

The Daily Bread of Life

Feed your household with the bread that endures to eternal life.
Feast on the words of God and works of Jesus.

This coming Sunday we will be celebrating our unity as a Synod and the blessings God has given us through our Synod. We call our group of Lutheran churches a "synod," because the word means "walking together," and our unity of doctrine and practice is very important to us. Our synod is the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, or WELS.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Text

Matthew 11:25-30

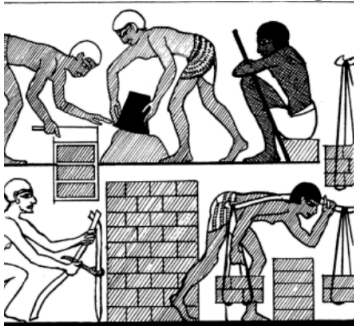
²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

²⁷ "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Keys to Understanding

Yoke : a wooden bar placed across the shoulders to help in carrying a heavy load. A yoke is being used in the bottom right.



Keys to Applying

Jesus spoke these words amid a time in his ministry when it was very evident that most people would not receive his message. John the Baptist was in prison and seemed to be having his own doubts about Jesus, and Jesus had just finished. Jesus apparently was becoming frustrated by the stubborn people of Galilee and their refusal to repent. Jesus, thinking about how many people in this troubled world would not come to him, issued this invitation to all who need rest to come to him and find it. His yoke is the fact that you will have to suffer as a Christian. You may be ridiculed, and you will have to struggle to resist the temptations of your heart and the world. The benefit is rest from all troubles, even the labors of Christian life. With Jesus you have the promise of forgiveness, and with that the promise of eternal life in heaven.

Because we are Lutherans...

Martin Luther's explanation to the Second Article of the Apostle's Creed

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, *delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil*, not with silver and gold but with his holy and precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death, in order *that I may be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness*, even as he is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

For all

1. What burdens you about life?
2. Other than going to Jesus, what solutions do people try in order to find rest from their burdens?
3. Other than Jesus, what gives you rest? Does that ever replace Jesus as your rest and peace?
4. We need to remember that the real cause for all our troubles is that we are sinners who live in a sinful world. God has made sure that we won't forget that by filling the world with troubles and burdens, (see Genesis 3 for God's curse on the world because of sin).
5. Find your true rest in Jesus. The only way to truly find rest is to have his promise of rescue from this sinful, troubled life.

More good reading for Lutherans...

From Martin Luther's introduction to the Small Catechism

He who does not highly esteem the sacrament suggests thereby that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no hell. That is to say, he believes in none of these, although he is deeply immersed in them and is held captive by the devil. On the other hand, he suggests that he needs no grace, no life, no paradise, no heaven, no Christ, no God, nothing good at all. For if he believed that he was involved in so much that is evil and was in need of so much that is good, he would not neglect the sacrament in which aid is afforded against such evil and in which such good is bestowed. It is not necessary to compel him by any law to receive the sacrament, for he will hasten to it of his own accord, he will feel constrained to receive it, he will insist that you administer it to him.¹

Questions for Adults

1. Spend some time thinking about the ways that our Savior gives us rest through our unity with others who believe in God. In the following ways, consider how our Savior uses our Synod to give his promised rest. How would your life be different in these ways if you were not part of a church or a synod?
 - a. By being a part of this church, you receive the Sacraments.

¹ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (341). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

- b. By being part of the WELS, you are able to call a pastor who has been trained in the Word of God.
- c. Together, as a synod, we publish solidly Scriptural Christian books through Northwestern Publishing House.
- d. Together, with our pooled resources as a synod, we send out missionaries to new parts of our country and to foreign countries.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, in this world where many things burden us, drive us to your Word and Sacrament for the rest you have promised. Lead us to be thankful for the blessings you have given us by bringing us together with others who are looking for rest also in the pure preaching of your Word and the faithful use of the Sacraments. Amen.

Week of October 8-14, Number 2

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The Text

1 Chronicles 17:10b-14

I will also subdue all your enemies.

“ ‘I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: ¹¹ When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. ¹⁴ I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.’ ”

Keys to Understanding

The house: David had been planning to build a house for God—a temple. God uses the word house in two different ways. He explains that he will actually be

Keys to Applying

With all the disappointments of worldly powers and even the earthly establishment of our churches, it sure is nice to know that God’s kingdom never will fall. Even the WELS (our church body) has its problems.

the one to build a house for David, in the sense of a royal dynasty. Think of the “House of Windsor,” the royal family in England. The kingdom would last forever, a prophecy that only Christ could fulfill. One of the members of that royal dynasty (Solomon) would build the house (temple) that David had intended.

God’s kingdom: his rule as God who loves and cares for his people, who love him and obey him freely. Simply put, God’s kingdom is made up of everyone who believes.

Even our congregation has its problems. Neither our church nor our synod are perfect, and neither will last forever. Besides this, we see every other earthly establishment crumbling—from national government to city government, even down to the family itself. Thanks be to God that his kingdom will never crumble. Christ, the only Son of David who could fulfill verse 14, sits on the throne. He has defeated sin and death by his death and resurrection. He rules in perfect power, untouchable by every enemy. He will protect us from every harm until the day when we join with him in the victory celebration of heaven.

Because we are Lutherans...

Martin Luther’s Explanation to the Second Article of the Apostle’s Creed

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold but with his holy and precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death, in order that I may be his, *live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness*, even as he is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Questions for all ages

1. What worries you most these days about your family, your church, and government?
2. Christ’s kingdom will last forever. Is God’s glory tarnished when Christian families fall apart, when churches are destroyed by quarreling or false doctrine, or when governments go corrupt?
3. How does Luther’s Explanation to the Second Article assure us that Christ’s enemies will never take away his kingdom, even though they may destroy our family, our church, and our government? (clue: it has to do his death and resurrection)
4. How do you know that you will be victorious with Christ in his eternal kingdom? (clue: start with thinking about your Baptism and the Lord’s Supper)

Bible Story

Paul and Silas in prison.

Acts 16:16-40

1. Paul and Silas sang, because they knew that they would be in heaven with God, even though they were in prison at the time.

2. They knew that the prison doors would not be able to stop God from doing his work through his Word.
3. God showed that no enemy will be able to harm his people or destroy his Church. He opened the prison, and then converted the jailer and his family by the power of the Word.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you rule over everything, and you do it with us in mind. We ask that you would keep your eye on what your enemies are doing, so that they will not be able to do us any true harm. We ask that you would protect us through this life so that we will one day join you in the celebration of your victory in heaven. Amen.

Week of October 8-14, Number 3

The Daily Bread of Life

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The Text

Romans 15:4-6

⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Keys to Understanding

Everything that was written in the past: Paul was talking about the Old Testament. From our perspective, the entire Bible is in the past, and was written to teach us, encourage us, and give us hope.

Keys to Applying

The key thought of this text is unity. The only way we can have true unity is through faith in Christ. Without faith, whatever friendship, marriage, or family relationship we have will not be truly close in every way. When Christ rules in your heart, you can't be all that close to someone who is ruled by sin. On the other hand, for those who do believe, God promises to give us true unity in his Word.

Because we are Lutherans...

Martin Luther's Explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and *sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith*. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

Questions

1. What dangers threaten your unity as a believing family? What dangers threaten our unity as a believing church?
2. What does this have to say about the necessity of hearing God's Word so that we may be united as believers in our family and in our church?
3. According to Webster, "glory" in this context means, "worshipful praise, honor, and thanksgiving, 'giving *glory* to God.'" Why does God receive glory for creating true unity among selfish, quarrelsome people like ourselves? Think about what happens when Christ and his Word are forgotten, and consider Luther's explanation to the Third Article above.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

You have called us into the body of Christ:

Help us live as one in Him.

You have given us one faith:

Keep us in the one true faith.

You have given us one baptism:

Let us live in our common baptismal grace.

You have given us apostles and prophets:

Let us hear with singleness of heart.

You have sent us pastors and teachers:

Enlighten us to learn with oneness of mind.

You have equipped us for the unity of faith:

Help us attain that unity by forgiveness.

You have given us Your love in Christ:

Enable us to speak Your truth in love.

You built Your church of Your will:

Make us to fit into our proper place.

You create Your church of living stones:

Enliven us to serve Your holy purpose,

that the whole church may grow and upbuild itself in love.

We ask it in the name of Jesus, the chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Amen.