

LUTHER ON PRAYER (adapted from Dan Borvan, 1/17 New Horizons)

Prayer Infected As part of “doing penance,”the Council of Trent prescribes 3 kinds of satisfaction— prayer, fasting, and giving alms—explaining, “God we appease by prayer, our neighbor we satisfy by alms, and ourselves we chastise by fasting.” We can “pay for others what is due to God” through prayer, alms, and fasting. Thus medieval society was composed of three estates: the Clergy, the Nobility, and the Third Estate (everyone else). A 17th lawyer summarized the duties of the three estates like this: “Some pray, others fight, still others work” (Duby, The Three Orders). Luther rejected a professional praying class, teaching that everyone’s prayers could be effective...He insisted that Scripture teaches the priesthood of all believers...The prayers of monks are not necessarily more effective than those of peasant farmers. Prayers are efficacious only because of the righteousness of God (the object of prayer), not the righteousness of the one praying. All Christians are to pray because God commands us to pray, not because we are holy enough to pray.

The Lesson Our own righteousness does not make our prayers efficacious, but neither should our lack of righteousness prevent us from obeying God’s command to pray. Luther explained, “For we allow such thoughts as these to lead us astray and deter us: ‘I am not holy or worthy enough; if I were as godly and holy as St. Peter or St. Paul, then I would pray.’ But put such thoughts far away, for just the same commandment which applied to St. Paul applies also to me. Therefore, you should say: ‘My prayer is just as precious, holy, and pleasing to God as that of St. Paul, or of the most holy saints.’ This is the reason ... since God does not regard prayer on account of the person, but on account of his word and obedience thereto.” We pray because God commands us to pray, and we have faith in God’s promise that He will hear our prayers.

The Danger As crystallized at the Council of Trent, the Roman church was teaching (and still teaches today) that God will not finally justify us until we have some good works of our own to merit the kingdom. Our grace-enabled obedience is part of the ground of our justification. This is a deadly error, for before the bar of the Lord’s perfect justice, nothing we can do is good enough. The best of our works are always tainted by sin, and if we depend in any way on what we do for our heavenly citizenship, we will find ourselves severed from Christ, who is the only way to the Father (Gal. 5:4; John 14:6). To commingle the good we do in our sanctification with the righteousness of Christ in our justification is to deny the gospel. (2014 Tabletalk Magazine)

A Tip for his Barber Luther said that when he felt cool or joyless in prayer, he retreated to his room or to the church, where he recited quietly to himself the words of the “Ten Commandments, the Creed, and, if I have time, some words of Christ or of Paul, or some psalms, just as a child might do” (Simple Way to Pray, 1). With each passage, Christians should ponder the instructions given to them, offer thanksgiving, confess sins exposed by the text, and issue a general prayer in response. Instead of mindlessly repeating words, the Christian meditates on divine truths and responds in a prayer of repentance and faith.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

November 16, 2025

TODAY	Ushers	Greeters
11/16	Dan B. and Kevin	Dan and Leila Bair
11/23	Matt J. and Peter	Jim and Ruth Robbins
• 9:30 am: Sunday school classes for all ages. • 10:30 am: Morning Worship • Fellowship meal: Today, following worship. Everyone is welcome and we will share what we have. • 4:30 pm: PM Worship- Scripture– Prov. 18:10 & Lk 11:1-2: "Lord’s Prayer (Pt 4): “Hallowed Be Your Name” • 6:00 pm: NE Kingdom Bible study on Genesis • Thank offering envelopes are available in your bulletin for this annual offering to the Lord for the work of foreign & home missions and Christian Education in the OPC. We will also be receiving this offering next week.		

THIS WEEK

- **Wed, Nov 19th, 7:00 pm: Zoom Bible Study on I Corinthians.** Check with Olivia for Zoom link.
- **Thu, Nov 20th, 9:30 am:** Ladies Bible study at Timm’s
- **Thu, Nov 20th, 1:30—3:00 pm:** Barre Bible Study
- **Thu, Nov 20th, 6:00—7:30 pm:** Trail Life
- **Nov 22nd, 9 am-12 pm: Greens Party @** COPC fellowship hall; see insert.

UPCOMING

- **Choir practice** will be held at 12:30 pm on 11/23, 11/30 and 12/7 to sing on 12/14. See Dawna Selle if you are interested in joining.
- **Apr 11-12, 2025:** Presbytery Ladies' Retreat at Swanzey, NH. See info on foyer table.
- **March 7th, 2026** The Genevans — see insert in today’s bulletin