

The Supremacy of God's Word Revealed in the  
Prayer That He Gave Us.  
Translation  
By: Andre Frandle

Senior Dogmatics  
Professor Brug  
3-20-98

Doctrinal discussions

The Glory of the Lord's Prayer (continuation)  
Read by Pastor F. Verwiebe in Elmira 1924.

Third Petition.

*May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

We have prayed: "Hallowed be Thy Name", "May your kingdom come"; and now it says further: "May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

What is God's will? We perhaps find the best answer from the connection with the foregoing. The good, gracious will of God is plainly this, that His Name among us be hallowed, and his kingdom may come to us. In this way these petitions hang together, and in this way they explain and complement one another. His Name is not yet kept holy, as it should be, like it is kept holy in heaven, just as even His kingdom is not yet come on earth, as it should be. Therefore we pray furthermore, that the will of the heavenly Father, may be done also on earth, as it surely is in heaven.

The good gracious will of God in regard to us is that we come into His fellowship through faith in His Son. It is that we be blessed through Him, that we have eternal life, like Christ Himself says in John 6:40. "*This is the will of him who sent me, that whoever looks to the Son and believes in Him, might have eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day.*" Matthew 18:14: "*Therefore it is not the will of your Father in heaven that anyone of these little ones should be lost.*" 1 Timothy 2:4: "*God wills that all men should be helped and come to an understanding of the truth.*" 2 Peter 3:9: "*God doesn't want anyone to be lost, but that everyone become repentant.*" It is furthermore the will of God that these ones, who have become just through faith, and have also received the forgiveness of sins through Christ, now should also lead a life of sanctification. Because they have indeed become children of God through faith they should strive after it- to be perfect, just like their heavenly Father is perfect; to be holy, just like He is holy. 1 Thessalonians 4:3: "*This is the will of God, your sanctification.*" 1 Peter 2:15, "*This is the will of God, that you stop up the ignorance of foolish men with doing good.*" This sanctification stands therein, however, that the man should love God with all of his heart, with all of his soul, with all his mind, and also love his neighbor as himself. In which two commands according to the Word of Christ in Matthew 22:37,39, the entire law and prophets are contained.

This will of God is a good will, for He only purposes good for men, his temporal and eternal welfare. This is His gracious will, that the compassionate love of God makes itself known therein toward the sinner. This will can only be good, because God is love, and therefore, his salvation and his happiness can only be intent on the good of man.

But why are we praying now, that this good and gracious will of God may happen? Because there are adversaries who are working against this good and gracious will of God; and these adversaries are Satan, the world and the flesh. They are terrible and powerful fiends. Luther sings about Satan: *Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight (literally: great might and deep guile are his cruel armor), On earth is not his equal.* And the description, which the Bible gives about this fiend, justifies these words of Luther perfectly. Christ calls Satan the murderer from the beginning. Peter says, "The Devil goes around like a roaring lion and seeks, whom he may devour". He is called in the Revelation the great dragon, the old serpent, the devil, Satan, who tempts the entire world. The sins and all the consequences of sins, the misery, distress and need, the temporal and eternal death, are his work. He is the sworn enemy of God and of His people and he goes out only for this purpose, to hinder God's will and to destroy God's work.

And the accomplice of the devil is the world. They are all the unbelieving, unconverted people, who live (lit. pass time) according to their old natural condition. Oh, how seductive it is still! How it knows to brag with its treasures and goods, its honors, its joys and delights! And it is in the majority. The majority of people side with it, and agree with the same broad way. And it is difficult to swim against the current! A person is so likely to go with the majority. Now it charms and entices; now it threatens those who do not side with it. How the Word of God also warns about this! *Do not love the world or what is in the world. Thus anyone who loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything which is in the world, namely the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the arrogant life is not from the Father but from the world. And the world perishes with its desires; but whoever does the will of God, he will remain in eternity!*

The third fiend that is contrary to the gracious, good will of God is our own flesh. That is likewise in the Bible an evil name. About its work is say, *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.* St. Paul himself, who was a man born again by the Holy Spirit, must say, lamenting about himself, *I am fleshly, sold to sin, for I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells nothing of good. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing. I am a wretched man, who will save me from this body of death.*

Now it is of value for the Christian to overcome the evil advice and will of the three powerful, tricky fiends. He cannot do it with his own power. This power only God can give him. But He wants to be asked, if he wants to give it. He demands our shouts, if we want to live, and through Him vigorously overcome our faculty, fiend, world, flesh and sin. Now in these words, "your will, loving heavenly Father, be done" lies the petition about power to overcome.

"Your will be done" says therefore immediately, Lord, teach us your will, that we know and want the same things. Furthermore: give us power that our will may be suitable and conform to your will. Hinder the will of those who are against your will, who do not want that we believe, live and walk in conformity to your will. Afterwards: let us say, that we submit ourselves to your will: *Not mine, but thy will be done.* For the will of God is now also, that we should through much tribulation arrive in His Kingdom, and that lays on our hearts so heavily. For this reason someone has also called this petition a difficult petition. The Holy Scripture is full of what the will of God is. Its essence is to lead them through sorrow towards the eternal goal. Hebrews 12:6 *because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.* 1 Peter 4:12-13 *Dear friends do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.* Romans 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,* 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.*

Sorrows and troubles cannot harm us but should be of use for us according to the good, gracious will of God to be wholesome for us. Also, the faithful Christian makes them necessary in many different ways. In one case they are for fatherly chastisement, so that he does not forget, what an evil thing his sin is. In another case as an unpleasant examination, whether he thinks with his faith that it is also serious, in another case as an unpleasant purification so that he is able to escape indeed more and more from his own still perpetually adherent sin. Many times, however, they are also unpleasant evidence, so that the Lord makes clear to his believers of the world, why they are ready. Everything is given thereby for him, so that the victory of faith may be for him who overcomes the world, just as the Lord told Ananias when he should go to Saul: *I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my Name.* And Paul himself said: *We boast of our own sufferings,* and broke into a formal song of praise about the coming sorrows with regard to his own and other children of God. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Romans 8:35-39.

Everyone must consider under this point of view that the evil, Satan and the world, inflict violence on the believers, to bring about the best they can, work against the wonderful will and rule of God only to their salvation and their bliss. Satan and the world freely strive only against, to do evil and to produce misfortune, but God turns the evil into happiness for his children.

This is often darkened and hidden to us here on earth. We must often sing with the song writer:

Think of what ways we find  
Often must the most loved child  
The greatest cross to carry;  
The entire time of grace  
Of life is  
A storm of greater torment

This is part of the secrets of the godly directions and decrees, which the light of natural (reason)

does not understand at all. The light of grace understands only a little, what will become obviously perfect at once in the light of splendor, about which Paul says: *Now I know it in part, then however I will know, the same as I am known.*

Which godly examples concerning submission to the will of God shall the Holy Scriptures put before our eyes.

God spoke to Abraham: *Go from your fatherland, and from your friends, and from your father's house, into a land, that I will show to you.* And Abraham responded, "Your will be done".

Genesis 22:1-2 *Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."* And Abraham heard the voice of God, which demanded this sacrifice from him, whether or not he could understand how this harmonized with the promise of God in reference to Isaac. Indeed for him, in Isaac his seed would be reckoned, and in Isaac all people on earth would be blessed. However- "Your will be done".

Job lost, in the testing of his faith, all his possessions, his sons and daughters but he said, *The Lord has given, the Lord has taken; let the name of the Lord be praised.* This is his faith and his confession. To this degree he submitted himself to the will of God. "Your will be done".

David had to flee from his own godless son Absalom; but he knew he stood in the hand of God. He said, *See, here I am, he made it with me, how it pleased him.* "Your will be done".

When Paul, according to Acts 21, was on the way to Jerusalem, and the Holy Spirit had predicted that bonds and sorrow were waiting for him there. The young man begged him, surely not to show up; there he said, *"What are you doing, that you are crying and breaking my heart? For I am ready, not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus"*. Indeed they were silent and said, "The will of the Lord be done".

The entire earthly life of our Savior, especially, was a life completely according to the will of his heavenly Father. Already Psalm 40:8 says about him, *Then I said, "Here I am, I have come -- it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."* About his mission on earth, he says in John 6:38, *For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.* John 4:34 says, *"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.* In the Garden of Gethsemane, in a terrible soul struggle, he spoke three times almost the same words: *Father, if it is possible, so let this cup from me, yet not what I want, but what you want"*.

Also in this piece he has allowed us an example, that we should follow after in his footsteps.

Indeed, it may be good for heart and flesh, to follow him, to carry the cross after him, to say, *How you lead me, so will I go without any of my own choosing.* But we know that the Lord has preceded us, and a coward he who will not heed *When the chief Captain takes the lead.* It is of worth: *We bear sorrows with him, so we will also be lifted up with him to splendor.* Through the cross we get to the crown. Whoever will be mocked here with him, will there also with him be crowned; whomever dies with him, will also there be lifted up.

Where does this petition also lead us? Into Heaven. For whoever does the will of God, he remains into eternity. Not all who say Lord, Lord attain this goal, but also the one who does the will of the heavenly Father, for there he shows his will entirely and completely. And to succeed there in, that is the desire, the longing, the prayer of all true children of God. And now to the shot: "Also on earth as in heaven."

The will of God is done in heaven. There is no argument against the same (will), no disobedience, no disturbed order; there is nothing except willing, happy, blessed service. Thus there was completely, at first, when God created heaven and earth, there the morning stars praised him, and all the children of God shouted for joy. But because of the fall into sin, the fall of Satan and the fall of mankind, a schism went through the creation of God. There the fallen spirit and men renounced obedience to the kingdom of heaven and rushed themselves through it into ruin, into discord and restlessness, into rebellion against his holy will. Since that time, this world has become a vale of tears, where sin reigns, the commencement against God, their Lord and will of the creator. Christ, the Son of God, has come. He came on earth to heal this schism, to lead men again into the community of God, that they know and should learn to love God again their Father in heaven. For this reason the Angels sang at the birth of the Savior: *"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, and goodwill to men"*. They trusted him, that he would accomplish the great, enormous work of redemption. And he accomplished it. He accomplished the will of the Father through his life, suffering and death. He redeemed mankind from the power and authority of sin and Satan. Everyone, who accepts him in faith, become children of God through it, and are fond of their Father in

heaven and serve him in willing obedience, will do his will, say with the Savior, "*Your will, my God, I gladly do*".

But there are here on earth still yet poor, weak children, who fail still often and much. Sin sticks to them yet always and makes them slow. They struggle against it, and it afflicts them, so that they become more and more thoughtless about sin. They are not ever entirely renewed. They have a desire for the law of God according to their inner man, but they still have another law in their members, that strides against the law in their mind and they are taken prisoner by the law of sin. But since they now have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, the Spirit of God drives them. Since their change on earth is already in heaven, through which they also wait for the Savior Jesus Christ, the Lord, thus they pray: "*Your will be done also on earth as in heaven*".

How is the will of God done in heaven?

First of all, it is done by all. There is not rebellion. All the cherubim and seraphim call their God and their King, Holy, Holy, Holy. Here on earth there are only a few, who give honor to this King, their God and Father. Peter writes about them in his first epistle as strangers wandering here and there. They must see and hear, like Lot in Sodom, the godless ways of the world. And they are nearby in the minority. Their wish and their prayer is, that they all may give God honor and do His will as it is done in heaven. "How in heaven"—without the slightest disturbance. Here on earth, the church is at the same time believing children of God, yet often inner strife and division reign also at the same time among Christians. Yet envy, jealousy, and ambition reign at the same time with James and John and their mother Salome. Ah, the Christian desires and prays that they all may be and live according to the will of the heavenly Father, as it is in heaven.

How in heaven—always. We waver only too easily between the two alternatives. The Lord must warn his young ones: *Nobody can serve between two Lords. You cannot serve God and Mammon.* The Eye is often not simple. It looks now to the right, now to the left, now also back as did Lot's wife, not ever fixed to the future, towards the eternal destination. God has, to be sure, earnestly prayed, *Hurry and save your souls, and do not look back again.*

But as Israel looked back and reflected on the fleshpot (symbol of good living) of Egypt, on its onions and melons, and said about the manna: *Our souls loathe this wanton food.* Nearby it was annoying on the way, it was put up by God and to those He lead toward the earthly Canaan. So it goes for the Christian often enough in this life. Israel murmured often against God and against Moses, now about this, now about that. Such thanks come also too easily in the heart of the Christian about the hardship of the pilgrimage through this world. Oh, truly, Israel is an admonishing and warning example, that a person can not hold himself up often enough like he should not do. And if a Christian thinks about this, holding up this admonition and warning, then he implores "Your will be done also on earth as it is in heaven", not merely backways or in jerks, but all the time.

How in heaven- entirely and completely, with complete earnestness and strength. Among Christians here on earth so often is valued, "the Spirit is willing". Which intention, decision he often forms. How will he be zealous in prayer, reading and hearing the godly words in the imitation of his Savior? How will he purify himself from the all the contamination of his spirit and his flesh! Sometimes a Word of the Bible, a sermon heard, the example of another Christian, the early Christendom, this or that servant of God, an particular experience in his life powerfully affects him, as a gracious proof prior to evil.

That means that from this time it should be otherwise. Until now you have not served your God earnestly enough. But as of now there are only good intentions to that state. Now he leads one as on wings of eagle in the heights, now the wing of faith will lift us barely from the ground of this earth. Ah, the Christian has so much to complain about, as his conduct of godly will is lukewarm and sluggish. And if the right will be known to him, then he prays heartily and ardently, "Your will be done also on earth as in heaven".

"How in heaven"- loyal and conscientious. The holy angels in heaven have only one will: to carry out the will of God exactly. To what purpose they are also sent, whether that means, to ruin Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone, or to save Lot from Sodom, to lift Elijah to heaven in a storm, or to annihilate Sennacharib's army in one night, to preserve Daniel's friends in the fire and to save him from the lions,--they always carry out their orders punctually and conscientiously. For they are altogether ministering spirits sent out for service to those who should inherit bliss. They stand always ready at his service.

Oh, that we do this also, when we recognize God's will. When we have recognized, what we should do or not according to his will, that we then not ask very long, whether it may be also wise or

advisable, or it leads also to the aim. That is not yet doing the will of God, but his own. That is setting still his own understanding and discretion over God's will and wisdom! But how often does it happen, that the heart imagines itself wise and God's will is not led out precisely and entirely and completely. King Saul is a horrible example to this point, and was rejected by God for that reason.

"How in heaven"- gladly and with pleasure. Truly, it should stand this way with us! Yet we serve the great God, the Lord and creator of all things, who is so good, so friendly, gracious and compassionate! In addition, he is so rich that he is able to do much more than anything that we may ask for or understand.

But how is it on earth, especially among the best children of God? Think about Moses. How he suppressed himself when God channeled him to work in his kingdom for his people. The prophet Jonah fled from God when He commissioned him to go to Nineveh to preach repentance among this godless state. Jeremiah excused himself, that he was too young for preaching; and afterwards when his office became difficult for him, damned the day of his birth. How difficult it is for to believe what Christ says about his service: "*My yoke is easy and my burden is light!*"! To serve God should be our joy and delight. Thus is his will done in heaven.

"How in heaven"- not forced but of a free will. Many are subject to force to do the will of God. In suffering he says: "*I must suffer, not: I want to or perhaps: I may suffer.*" Quite a few go to church, to the Supper, pray, read their morning and evening benediction. Not willingly or happily, but emptily by him possibly from his parents-produced lifestyle. There is nothing willing, happy or blessed about this. About God's will, commands and law it should be said, "*Your will I do with pleasure, and your law I love*".

Indeed the more who think back about what is in this petition, in all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, the more and godlier the wonderful powerful contents come forward. Which treasures, heavenly treasures, has the Savior put in these small and short words! Come not longing in our poor, restless heart of sin. Nevertheless to be there soon, where we praise God's name and honor up there with the angels, looking at him and in his complete and perfect splendor and in his eternal kingdom, without end. Incessantly doing his will as the holy and unfallen angels, who stand before his throne and see his face.

*Oh that I was already up there*

*My Savior, were I there*

*Where the angels praise you*

*And sing hallelujah*

*Hey, were we there! Hey, were we there!*

#### **Fourth Petition**

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

In the first three petitions the Savior directed our thoughts to heaven, in the latest one then, what we still need here on earth. This is the talk about our daily bread, about our remission of guilt, about forgiveness, which we have to accomplish and about deliverance from evil.

As we have made ourselves clear already in the beginning, so let us find in the order of petitions, in the entire order of the same, wonderful wisdom. The Lord knows us and knows what is necessary, good and beneficial for us; and he teaches us to pray how we should bring our God pleasing concerns to him.

The fourth petition now directs our thoughts toward daily bread. Thereby, that in this prayer of the Lord, think also about bodily bread, the food for the body. He will not bear an account in the earthly sense an account, as many have expected. Oh no! The complete opposite is the fall. We exist of body and soul, the both have their needs. God, the heavenly Father, is the creator and preserver of both. When, therefore, the petitions came first concerning spiritual, heavenly goods, so it has been expressed very clearly, of which we thought about first, and what we should pray for first. But our earthly needs are also not forgotten. For our heavenly Father knows, everything that we want and he wants us to have, so that his children should ask for them also as dear children ask their dear Father.

We present the contents of this petition in three parts.

1. What is daily bread?
2. How does the heavenly Father give it?
3. How should we receive it?

1.

Our Father Luther told us in the small catechism very well, what daily bread is with the words: "Everything that is needed for bodily livelihood and nourishment." Therefore these words mean everything

that is necessary, useful and wholesome for obtaining a material life, as Luther works this out further in his explanation.

We have necessary bread and that is the subject upon which the senses and thoughts of man judge themselves. "What will we eat? What will we drink? With what will we clothe ourselves?" To be sure, one person thinks about this, and another person that at the same time. Indeed, after he is rich or poor, and again what situation he finds himself just then. After the fall there is only one chief worry. Finally, the only worry of natural mankind is to obtain the daily bread. For the belly is now his god because he is earthly minded. He sees his luck in the goods of this world and is afraid of their loss. He thinks if he has a lot of it, an overflow, a reserve for many years, then he can be calm and content and happy. And if his daily bread is ascertained sparsely, then he begins to worry, he becomes anxious about his future, envious and jealous of his neighbors, seizing for himself their property, becoming a thief or cheat.

What is considered daily bread now? It is this translation of a Greek word, that only comes out in the heavenly Our Father, no where else. Generally is the bread therewith, which is needful and necessary for obtaining a material life.

We pray, therefore, with this word "daily", that God may give us what we need for our bodily livelihood and nourishment. We have what is needful, what is good and wholesome for us in it. Indeed, now the needs of men are very different, depending on region, class and surroundings. Compare how little the majority of the Asians come out with to how much the needs and demands go in our lands! Compare how much a king buys with how little a beggar buys! We now pray for "daily" bread so that God would give us what we have need for our maintenance in our class.

In it lies now and at the same time that a person should be satisfied with what is enough for bodily livelihood and nourishment. A person should not strive after it, always wanting to have more. But on the other side also, that a person looks after a body, give him his due. And that is a prayer to the heavenly Father, who knows what is best, what we need. Thus therein it lies, that a person find and submit his will if sometimes the daily bread is apportioned a little meager so that a person does not look envious and jealous at the position and state of another. The heavenly Father knows well, why he leads us this way and not another. We should have the sense that He gives to everyone of his children their due.

This daily bread he ought to give to us "today", or as Luke says, "day after day". The word "today" goes chiefly therefore that he prevents the worry of the hearts. Therefore we pray to be sure that he gives us the present day's bodily livelihood and nourishment. Don't worry about the next day because the next day will worry about itself. It is enough, that each day has its own troubles. With these words, Christ himself explains this "today".

The generation of the present day understands so little in this sense. A person wants to gather wealth for the future, for his whole life. A person plans, speculates, works to that end to become rich quickly. Only a few succeed in this, and the others, who did not succeed, envy those who got lucky. How few are inclined with such sense and for that reason are likely to pray this prayer to God in a satisfactory way.

Indeed, everyday we need food and drink. We don't know at all, whether we will be the same yet tomorrow. But for the present day we need to pray confidently. For He, our dear Father in heaven has created us in this manner, so that we have needs. He commands us to pray for this reason. For this reason it says in His Word in Psalm 145:15: *The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.*

This prayer for daily bread, which is for today, is proper now for both rich and poor. For the poor, who live from hand to mouth. They know that they have a God who wants to and is able to provide for them. For that reason they should pray confidently and with all certainty also for their daily bread. It is proper, however, also for the rich, for wealth is insecure and uncertain. Men can easily seize it. In addition to that, what use is all the overflow of earthly riches in sickness! And when death approaches, then wealth fails more than ever as it goes with the rich person. It has supported the field well and the one who seeks comfort and relies on his wealth. How foolish he had acted! To be sure, he worried so much about tomorrow, the future and for this reason neglected his immortal soul. How dreadful the Word of the Lord is for such a person: *'you fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'*

The great, rich, all powerful and caring God has given us life and existence and he will also preserve us. We should trust and rely on this God for what also concerns our body, the daily bread. We are well provided for by Him. He will give it to us "day by day".

2. How does He give it to us?

Next we must hold out to ourselves, that it is **God** who gives and must give us our daily bread. Sinful mankind forgets this so easily and often. Most men don't know that we have our daily bread from God. Likewise they don't thank Him for it either. They live Godless there in the world. And indeed, the richer a land and people are the greater is the danger that it has forgotten its God, the giver of all good and all perfect gifts, as we have daily before our eyes in our own such a richly blessed land by God. How a person glorifies and boasts among us about the greatness and wealth of the land, industry, skill and spirit of enterprise of its inhabitants.

But how all this is still nothing at all if a person looks at it in the right light! What is the need for all mankind's ability and wisdom, industry and work if God removes His blessings! One single late frost so often destroys all the effort and work of the farmer. An incessant rain during harvest time often destroys the yield, in which the farmer is glad. Indeed, "we plow and we spread the seed on the land, yet growth and development do not lie in our hands". If business stocks trample, how many become unemployed and without means right there; for it is to no purpose that we stand early and after that sit down for a long time. Everything is put on God's blessing and not on our work. And for that reason this prayer is of value also concerning daily bread as God gives it to us. To be sure, not merely prayer but also work.

"From the sweat of your brow shall you eat your bread", is what God spoke to Adam when he had fallen into sin. And that is of value to each child of Adam in the entire world from all social positions and economic situations. God lets his sun rise and He sends the rain on the earth, but He has ordered men the work at the same time. For this reason the Apostle very seriously impressed that each person should work, and to be able to earn for themselves their own bread. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12: *Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12: *For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.*

Accordingly if a man eats who does not work, although he is able to work, doesn't eat his own bread, but he is one and the same as a thief, who violently steals and cheats. He makes another work for him while he yet should be through his own work working for his own bread according to the will and command of God.

### 3. How should we receive our daily bread?

God gives, like Luther says, our daily bread also truly without our prayer even to all the evil people, who do not know at all, that He is the Giver of all good gifts. Hence, they don't thank him in return for them. Christ, however, taught us to pray concerning our daily bread, so that this may not be the case among us also.

In our time is it especially entirely necessary to make ourselves perfectly clear in this matter. The carnal heart is alienated from God after the fall. In Romans 1:21, Paul describes this alienation of God in broad, powerful outline, it says, *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.* This defection from God and alienation of God will become increasingly greater in the last times of the world according to Scriptures. And to each one, who has eyes to see, can remember, how much a person in this citation forgets about the creation of the Creator and about the gifts of the Giver, nor is He thanked in return. When the generation of today celebrates its festivals at the completion of any work of its hands. Nebuchadnezer said it indeed not the first time: "This is the great Babylon, which I have built for a royal house with my great power to honor my excellence.

We Christians are also children of our time. We stand in danger of becoming stuck from these ways, that we are also going that way. We should, to be sure, be the salt in this world. Are we also thereby, that we know God as Giver and thank Him for that and that the generation of our day notices this also, conditioned that we are different from the children of this world? Do we come to our table prayer really from the heart, or have they become only a custom to us? After God held out to the people of Israel, in what for a blessed land he would lead them, he says in Deuteronomy 8:10 *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.* In this sense we ourselves should practice daily. On it should we always remember our food and drink and other daily blessings of God. These gifts of God become sanctified for us through the Word and prayer- 1 Timothy 4:4-5, 1 Corinthians 10:31, *"Whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."*

Yet how little this petition is even prayed in the correct sense. How punishable is her discontent



with her position, jealousy and envy against her neighbors; for finally, they are, to be sure, sins against God, with whose conduct and governing is man discontent, against which a person disputes.

Of course, it is God Himself who from time to time sends so-called hard times, distress and misery, war and famine. He does this around the world to lead right before their eyes that everything comes from him and that everything depends on his blessing. He seizes sometimes in the life of an individual person just the same as an entire people so that a person thinks. They must wake up from their delirium and alienation from God and recognize that an all-powerful and zealous God rules over mankind. Although the last time we have seen it shown to us and how true the complaint of God was about Israel when we read Isaiah 1:5 *Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion?* In general, a person is noticed in spite of the terrible judgement of God, just as when a great world war befalls the people of the earth. There is little or no penance and return to God at all, but digression from Him only always more and always greater. There are many, very many, who often talk about it, that they have lost all faith in an all powerful and gracious God because they find it impossible to believe that such an all powerful, gracious God can look at such misery without helping out. Because of such unbelief and thoughts, however, they only sink into deeper misery and thicker darkness. It is hidden from them because their ignorant heart is darkened.

And how would it sit in our land, which considers superficially, if it must suffer in even the smallest way from this world war? Indeed it is so, that a person in spite of all outward welfare is still inwardly not happy or content but that covetousness, jealousy, envy, greed, cheating in trade and commerce, deceit and discontent ever increases with its fortune, God and men. Whether in a short time or long time, it will lead to a sad end someday. God's Word teaches that, and it is only too clearly confirmed by world history.

We Christians should be leading also for that purpose. Through the goodness of God, which we are particularly enjoying in our richly blessed lands we should share our earthly goods all the more abundantly with the needy neighbors near and far and help with our earthly resources to that end so that the kingdom of God is cultivated and promoted. We are children of the same single heavenly Father, whose goods we so richly enjoy, that we should have a generous heart for others and for the poor. Oh, how is a true Christian, who sees and considers how richly God has blessed him, able to be cold and heartless toward his hungry neighbors! And how the daily bread for the body again brings to mind that Bread, which came from heaven, which feeds our souls for eternal life, and that we should bring this to others who do not yet have it!

Indeed, if a person thinks about this correctly. In what kind of connection these four petitions stand, how the petitions which handle spiritual goods precedes, how the heart becomes lifted up by means of it to the Father in heaven -- by means of it firstly a person is brought into a correct conviction. With this petition, the bodily bread is joined with Him and it is credited to him in childlike faith that He will not also neglect us in this point since He knows everything that we need.

## FIFTH PETITION

**And forgive us our sins as we forgive them that trespass against us.**

We come into this petition with the following three points:

1. Our guilt
2. The forgiveness of the same
3. Our vow to it.

We have become children of God through faith. Who, since we pray that his name be holy, his kingdom come and his will be done also on earth as it is in heaven and we have prayed to him for daily bread our bodily livelihood and necessity, so follows this petition about forgiveness. The forgiveness of which has laid guilt on us. It is commonly called outwardly, as it is by Luke, our sins. Through sins, are we acting wrongly toward God, we have "guilt" and "debt" before God. We have broken God's laws, and He holds us answerable for that reason. He says to us in His Word, in the Law, which makes itself however also, more or less, distinct and perceptible in the conscience of man. A man feels that he is guilty before God.

This is, to be sure, manifoldly denied in our time. A person explains the conscience, this feeling of guilt for commissions and omissions of mankind could be displayed in him. This could not be something innate, not imparted at birth or by nature but that could be produced in him through his upbringing.

The Scriptures teach, however, that also the heathen, who do not have the revealed law of God,

nevertheless, are held accountable to God for their actions on the day of judgement. Romans 2:15 says, *since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.*) In general, human experience confirms now also, as well as that all men have a conscience. Although it also at times almost becomes paralyzed in certain people, the conscience is a formidable power. It can only remind one here of the tragedy of people of old and new times, on individual particular events just the same in old times as in the new, in which the horrible sacrifices which the heathen brought forth to quiet the voices of their consciences. On the utterances of the philosophers, that there is no better explanation of the understanding of the human race, as a huge burden of guilt lays on him. On Goethe's word: "You lead us out into life and let the poor become guilty, then you leave them the pain, then pay for all the guilt from earth." (The voice of conscience, the accusation of the same shows itself in the proverbial sayings as: "Fear makes God," the fear has made the gods; "Conscience makes cowards of us all"; "Man is incurably religious.") The modern philosophy has brought out a psychology, in which it wants to remove the conscience. The rationalists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century sought the same thing. They didn't succeed then, and it will never succeed.

The Catholic Church has a very good understanding of this, the feeling of guilt, as it rests on men's hearts through the voices of conscience, made use of it for their purposes. Therefore they boasted that if a child remains with them for nine years, the child would forever remain a Catholic. Luther had complained about this very thing later in his life, as many grew in a slavish fear of God as such was their lot under the papacy which stuck growing up.

However, it is of value, especially in our time, that we become rightly clear about this ourselves, that our sin is debt before God. He says, *"Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy"*. *"Therefore be perfect, just like your Father in heaven is perfect"*. *"You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and serve your neighbor as yourself."* Luke 17:10 says it: *So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'* Accordingly, we owe God everything. For He has given us everything, what we are and have, body and soul with all their gifts and abilities. We are obliged to put all these in His service. Each and every one, if we do not do this are denying Him something. We owe him something and thus we contracted a debt to him. Now this exists in thoughts, words and deeds. Oh, how great, how terribly great, therefore is our debt before God! We are the unfaithful servant, the evil servant, who owed his master 10,000 pounds.

How this debt grows into a monster! When God sometimes allows the conscience to wake up, it's like it was with the psalmist, when he shouted out, *"My sins go over my head. They are a heavy burden. They have become too heavy for me!"*

We can never pay for this debt. This delusion sticks, to be sure, in the hearts of man although, nearby, his conscience never allows him rest. It is indeed the teaching of the Catholic Church that a man is able to do even more that God demands from him. This was the also the error of the Jews at Jesus' time, especially the Pharisees, who wanted to construct their own justice, which they thought, as the rich young man, that they have kept all these commandments. How deluded these men were and how difficult it is to contain, to persuade them from it!

Indeed, let's make ourselves perfectly clear, **that** we are guilty of sin, and **how** we are guilty of sin, that this sin is great. It is very great before God. It brings death and eternal damnation to us if we do not become free of it. It never becomes obsolete and that neither we nor any other creature can pay for it. Let us make this clear so that the forgiveness of sins becomes so much more excellent, rich and comforting to us.

## 2. The forgiveness of the sin

The sinner, whose conscience is seriously awakened for the first time, says first and foremost: Can I be forgiven of this guilt? Is there truly a forgiveness of sins? The Son of God teaches us in this petition, to go to the heavenly Father with the prayer: "Forgive us our sins"! Will He do this, if there is no forgiveness or much forgiveness in him? Not at all! Indeed, there is forgiveness of sins, all sins, for the small ones as well as the great ones.

**How is it established?** By the grace of God in Christ Jesus. That is the unanimous teaching of the Holy Scripture in the Old and New Testament. That is the essential content of the promises about the coming Redeemer. That is the content of the good news about the Savior who appeared in the flesh. That through his name everyone who believes in him should receive forgiveness of sins. It may lead further to mention here also the only main place of Scripture (that talks) about the grace of God and the Redemption

thus done through Jesus Christ. It would be enough to quote here the words of Paul in Romans 8 where he, so genuinely in the fervor of his spirit, driven by the Holy Spirit, talks about this subject, where he proclaims: *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.* Indeed, so certain is the Apostle that he can say, “*I am certain that neither death nor life nor angels nor demons nor authorities nor powers neither the present nor the future, neither height nor depth nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.*”

That is the certainty of faith about the forgiveness of sins through God’s grace in Christ Jesus. It also expresses itself in the confessions of so many Christians and songs. Here is an example:

What can for me now take down sins great number?  
I am in God’s grace, the guilt is altogether  
Paid by Christ’s precious blood  
That I no more need fear hell’s torment or fire.

I know it, I know it,  
And will it retain  
So sure the hands of God the kingdom yet maintains  
So sure God’s Son in heaven yet shines  
So sure have I forgiveness of sins obtained.

Indeed, it can be nothing else than that a Christian, who prays believing this petition, thereby also is and must be certain of the forgiveness of his sins. It would be an insult of God indeed to pray: “Forgive us our sins”, and nevertheless still doubts and is uncertain whether God also remitted the sin! The Christian is a dear child of God through faith, and he prays hopefully and with certain confidence as a dear child asks his dear father, and knows, this prayer will find a favorable hearing. He asks in the name of Jesus, in trust of his atonement, the payment of his sin. He knows indeed, Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten, dear Son, really became a man for him, died on the trunk of the cross for him and forgot his blood as a precious ransom for him. His sins are really destroyed, his debt of sin was paid before God. The ones who still doubt call into question the Saviors entire work of redemption. God makes them liars and consequently, they have committed the worst sin of all.

To be sure, only a penitent, contrite sinner can be certain of the forgiveness of his sins. How is a person able to receive the forgiveness of his sins, while he is still not aware of his sin, not sad about it, that he sinned against God, offended and has grieved his dear heavenly Father! True repentance, however, is an effect of the Holy Spirit, who effects both in the sinner. That firstly, when he knows his sins are alive he will be filled with repentance and sorrow over them. And thereby also secondly, go to God and there become free from his sins as the Savior makes this so crystal clear to us in the parables of the publican and the sinner and the of the lost son. What else was their confession than the believing prayer of the fifth petition: “Forgive us our sins!”

However, this petition still has an addition, a vow.

### **3. The vow: “as we forgive those who trespass against us”.**

Let’s pay attention to the wording of the original texts in Matthew as well as in Luke. Matthew has: “*As we also have forgiven those who trespass against us*”. Luke: “*For we also forgive everyone, who acts wrongly against us*”.

A contrite, repentant, believing sinner understands this about himself that he is prepared to forgive the one who sins against him. This stands out very clearly in the original texts in Matthew as well as in Luke.

A sinner, who has come to the realization of how great and severe his sins are, who feels repentance and sorrow about it, who longs after it, becomes free from this burden. Now God’s Word becomes clear to him through the Holy Ghost that God wants to pardon him still from all this guilt of sin in Christ- whom he actually came to know in his heart. He can do nothing else than think that he now also is forgiving toward the sinful brother. He is ready to forgive the same one also his sins.

But why then this addition to the 5<sup>th</sup> petition still? Why the grave admonitions and warnings of the Lord: “*Settle with your adversary as soon and so on* in Matthew 5:25,26. And Mark 11:25,26: *And*

when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." To that point also is the parable of the unfaithful servant. This happens for this reason, because the human heart is a defiant and timorous thing, and despairs evil as we see this directly in the mentioned parable.

The debtor is only inclined to become free from his sins. To forgive another their sin man is, for that purpose, by nature not at all inclined to do, but says about it, "Pay me, what you owe to me!" How many excuses, extenuating circumstances and the like a person has so that he is not able to forgive! One time he says, "He has done too great (a sin)," another time, "I will truly forgive, but I cannot forget it."

How often he will sin here and how often, therefore, is the prayer of this petition before God pure hypocrisy. How many excellent examples are there on the one side in the Scriptures and in church history. As true children of God, enlightened by the Holy Spirit and made certain of the forgiveness of their sin, they were also prepared, to forgive their neighbor! Let me remind you here only of the example of Joseph, David and Stephan. But on the other side, how many have been given also, where indeed they forgot their guilt and godly grace and pity, and acted ruthless and irreconcilable toward their neighbor and for that reason made themselves unworthy of godly pity. So that the former guilt is reflected again on them, so that it would not be forgiven to them because they would not forgive their neighbor!

Augustine called this petition, therefore, the "dangerous" petition. And how true it is! We have all the reasons to hold an examination in our hearts so that we do not fall into these sins and so that we do not make our prayer before God into an abomination. Great and much is our guilt before God. Gracious and merciful is our Lord that He will absolve us from all our sins and guilt. Therefore let us be willing and prepared also to forgive the sinful neighbor his guilt.

It's an excellent thing for a person to know he is free from his guilt through the forgiveness of sins. But let us also do service in addition to this, so that we remember how costly it is, and so we also remember to forgive others, the ones who sin against us!

## SIXTH PETITION

### **And lead us not into temptation.**

In Genesis 22:1 we read: "*Some time later God tested Abraham.*" He gave him the command to offer his only son, Isaac. John 6:6 says "*He asked this only to test him*". In James 1:13 we read, "*No one should say, when he is tempted, God is tempting me...he tempts no one.*" And here Jesus now teaches to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

How are we supposed to explain these apparent contradictions- for it can only be one such- that it can be said about God: he tempts and again; He tempts no one? Likewise, that we pray, that He might not lead us into temptation.

Our catechism teaches that there is a temptation for good and a temptation for evil. God tempts not for evil but for good. Otherwise, the word "to tempt", if it is used about God, means more like "to test", that God sets up a probe for purifying and strengthening our faith. Of this the Scriptures speak in many places. Such a tempting-testing is necessary, useful and wholesome for the Christian. 1 Peter 4:12 says about this: "*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.*" James 1:2, "*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds.*" Verse 12: "*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*" Deuteronomy 13:3: "*The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.*" Deuteronomy 8:2: "*Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.*"

God also sends these testings or temptations, so that it is known, how it stands with men, with the faith of the Christians. God knows this before hand, to be sure, also without these temptations. However, they are necessary for us just the same. They serve the purpose, to show us, how weak, indeed, how entirely nothing we are without the Lord, so that we don't rely on ourselves but on Him. Such temptations and the persistence in the same serves also as an example for others, for the world, of what the Lord can accomplish through his apparent, and by himself, really such weak instruments. How the power of the Lord is so much mightier in weaknesses and through weaknesses. A Christian, who has gone through such testings, learns so many things from it, what would otherwise remain hidden from him. For that reason it says in the Scriptures, "*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial*" and "*To those the Lord has loved, those he disciplines, he flogs however, every son that he receives.*"

Since now these testings or temptations of God serve us for the best, what are these then, into which we pray in the 6<sup>th</sup> petition that the heavenly Father would not lead us? In his explanation of this petition, Luther much more clearly laid out the true sense of the words, “God surly tempts no one (for evil), but we pray in this petition that guard and keep us so that the devil, the world and our flesh do not deceive us nor lead us into unbelief, despair and other great shame and vice, and though we are assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and obtain the victory.

The Holy Scriptures speak about a creature, which it so properly calls the “tempter”, Satan, the devil, the old snake, the old dragon. How dangerous to our salvation it presents this fiend before our eyes! How tricky, malicious, wicked he is! How he knew to approach Eve with such an apparently harmless question, “Indeed, did God really say?” And yet, what kind of a fraud lied therein? How is it so correctly lays evil upon, to bring doubt into the heart! And then as soon as Satan notices that he has got to it, to gain an entry into Eve’s heart, he precedes the storm again to gain ground, to get Eve completely away from God, to stir up mistrust toward God, attack against him and rebellion. How indeed both truth and lies are mingled among one another to obtain such an easy entry with the lie when he said, “*You will not surely die; but God knows, on which day you eat from it, then your eyes will be open and you will be like God and know what is good and evil!*”

And how at the very beginning of the world when he plunged our first parents into sin and through it into ruin and thus he set his game with the human race in motion. How the Scriptures paint him before our eyes in the Old as well as the New Testament that he goes around like a roaring lion and looks for someone to devour.

He is now further called the “god” or “prince” of this world, the world, which lies in a bad way, in which and through which he carries out his work, to corrupt the work: well, the world! What an evil name it also has in the Scriptures! How jealous it also is in the service of its gods and princes! How John so urgently warns about them: *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

**Desires of the flesh**, rude and refined- what a powerful temptation lies therein! How many have been brought to their fall following body and soul, for time and eternity!

**Desires of the eyes**, - how the world perceives it, to show attention upon itself through luxurious clothes, gold and precious stones! With what charm it pours over these things, which it praises, it wants to attract through them, to tie them to itself.

**Arrogant life**, how proud is the world of that which it has, its power and wisdom, inventions, and achievements! How it fills its press with it! How it will organize celebrations, to exalt about that which man has attained! Indeed, so much the more at these festivities how the world indulges at the same time with this trinity: desires of the flesh, the eyes and arrogant ways! Happily they value those things which it can take part and how they become envious of those things which it cannot!

Yet how futile, how fleeting, how miserable is all this! “The world passes with its delights” and the world itself suspects and feels it, that everything it has and practices is vain and nothing. It surely sings to itself: “Pick the rose before it withers!” With such a ball, a worldly poet once wrote of a celebrated opulent beauty in the album:

Whether you also beam in diamond’s splendor  
It diminishes no beam in your night of death  
I see the necklace that corrodes upon your breast  
I see my love, how much you are miserable”

But how tempting still is the splendor of the world for the poor carnal heart! How easily it is infatuated by it just the same, carried away by it. It is chained by it, enticed and pulled in vain. For we carry the vilest fiend in our hearts. That is our own flesh, which is the world in us. Oh, the world outwardly would not be so dangerous for us with all its tricks and boasting if we would not have set the traitor in our own hearts. The world, like the fiend, besieges the fortress of our hearts from the outside, and our flesh can do nothing else in its inclination than to surrender itself to the fiend as soon as possible.

These three, Satan, world and our own flesh are our tempters. In the 6<sup>th</sup> petition let us turn to the heavenly Father and say: “Lead us not into temptation”. That means, dear Father in heaven, do not abandon us to the power and trickery of these hellish fiends so that we fall into their tricks, nets and traps. Abandon us, if it is at all possible, either not at all to their temptations or instead, if it is necessary for our testing, purification and preservation, then let us not succumb to the temptation, but make it so that it

prevails in the end so that we can endure it so that we still win in the end and obtain the victory.

The believing Christian goes through these temptations, for they become a means in the hand of God. Firstly to show to him how weak and powerless he is by himself in the hour of temptation. There he learns to speak from the heart with Luther: "With might of ours can naught be done, soon were our loss effected." On the other side, however, he knows, as we become preserved by the power of God to bliss, how faithful the Lord is, that he does not let us be tempted beyond our ability. The guidance of the Lord leaves him with both renewed and confident and he speaks with the dear poet:

If God is with me  
Then let everything the same tread against me  
Then often I call and pray  
Everything under Him gives way  
Do I have the Chief for a friend  
And am I loved by God  
What can the fiend do to me  
Or adversary hoard?

Christians will, for this reason, point to their confidence and their strength in the Scripture as God's power, love and faithfulness. **1 Peter 1:5** *who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation.* **Matthew 28:18,20** *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* **John 10:28** *My Sheep will come to me no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.* **1 Corinthians 10:13** *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

When therefore Christians are called on to fight the fight of faith against the fiends for their salvation, he will also show them at the same time, how and in which ways, on which turf, they are to lead this fight and therein are able to stand victorious. To that point, St. Paul says in **Ephesians 6:10**: *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.*

However such a Christians, who correctly prays this petition, will also now not rush himself into a temptation. How can a person pray to the Father in heaven, to lead him not into temptation and he himself rushes headlong and knowingly into it! That is frankly, tempting God! We see, unfortunately, of this only too much in current Christianity. How many seek our places and opportunities for carnal amusement, seek the friendship of a child of this world, not merely the inevitable civil relations with them. How many read smutty literature and poison their heart and mind through it!

Correct praying of this petition also includes the neighbor so that God would also preserve him from and in his temptation. A person can't speak apathetically and callously: "Should I be my brother's keeper?" A person will also avoid places and opportunities where perhaps he himself is able to go without harm and injury to his own conscience. In doing so, however, a person must watch out, that he may lead another person to do the same thing, and in so doing to cause him to fall.

Furthermore it will become produced so that a person not arrogantly make a judgement about the fallen neighbor and he will not assume anything more about his own fall. A person will at the same time, take to heart the word of the Apostle, *"Whoever stands there, may he watch carefully so that he does not fall"*.

And finally, a person, by earnestly praying this petition is a sign that a person is standing in the discipline of the Holy Ghost, who leads us for that reason to avoid and flee sins and temptations and pray against them.

How significant and highly venerable, therefore is also this petition! How excellent and costly, so that we may pray thus: Christ teach us how to pray!

### 7<sup>th</sup> Petition

#### **But deliver us from evil.**

This is the last petition and Luther says: "We pray in this petition as the sum of all." We summarize everything herein.

Then what does this "evil" mean here? The reformers say, "from the evil one" and mean by it the devil. Better is entirely certain, to think about it with Luther, that here in this last petition once again

everything should be taken together, which oppresses and torments us and what we express mostly with the word "evil". In general, it is certainly sin and all followers of sin with it and whatever other names these same things may also have.

### The evil

How enormously great is the quantity of evil in the world. Luther parts them into four classes: body and the soul, possessions and honor.

When we look around us in the world, we see quite a few, quite a lot of what is beautiful and good. We look above us in the starry heaven with its innumerable and countless hosts, sun, moon and stars. And the Scripture says of it: "*The heavens tell the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handy work.*" It will call out to us in the prophets, "*Lift your eyes in the heights and see. Who has created such things and lead your army out by the number? Who calls them all by name and whose ability and strong power is so great that He doesn't miss a thing?*"

We look around us here on this world and again we must say there are many beautiful and good things, the blades of grass and the flowers, the tree and the shrub. We consider mankind the king of creation. How wonderful is his life prepared! He is indeed wonderfully made and his reasoning soul with its powers is still very wonderful. Indeed, so many things, which a man sees about himself and by himself and in himself, fill him up with joy and admiration of these things.

But is everything good? Is there not also some things of which each one says and must say, "That is not good"? Is there not also so many things next to the many good things about which we say, that is evil, that is bad?

Beautiful, wonderfully beautiful is a field and forest and meadow in spring. But next to the useful and blessed plants grow also the weeds, prickly thorns and thistles. Rain and sunshine make the earth fruitful so that grain grows and there is bread to eat. But sometimes the rain comes in storms from heaven and destroys the green crops. Sometimes the sun burns with terrible heat so that the plants wither and the work of the farmer is in vain. A child in his childhood is as beautiful as a flower but many get sick and shrivel up already in their young days and many sink into an early grave. When a man is young and strong and healthy, he is pleased with his life and is happy but often he feels mad and ill and sometimes, terrible pains make his life a burden. And finally let us see how all men without exception live still only a short time on this earth and then everyone, everyone leaves this world through death. And the death is something terrible. Everyone is shocked by it. Many run away from it and still are not able to. He calls it in the book of Job the king of fright. And the heathen say, "Of all the frightening things, death is the most frightening".

About all these evils, those of body and soul, of possessions and honor, misery, distress and death, which pain and torment, fear and anxiety prepared him, man sees himself surrounded by them from infancy. No place is safe from it, no power, cleverness, skill and authenticity can make him free from it. How far man may advance in skill and wisdom, discoveries and inventions, never will he work this evil out of the world. There will always be a nagging feeling of guilt, anxiety and dissension in his heart. There will always be a thousand times of misery, lamentation and distress by sickness, pain, grief and heart suffering around him. And death, with its smirking face, waits for him over a short or long time.

**Where does the evil come from?** As far as I can remember man has asked and the wisest and most cunning of them have never found an answer to it. All the wisdom of this world is confounded by this question. However, the terrible facts of the evil is that it is there in the world and it oppresses and torments mankind, to lay only too clearly before everyone's eyes. All efforts to control evil in the world, to make an end where possible, have fallen in vain. To be sure, man has in one way or another somewhat relieved many distresses. Medical skill and wisdom, sanitary measures and the like are in many respects becoming successful up to a certain degree. All kinds of machines have decreased and eased a certain amount of the workload for mankind. But in spite of all this man must still eat his bread by the sweat of his brow and the amount of sickness decreases in more advanced civilizations sooner than in lesser. The king of fright, death, mocks foremost agreeable at each attempt to ban him from the world or also to move him only in the distance (idea is only the old will die). He reigns unconditionally over young and old, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant.

There is a book now that teaches us how we are finally able to become entirely and completely free from all evil. That is the Bible. It teaches us that this misery because of the fall into sin has passed on over generations of men, that God created the original man good also without sin, and for that reason he was not subject to evil. However, because of the revolt against God, mankind has sunk into misery which the Scriptures often call in an all extensive way, death, when it says therein, "*The wages of sin is death*"

wherein spiritual, physical and eternal death are included.

It teaches us that no man by his own power is able to make himself free and loose from this evil, the sin and their results, that he dies because of trespass and sin. It shows us mankind directly how he is inwardly and outwardly alienated himself from God and in rebellion against his Creator and Preserver, in his worthiness of damnation and helplessness as no other book in the world does. To be sure this is rather entirely intolerable for the generation of today. But the conscience of man condemns him and agrees with the judgement of Scripture.

Surely this book does not leave the man now in his misery and helplessness but reveals God to him as gracious and merciful toward the sinner. (It reveals him) as a God who does not reject the revolting creature from himself but he wants it (revolting creature) free and separated from sin and its results, to save it, to make it blessed. So he, the impure sinner, should come again into the fellowship of the pure, holy God and should have in him eternal life. For this purpose, the great God sent his one and only Son on this world, to atone for their guilt in their place, to bear their punishment. Thus, he shall do away with the dividing wall for us, which was between God and man.

These ones who accept this Son of God as their Savior and Redeemer, have forgiveness of sins in him, are already blessed through faith, indeed blessed and are yet first in the hope. They are already in possession of the blessed heavenly goods, the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. They are already children of God here on earth. However, the redemption is still not entirely and completely revealed. They change in faith and still not in sight. It goes for them like a rich heir, who has inherited some property, and it's also already confirmed legally. Indeed, he also already has the deed for it in his possession. However, he is still abroad on his homeward journey.

So also is it with the believing children of God here on earth in the vale of tears of this world. Everything is theirs through faith in Christ. However, they still have to go through many things, which oppress and torment them, on the pilgrimage to the eternal Fatherland. It is the evil in his diverse character.

Now let us pray in the last petition: "Father in heaven, deliver us from evil". May we finally entirely and completely be free from sin, which sticks to us all the time still, and from the effects of sin, which still rest on and burden us. Accordingly, the Apostle Paul himself felt this way sometimes and nevertheless he rejoiced and also cried out "*The Lord will deliver me from all evil and help me to his heavenly kingdom*". About this he speaks in Romans 8:23: *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies*. About this Christ speaks in Luke 21:28, "*When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*"

Then redemption will enter entirely and completely. Let us again become completely renewed after the image of God for He makes then everything new. Therefore the Christian prays with the psalmist: "*And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.*" And he speaks with Paul: "*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*"

Here let us understand then also, that this, what we call here on earth **evil**, is in truth for us no evil. It is but only a means in the hand of God, to make heaven sweet as sugar and this world bitter as gall to us, to allow us to serve as best we can.

To be sure, this longing after heaven may be no mere fleeing of a cross, as so many have already cried out under the burden of their torments, "I wish I were dead and with it free from all evil!" On the contrary, it is prayed, "I will stand here waiting until your mouth tells me to go: away, away to your rest, away, away to heaven with you!" It is for this reason that true Christians act, are near the Lord, free from sin and entirely conform to the will of their God. This is still not possible here on earth and therefore the longing after above, the prayer concerning the final and complete redemption, as Luther already expressed! "And at last, when our last hour shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven".

## CONCLUSION

**For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory**

The conclusion of the sacred "Our Father" is not found in Luke and the oldest manuscripts don't have it in Matthew either. It is found, however, already at the time of the church fathers like Chrysostom, Theopholet, and so on and what many will say in the Syriac translation in the second century. Let us not go



into this matter any deeper here. The words close it very well and fit onto the seventh petition. In 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 is found noteworthy similar and corresponding words, "*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.*"

According to 1 Timothy 2:1, "*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone*". Let us feel instinctive, that in the petition such a conclusion, the thanksgiving, should follow. We would feel like it lacks something if it were absent.

#### **Yours is the kingdom**

This one, our Father in heaven, is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords and we are His subjects over whom he governs, whom He rules, provides, protects and preserves. Let us know and confess this. For this reason we are happy, therefore let us swear allegiance to Him.

#### **Yours is the power**

Dear Father in heaven, you are able to give us what we ask for, about what we have prayed. There are great, excellent possessions and gifts, which we have wanted from you, but you alone have the **power** to given them to us. You are able to do and give more that everything that we ask for or understand according to your power.

#### **Yours is the glory**

We speak praise and thanks to you for it. You have created all things for the commendation and praise of your glory. We, as your children, to whom you have plainly said and promise to grant their prayers, give to you out of most thankful hearts the honor that is due to you. We give it now already here on earth but one day it will be with all the angels and elect without end and ceasing in eternity.

#### **Amen**

It is a noteworthy thing concerning this little word, "Amen". It is taken over from the Hebrew without translation in all the languages of the world in which the Bible is translated. For many it means nothing more than a conclusion, the end of the prayer. However, it has a more profound significance. It comes here from a Hebrew word that means "to be sure".

It is first mentioned among Israel in the desert and is much like, "it is so", "then it will be done", and "it is agreed".

Among Buchner, let us find concerning it in the following list:

"It is used in the Scriptures 1) when the agreement to an action was given Deuteronomy 27:15-26, Nehemiah 8:6, Revelation 5:14. 2) In the words of Christ, where he confirms with it the godly authenticity of his sayings and where he wants to promote faith in Matthew 15:8,26, 6:2,5. John 1:51, 3:5,11 as he, because of his unerring witness to the truth and is truth himself, he alone was able to do it. 3) When God was praised Nehemiah 8:6, Psalm 41:14, 72:19, 106:48. 4) When perhaps good things were desired Jeremiah 11:5, 28:6, Revelation 22:20, Job 9:12. 5) At the end and resolution of a prayer Matthew 6:13, Romans 16:24, 1 Corinthians 14:16, Revelation 22:20-21 where the Amen of an entire congregation is confessed as a solemn expression of their full unanimous agreement in the prayers. 6) From the Apostles, when they closed their letters.

Christ, our Savior was also then called the mouth of truth. Revelation 3:14, "*These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.*" So far Buchner.

Possibly to this Isaiah 65:16, where Luther has translated, "the true God" in English it says, "The God of Truth". In Hebrew, "the God Amen" in whom all promises and pledges are certainly also Amen.

The word would be used in the Jewish synagogues and went from there over into the Christian church.

Luther has explained it very beautifully when he said in the question, "What does Amen mean? That I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and heard; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised that He will hear us. Amen, Amen, that is yea, yea, it shall be so."

Also this word "Amen" does not merely mean the end of the prayer, the prayer has now come to an end, but it means that the believing Christian has a firm, certain conviction and confidence that his

prayer is heard.

### **On what is this confidence of the hearing of prayer grounded?**

1) On God's command 2) on His promise

Without this command that we should bring our requests before God in prayer, it would certainly be inexcusable arrogance on the part of sinners to step up to God. For we are of no worth, that we pray also not having earned it. What we have earned is nothing but anger and disgrace, his punishment that continues in death and damnation. However, now he has asked us also to pray. The commands concerning it we have indeed in large quantity in the Scriptures.

For that purpose he has given us the promise to hear us. *"Ask and it will be given to you"* and so on *"In this way you will ask the Father for something"* and so on *"Call on me in the trouble"* and so on.

This confidence is strengthening by this that we know we have an intercessor to the Father, Jesus Christ, who is just and who has commanded us to step before the Father in his name. Further in it, that the Holy Ghost defends us with inexpressible groaning.

The Christian knows that he carries the prayers and intercessions of all the believers as it is pronounced indeed outwardly by the words, "our" "us".

However, are there then not many who complain that their prayers are not heard?

That has different causes.

It is one and the same thing that a person does not pray at all to the true triune God compared to the Freemason or compared to the Catholic who prays to the Virgin Mary and other saints and the poor heathen who prays to his false idols.

Many pray in doubt. About such people the Scriptures say, *"But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord."* The prayer of a doubter is nothing more than an insult to God, since the Lord knows his heart.

Others pray again and again for foolish, even harmful things.

Others dictate God's time and way and manner of granting prayer.

Others see and do not realize that God already has heard their prayers when they are, to be sure, answered differently than they expected. For often the Lord in His wisdom gives to His own something much better than what they had asked Him for.

Sometimes God also stretches his answer over a long time because it is good for us to pray long and earnestly concerning gifts.

Indeed, it depends only on this, as Jesus says, that we have faith. For all the promises of God are indeed in him, and are Amen in him.

To this triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who has revealed himself to us in his Word for our salvation, who is able to do exceedingly more than anything that we ask for or understand according to his power which indeed is effected in us. To him be honor in the congregation, which is in Jesus Christ for all time, from eternity to eternity. Amen.