

Devotions - April 6-12, 2008

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Sunday, April 6

Our Father, who is in heaven...Matt. 6:9

A new father took his 2 week old baby girl on her first outing with the proud grandmother who pushed the stroller. When they came to a small curb and there was a slight bump as the stroller wheels rolled to lower ground, the new father quickly put his hand down to the child, saying to the grandmother, "Oh, be careful"!

Loving, aware, sensitive, reaching out, careful – that is how our spiritual Father is to us, all of us. No one is excluded from God's care and attention. For God so loved us that He gave us His only son who tells us, "be full of care, love your neighbor as yourself; what you do to the least one, you do to me".

*Lord, thank you for loving each of us. May we see your face in everyone we meet today.
Amen.*

Monday, April 7

Hallowed by Thy Name...

How do we hallow (glorify) God's name? After his crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples while they were fishing. Three times Jesus asked Peter, the disciple who denied him three times, "Simon, Son of John, do you truly love me?" Three times, Peter answered, "Lord, you know that I love you." Three times Jesus replied, "Feed my sheep."

We have many opportunities to feed God's sheep. We can pray for those in need of physical and or spiritual healing. We can listen attentively when others speak. We can share our gifts and talents, and we can give money to our local congregation, the synod, and to charitable organizations. We hallow God's name by tending God's sheep.

Lord, thank you for all you have first given us, our life, time, talents, and possessions. May we be generous in feeding your sheep. Amen

Tuesday, April 8

Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done...

In the King of the Mountain game kids play, the object is to get to the top and keep others off the top of the hill. Kids recognize the child on top as the most powerful one, the king!

In saying, "Thy Kingdom come," we acknowledge the One we want to be king in our life, the One we recognize as more powerful than ourselves, the One we need to do God's will. As Martin Luther said, "I cannot by my own strength..." resist reacting when ignored, (turn the other cheek), give generously (go 2 miles, not 1), trust God to provide (look at the lilies and the birds).

King of the hill of Calvary, we praise you for you unlimited power to help us seek first Your Kingdom and giving us all other things. Amen.

Wednesday, April 9

Give us this day, our daily bread...

Limited time offer! Call 1-800...NOW! One day sale! 7 a.m.- 10:00 a.m. early bird specials! The day after Thanksgiving is the biggest retail day of the year. After we pause briefly to give thanks for what God gives us, we eat too much. The very next day, if we are not focused on trusting God to provide for us this day, we become consumers, spending money we sometimes do not have. We become frantic collectors, forgetting that God gives us what we need to live.

We are not "Born to shop" or brake for garage sales. We are born, we are and will always be born and reborn to love our God with all our heart, soul, and mind. We can trust the one who was so generous as to give us His only Son to provide for us each day the daily bread of life.

Generous One, help us remember whose we are told to trust you to provide for us. Amen.

Thursday, April 10

Forgive us our sins as we forgive others...

We have all been the the object of someone else's impatience, harsh words, unkind deeds, glaring looks, or rudeness. Being human, we want to catalogue those hurts, gunnysack those wrongs, and hold on to the injustice of it all. We did not deserve being treated that way. How could anyone do or say that to delectable, delightful us???

Perhaps the clue to the answer is in the question. We focus on ourselves thinking that someone else's words and actions are about us. Navite Americans urge us to walk in another's moccasins. Jesus taught us to look at situations from the other person's point of view. In suffering the greatest injustice of all, His death, He said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Jesus, help us heal from our wounds, forgive others, and find new life in You. Amen

Friday, April 11

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

We are tempted to avoid thinking about temptation. When we face our temptations, the beams that are in our eyes, we see our failings, our flaws, our reflection of our humanity, and our need for God.

So many activities seem more important than daily prayer. Activities like getting children up, dressed, fed, and to school on time, going to paid employment, having breakfast with a friend, making phone calls to organize a project, etc. Jesus, too, was tempted to feed his body before strengthening his spirit when challenged "to turn these stones into bread." He was enticed to throw himself down from the temple so others would recognize his power. The seduction of wealth, "all the kingdoms of the world," was placed before him.

Jesus later used His power to feed the 5,000, to heal the sick, raise the dead, and finally, to bequeath us His Kingdom by submission to the cross. He engaged in the daily tasks of his calling after rejecting the temptation to take the easy way out. Instead, he took the time to wait for the angels to attend to Him.

Jesus, help us to live by "every word that comes for the mouth of God" in daily prayer. Amen.

Saturday, April 12

For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

And here we are, 21 centuries after Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, praying what he taught us! What other form of governance has outlasted God's?

For it is God's power, through us, that keeps His rule alive. While we are like Peter, at times, denying Him, turning from Him, and pursuing our own way, God's power can use us even then. While we, like Thomas, doubt if God is with us, God persists in reaching out to us. While we are like the disciples who wondered where bread would come from after Jesus fed the multitudes, God can use our lack of understanding. God's use of wretches like the disciples, and us, sustains His Kingdom in spite of our denial, doubt, and denseness.

It is God's power that uses us, transforms us, and renews us. That power is God's glory. Thus be it ever!

You are an awesome God! Help us to see you at work in our lives. Amen