes the work of the Spirit, the greatest of God’s gifts. (CSB)

If fathers who are evil give good things to their children, then most certainly the perfect Father is in heaven will give the greatest gift: the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot believe in Christ or have forgiveness and eternal life. See Luther’s explanations of the Third Article and of the Second Petition in the Small Catechism. See also Romans 8:12-16; Galatians 3:1-5, 13-14. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

Jesus’ reference to the Holy Spirit at this point helps explain why the Lord’s Prayer became part of the church’s baptismal and eucharistic liturgies. In fact, the Lord’s Prayer could be called “the catechumen’s prayer,” for this is how one is instructed to pray in preparation for Baptism and Eucharist. When one learns to pray the Lord’s Prayer, one learns how God has established his hospitality with us in his name and his kingdom and how we respond to this welcoming God by petitioning him for those things that we need to keep us faithful and from falling into unbelief. When one prays, one enters into a relationship of hospitality where God is the giver of all things and the petitioner is the recipient of the gift of his Holy Spirit. By that Spirit’s power God’s kingdom comes among us as we “believe his holy Word and live a godly life, both here in time and hereafter forever.” That Holy Spirit keeps the whole Christian church on

earth “with Jesus Christ in the one true faith,” and in that church “he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers.” The grand promise—that the good Father gives the Holy Spirit through Jesus—assures a gracious answer to every prayer. (CC p. 471)

**11:1–13** Jesus teaches that Christian prayers are unfailingly heard because God has promised to hear us, and He always keeps His promises. Were prayer to depend on us, we could never be sure of God’s response, because sin corrupts completely. We can depend on God to keep His promise to hear us and answer us because He never breaks His word. Prayer is a blessed opportunity granted by the Gospel. • “What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Ev’rything to God in prayer! Oh, what peace we often forfeit; Oh, what needless pain we bear—All because we do not carry Ev’rything to God in prayer!” Amen. (*LSB* 770:1) (TLSB)