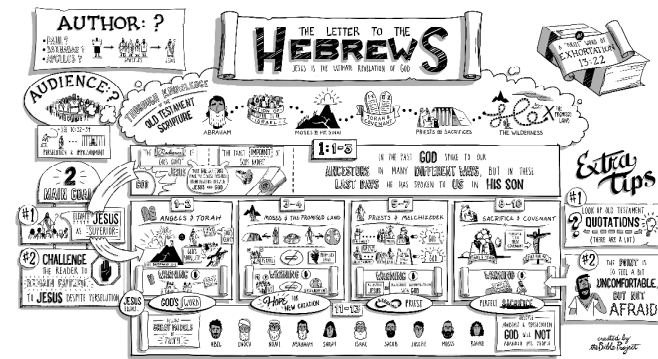


The Congregation at Prayer
The Whole Story

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



Week #10-The Whole Story
Pre-Lent: Week of Quinquagesima
March 2-March 9, 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 Second Commandment**
You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

VERSE: Mark 12:29-31 ***“The most important (commandment) is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as your self.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”***

PRAYER of the WORD

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

Sunday, March 2

- Read ***Psalm 61*** (I call to you when my heart is faint.)
- Read ***The Catholic Epistles: Hebrews 5-7***

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Just as we say that it is possible to have faith without being literate, so we assert that it is not possible to understand the statements contained in the faith without study. To assimilate the right affirmations and reject the rest is not the product of simple faith but of faith engaged in learning. Ignorance involves a lack of education and learning. It is teaching that implants



- 4 For us He prayed; for us He taught;
For us His daily works He wrought,
By words and signs and actions thus
Still seeking not Himself but us.
- 5 For us by wickedness betrayed,
For us, in crown of thorns arrayed,
He bore the shameful cross and death;
For us He gave His dying breath.
- 6 For us He rose from death again;
For us He went on high to reign;
For us He sent His Spirit here
To guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.
- D 7 All glory to our Lord and God
For love so deep, so high, so broad;
The Trinity whom we adore
Forever and forevermore.

Text: attr. Thomas à Kempis, 1380–1471; tr. Benjamin Webb, 1819–85, alt.

Text: Public domain

in us the scientific knowledge of things divine and human. It is possible to live uprightly in poverty. It is also possible in wealth. We admit that it is easier and quicker to track down virtue if we have a preliminary education. It can be hunted down without these aids, although even then those with learning, “with their faculties trained by practice,” have an advantage. STROMATEIS 1.6.35.¹

Monday, March 3

- Read ***Psalm 62*** (God alone is my rock and my salvation.)
- Read ***The Catholic Epistles: Hebrews 8-10***

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: We ought to examine not merely one single form of self-control in sexual matters but the other objects which our soul self-indulgently desires, not content with bare necessities but making a fuss about luxury. Self-control means indifference to money, comfort and property, a mind above spectacles, control of the tongue, mastery of evil thoughts. It actually happened that some angels suffered a failure of self-control, were overpowered by sexual desire and fell from heaven to earth. Valentinus in his letter to Agathopus says, “Jesus showed his self-control in all that he endured. He lived in the

¹ Heen, Erik M., and Philip D. W. Krey, eds. 2005. [Hebrews](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

practice of Godhead. He ate and drank in a way individual to himself without excreting his food. Such was his power of self-control that the food was not corrupted within him, since he was not subject to corruption.” So we embrace self-control out of the love we bear the Lord and out of its honorable status, consecrating the temple of the Spirit. It is honorable “to emasculate oneself” of all desire “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven”³⁰ and “to purify the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” STROMATEIS 3.7.59.²

Tuesday, March 4

- Read ***Psalm 63*** (O God, you are my God)
- Read ***The Catholic Epistles: Hebrews 11-13***

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: “Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets?” “The majority do not turn their minds to the sort of things they encounter, and, if they are taught, they do not acquire knowledge, although they think they do.” So says the admirable Heraclitus. Do you not realize that he is another critic of nonbelievers? “The righteous shall live by his faith,” says the prophet.³ One of the other prophets remarks, “If you do not believe, you emphatically will not understand either.” How could a soul come to the

² Heen, Erik M., and Philip D. W. Krey, eds. 2005. [*Hebrews*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Luther’s Morning Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Luther’s Evening Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

544 O LOVE, HOW DEEP

- 1 O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
Beyond all thought and fantasy,
That God, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form for mortals’ sake!
- 2 He sent no angel to our race,
Of higher or of lower place,
But wore the robe of human frame,
And to this world Himself He came.
- 3 For us baptized, for us He bore
His holy fast and hungered sore;
For us temptation sharp He knew;
For us the tempter overthrew.

water, so now anyone who has not been baptized in the church cannot be saved, for the church has been founded in the unity of the Lord, as the sacrament of the one ark. LETTERS 74.11.⁷

Sunday, March 9

- Read ***Psalm 68*** (God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered.)
- Read ***The Catholic Epistles: 2 Peter 1-3***

End Every Day

Pray the *Collect for Ash Wednesday*

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Your Personal Prayers

pray **LORD'S PRAYER**

⁷ Bray, Gerald, ed. 2000. [*James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

study of these things, itself exceptional, if, deep within, lack of faith over the teaching is fighting against it? Faith, which the Greeks think alien and useless and which they consequently malign, is in fact preconception by the will, an act of consenting to religion and, as the divine apostle puts it, “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old received divine approval.” Without faith it is impossible to please God. STROMATEIS 2.2.8–9.³

Wednesday, March 5 (Ash Wednesday)

- Read ***Psalm 64*** (Preserve my life from the dread of the enemy.)
- Read ***The Catholic Epistles: James 1-3***
BEDE: You can believe what God says, you can believe that God exists, and you can believe in him, which means that you love him so much that you want to do what he tells you. There are many evil people around who can manage the first two of these. They believe that God means what he says, and they are quite prepared to accept that he exists. But it takes someone who is not just a nominal Christian but who is one in deed and in living to love God and to do what he commands.

³ Heen, Erik M., and Philip D. W. Krey, eds. 2005. [*Hebrews*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Faith with love is Christian, but faith without love is demonic. CONCERNING THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.⁴

Thursday, March 6

- Read **Psalm 65** (Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion)
- Read **The Catholic Epistles: James 4-5**

CHRYSOSTOM: It is a great thing if we can give thanks with great joy. But there is such a thing as giving thanks out of fear, and also such a thing as giving thanks in grief. This is what Job did when, in great suffering, he thanked God, saying: "The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away." Let no one say that he was not grieving over what had happened to him or that he did not feel it deeply. Do not take away the great praise due to the righteous.... How great is this praise? Tell me, in what circumstances do you bless Job? Is it when he had all those camels and flocks and herds? Or is it when he says: "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away"? For the devil also harms us not in order to take our possessions away so that we have nothing left but so that when that happens he can force us to curse God because of it. CATENA.⁵

⁴ Bray, Gerald, ed. 2000. [James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁵ Bray, Gerald, ed. 2000. [James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Friday, March 7

- Read **Psalm 66** (Shout for joy to God, all the earth)
- Read **The Catholic Epistles: 1 Peter 1-2**

OECUMENIUS: What exactly are the blessings which God has given us in Christ? First, there is hope, not the kind of hope which he gave to Moses, that the people would inherit a promised land in Canaan, for that hope was temporal and corruptible. Rather God gives us a living hope, which has come from the resurrection of Christ. Because of that, he has given all those who believe in Jesus the same resurrection. This is a living hope and an incorruptible inheritance, not stored up here on earth but in heaven, which is much greater.

COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.⁶

Saturday, March 8

- Read **Psalm 67** (May God be gracious to us and bless us.)
- Read **The Catholic Epistles: 1 Peter 3-5**

CYPRIAN: Peter showed and vindicated the unity of the church by commanding and warning that we can be saved only through the baptism of the one church. Just as in that baptism of the world by which the ancient iniquity was purged, the one who was not in the ark could not be saved through

⁶ Bray, Gerald, ed. 2000. [James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.