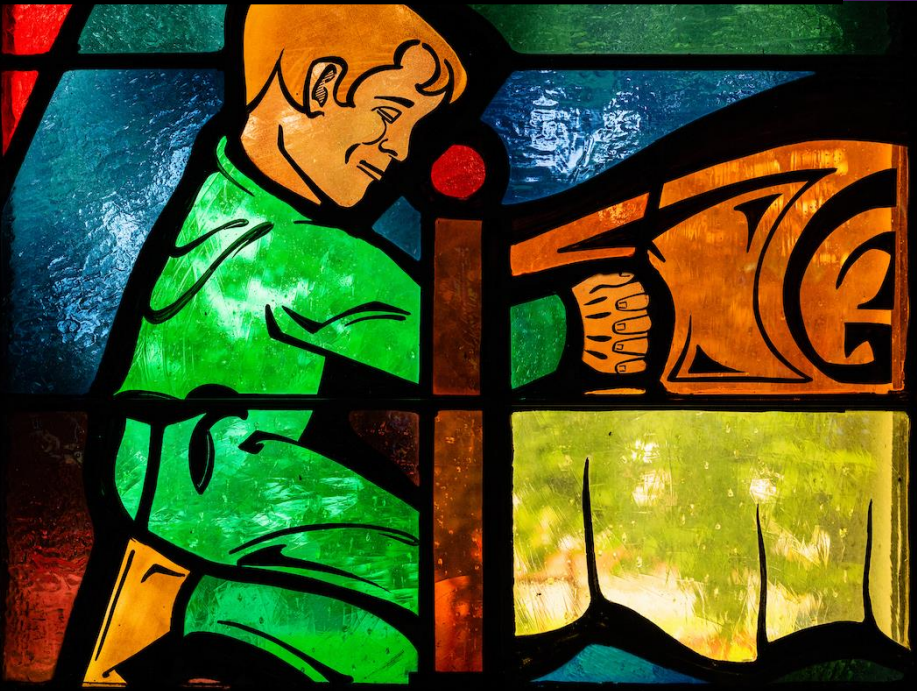


Pray



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February 21, 2024

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Pray for the leaders of this community

When we think of politics, we often think about the things we see on national news: the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court. We will focus our prayer on these on a later day. Today, I'd like you to focus your prayer on those who lead in this community.

These are not all political positions, but many are. Examples of our community leaders are our township and county boards, school principals and superintendents, school boards, judges

The more local a leader is, the more their policies and decisions affect your daily life. Sometimes we agree with these policies and decisions, sometimes we don't. Our community leaders need your prayers.

St. Peter directs Christians: "Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good." - 1 Peter 2:13-14

St. Paul urges young pastor Timothy to instruct Christians that: "petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." - 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Today pray for the leaders in our community who make, administer, and judge our laws.

February 22, 2024

Psalm 133

Pray for unity.

Our world is marked by division. Nations, families, and churches often suffer strife from infighting and disunity. In the church this disunity shows itself on several fronts. We become divided when we place our preferences and pet projects ahead of the mission of Jesus. We become divided when we start comparing ourselves to others. We become divided when we grapple for who is in control.

The capitol “C” Church is also divided. Sometimes by language or ethnicity, but also by doctrine. Rather, it is false doctrine, a discord of teaching that divides the Church into its many denominations. Such division is painful.

Yet there is hope. Despite the divisions that we see in the world and in the Church, the picture that Scripture paints of our redemption is one where divisions cease we will have a perfect unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13).

In the book of Revelation, John see the “multitude” of the heavenly host:

“After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!” - Revelation 7:9–10

Today, pray for unity, unity in our community, in our nation, in our world, but especially in the Church. Know that God’s answer to this, ultimately, is yes!

February 23, 2024

Romans 13:1-7

Pray for those who “bear the sword”

The fourth commandment teaches us that we are to honor and obey those in authority. All authority comes from God. In creation, the place where authority first resided was in that of father and mother. It is from this office that all other authority derives.

Since our world is evil, we pray that we would be delivered from evil, including evil that would hurt and harm our bodies and take our possessions. To answer this prayer, the Lord has given the authority to some to “bear the sword,” that is to execute God’s wrath upon those who do evil, up to, and including taking the life of an evil doer.

This is a solemn task. Those who serve in this capacity, such as soldiers or police officers, are in need of our prayers. At times, the weight of the responsibility and even guilt for taking forceful action can be heavy.

Today we pray for those who bear the sword. We especially pray that God would guard and protect them. We pray that they would receive a clean heart and a clear conscience through the hearing of the Gospel, that all their sin has been forgiven in Jesus Christ. Finally, we pray that we would honor those who serve in such a way that they are willing to lay down their lives for their neighbors.

February 24, 2024

John 9:1-7

Pray for the sick

One of the most frequent prayer requests I receive is for those who are suffering from an illness, injury, or disability. Among the manifold gifts of God, health is among the foremost. Good health, however, is often not appreciated until it is gone. The sick need your prayer.

Sickness is a result of man's fall into sin that first occurred in the Garden. In a very real way, it is the entrance of death into our very lives before death's final blow. It is no wonder that when sickness arises, those who are afflicted, and those who love the afflicted turn and ask God "why?"

When Jesus heals the man born blind, He is asked, "who sinned, this man or his parents?" We too want to find where the blame belongs. While the theologically correct answer, pointing back to Adam's sin is accurate, it isn't always helpful. Jesus wants his disciples to have a completely different perspective on sickness and suffering:

"It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."

We won't always know what God is doing, exactly how He is using sickness and suffering for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28), but He does. So when we pray for the sick, we pray to our Great Physician, Jesus Christ not only for healing, but grace to bear these infirmities in faith. We also hold onto the promise, that while earthly healing may be temporary, what Jesus has secured for us in the resurrection is eternal.

Today, pray for the sick. Pray for them by name. Pray not only for healing, but faith that clings to the promise of the resurrection, where God will raise the bodies of all believers in glory to life everlasting.

February 25, 2024

John 4:23-24

Pray to receive the Lord's gifts with thanksgiving

What is true worship? What does Jesus mean when He tells the woman at the well, "the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the father in spirit and truth"?

It is simply this: The worship which pleases God is to believe in Him and expect nothing but good from Him. The greatest good that our Lord gives us is of Himself in His Word and Sacrament.

Christians began worshipping on the day our Lord Jesus rose from the dead quite early. In fact, we see that this is already the pattern in the New Testament. The chief purpose of Christian Worship is not to make a sacrifice to God so that He will be pleased with us and have mercy on us. Rather, it is to receive from God the gifts He loves to give.

Christ made the once and for all sacrifice for us on the cross. What He accomplished for us there is delivered in the Lord's Gifts in the Divine Service. In the Word, Absolution, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, we receive nothing less than forgiveness, life, and salvation.

As you prepare for worship, pray that you may receive the Lord's gifts with thanksgiving.

February 26, 2024

Matthew 5:43-48

Pray for your enemies

It is easy to love someone who is nice to you, to pray for a friend, or even to pray for your neighbor. One of the most difficult things that Jesus calls Christians to do is to “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

We pray for our enemies by not wishing them harm, but praying for their wellbeing of body and soul. We pray that God would aid us in not returning evil for evil. We pray that “all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from [us] along with all malice.” (Ephesians 4:31)

David teaches us in the Psalms that when we pray for our enemies our prayer is that God’s justice would be done. “Vengeance is mine says the Lord” (Romans 12:19). We also pray for the redemption and salvation of our enemies.

Why does the Christian do this? We love because Jesus first loved us (1 John 4:19). God has loved us even while we, in our sin, were His enemies. As Jesus was being crucified, he prayed “Father, forgive them, for they do not what they do.”(Luke 23:34)

Today, pray for your enemies. Pray that they would repent, that they would know and believe in the salvation in Jesus Christ. Pray that in your dealings with them, that all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice may be put away. Pray that you would bear the fruits of the spirit towards them.

February 27, 2024

Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 1:16

Pray for courage to share the Gospel

Just prior to His ascension, Jesus instructs His disciples:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” -
Matthew 28:19–20

The word that is used for “go” is not a command. Rather, it is attendant to the command “make disciples.” It may be translated this way: “Therefore, as you are going, make disciples of all nations...”

What does this mean? It means that we make disciples where we are at currently. Indeed, some are called to be missionaries to far flung corners of the globe. Some men are called into the public ministry to be pastors. This command to “make disciples” is given to the Church.

Maybe you have tried sharing the Gospel, that Jesus has died for the sins of the World, with somebody. Maybe you never have. For many, this can be a daunting task. The temptation is to let our fear and doubt prevail when it comes to sharing the Gospel with others. We may hesitate due to concerns about how our message will be received or fear of rejection.

When we are afraid of sharing the Gospel of Jesus, remember His promise at the end of this command, “I am with you always.” That’s right, Jesus is with us. In fact, He has attached numerous promises to the proclamation of the Gospel, namely that it will succeed in all that the Lord has set it out to do (Isaiah 55:11) and that it will bear much fruit (Matthew 13:23).

Today, pray for courage to share the Gospel with your neighbor and faith to rely on the promise of God that the Spirit will accomplish His work.