



PORTALS
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FOR PERSONAL
AND FAMILY DEVOTIONS

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For Personal and Family Devotions
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Devotions for October

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Devotions for November

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Devotions for December

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Rev. Frederic W. Baue, PhD, is a pastor emeritus of the LCMS. Rev. Dr. Baue served congregations from 1981 to 2011, including a five-year stint at Concordia Publishing House, where he was a senior editor and managed the editing of *Portals of Prayer*. Widely published, Fred also wrote the text to "What Is This Bread" (*LSB* 629), for which his wife, Jean, wrote the music. Fred and Jean reside in St. Louis and have three grown children. Fred enjoys playing classical guitar.

Matthew Garnett is a truck driver, host of the *In Layman's Terms* podcast, and a freelance contributor to *The Federalist*. Having worked as an Evangelical pastor, Matthew now lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana, with his wife, Jennifer, and two children, Isaac and Amelia.

ORDER OF FAMILY WORSHIP

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader (*With all repeating each phrase*): Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

A PSALM may be read by the leader or by the family in response.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE READING

THE MEDITATION

THE PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: The almighty and merciful God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us.

All: Amen.

Martin Luther's Morning Prayer

Make the sign of the holy cross and say:

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

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Martin Luther's Evening Prayer

Make the sign of the holy cross and say:

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

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

—Adapted from Luther's Small Catechism

See prayer section for daily prayers, as well as prayers for Church festivals and other special occasions.

Mealtime Prayers

Asking a Blessing

The children and members of the household shall go to the table reverently, make the sign of the holy cross, fold their hands, and say:

The eyes of all look to You, O Lord, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

(Psalm 145:15–16)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts, which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Returning Thanks

Also, after eating, they shall, in like manner, reverently make the sign of the holy cross and with folded hands say:

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever. He gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love. (Psalm 136:1, 25; 147:9–11)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

—Adapted from Luther's Small Catechism

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1



Read Matthew 6:25–34 ♦ Psalm 121

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? *Matthew 6:27*

Worry

There seems to be no shortage of things to worry about. We might worry about our job, money, or whether a loved one will make it home safely in a storm. But have we ever gained an hour by worrying? Worry never adds time to our days. More likely, by worrying we have wasted precious hours that could have otherwise been productive.

Besides being a waste of time, worry can leave us feeling unwell, with a headache or upset stomach, for example. And while many people struggle with anxiety, depression, and mental health, Jesus doesn't want us to choose worry as a response to a situation. In fact, He commands us not to.

Left to ourselves, worry would consume us. But God didn't leave us to ourselves. When God the Son died on the cross, He died for our sins, including the sins of fear and worry. And since Jesus took care of our worst problem, sin, He is perfectly capable of taking care of any other problem as well. Ask God to strengthen your faith in the fact that He cares for you and shelters you in every storm. And remember that our gracious God works all things for good for those who love Him (see Romans 8:28). You needn't worry about that!

Dear Jesus, help us remember that You are in control and we have no need to worry. Amen.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2



Read Matthew 7:7-11 ♦ Psalm 66:16-20

Ask, and it will be given to you. *Matthew 7:7*

God Answers Prayers

When we are in trouble, do we immediately turn to God for help? Not always. We sometimes make prayer our last resort. We try everything before we finally think of praying. God is an afterthought. Perhaps we think this way because we feel that our prayers in the past have been unanswered. We didn't get what we asked for, and it feels like we must take problems into our own hands. Perhaps we have even fallen out of the habit of praying.

God wants us to turn to Him with whatever we are facing. Jesus says that if we ask, it will be given to us. So why do we sometimes feel as though God isn't listening?

Jesus isn't promising to give us everything we want. He is promising to give us everything we ask for that lines up with God's will. Not everything we want is good for us.

Think about Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. He asked if it were God's will, that His suffering be taken away. If God had done this, we would not be forgiven. Our sins needed to be atoned for, and Jesus was the only one who could do so. That is why Jesus said in His prayer, "Not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).

When you are tempted to think that God won't answer your prayer, remember that He always hears us and always answers according to His gracious will for us.

*Dear God, thank You for always answering our prayers.
In Jesus' name. Amen.*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 3



Read Matthew 7:13–29 ♦ Psalm 78:1–29

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Matthew 7:15

False Teaching Hurts

Would you let a ferocious wolf into your house? Would you let it share your dinner? Probably not. But what if a sheep wandered into your yard? Would you feed it? We think of sheep as harmless.

False teachers are out there. They say appealing things, but their teachings are contrary to God's Word. They are ferocious wolves coming after our souls. It would be easier if they were as scary as a wolf, but they come disguised as harmless sheep.

False teachers want us to believe they have the truth, but they come with lies. One of their most dangerous lies is that we can get ourselves to heaven. The truth is that we cannot. There is nothing good enough in us to make things right with God on our own so we can enter heaven.

Only Jesus can make us right with God. He did that by both living a perfect life and taking our sins to the cross. Anyone who brings a message contrary to this or any other teaching of Scripture is a false teacher, a wolf.

Keep watch so false teachers don't deceive you with their sheep's clothing. Compare what they say to God's Word, and if they say something different, don't listen to them. Listen instead to your Shepherd's voice!

Dear Jesus, please keep us away from false teachings. Amen.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4



Read Matthew 8:1–17 ♦ Psalm 31

And Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Matthew 8:3

Power to Cure

Jesus was on this earth when there was no cure for leprosy. No one had a cure, except for Jesus.

Jesus has the power to cure anything, no matter what it is. He can cure any illness—even death. Many times while on this earth, He raised people from the dead. Jesus came into this world to bring us the cure for the deadliest disease ever to infect humans—the terminal disease called sin. We are all infected with it. Because of our sins, we will die.

Jesus came with the healing most needed—to cure us of our sins. Yes, we may suffer, and we certainly will die an earthly death, but we will not die an eternal death.

To cure our condition, Jesus gave us His blood. It wasn't enough to just give His blood, as we might donate to a blood bank. To cure us of our sins and atone for them, the Lamb of God had to give His lifeblood and die in our place.

The cure for our sins was very costly. Thankfully, Jesus was willing to pay that price—to go through with the suffering and death required for this cure. Now we are forgiven, and although our earthly life will end, we no longer have to fear death. Jesus, our Great Physician and beautiful Savior, leads us to eternal life with Him.

Dear Jesus, thank You for being the cure for our sins. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5



Read Matthew 8:23–27 ♦ Psalm 91

That evening they brought to Him many who were oppressed by demons, and He cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. *Matthew 8:16*

Control

We like to be in control. It feels good to know how to fix problems we encounter. But sometimes things are out of our control. We have done everything we can but nothing works. This isn't a good feeling. It can be scary to feel powerless and just wait to see what might happen.

Unlike us, God really is in control of everything. Jesus showed that control when He healed the sick and drove out demons. He even controlled nature when He told a storm on the sea to be still and the storm obeyed Him.

Often when we lack control, we worry, feel anxious or afraid, or even become angry. God commands us not to react in these ways. He wants us to trust that He is in control. The outcome may not look like what we want, but God knows best.

God has always known best, even when He sent Jesus to die. Jesus' death may not be how we would have handled our sin situation, but He knew the perfect way and time to fix the problem of sin. His resurrection was proof that He was in control.

When we feel things slipping out of control, let's bring everything to God, trusting in His provision and protection.

Dear Jesus, thank You for always being in control of everything in our lives. Amen.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6



Read Matthew 9:9–13 ♦ Psalm 119:169–176

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.”

And he rose and followed Him. *Matthew 9:9*

Spread His Word

God could have decided to spread His Word all on His Gown and in any manner He wanted to. And while He didn't need us, He chose us to spread His Word through people. In today's reading, Jesus called Matthew as a disciple. Matthew was a tax collector. In those days, tax collectors were seen as terrible sinners because they took more money than what was required for the taxes and kept some of it for themselves.

The lesson for us is that Jesus uses people, even though they are sinners. He called Peter, who would betray Him. He called Paul, who was a persecutor of Christians. And He calls us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the water and Word of our Baptism.

Jesus calls us to share with others the Good News of the Gospel. This is not because we are better than other people. The reason we can do this important work for God is because Jesus paid the penalty for our sins in His death on the cross. Although we are sinners, we are forgiven! And we can share that Gospel message with others so they, too, can know about their Savior.

*Dear Jesus, thank You for dying for my sins,
for rising victorious over death, and
using me to tell this Good News. Amen.*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7



Read Matthew 9:18–38 ♦ Psalm 100

He said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.”
And they laughed at Him. *Matthew 9:24*

Death Is like Sleep

Death wasn't part of God's plan. His plan was for us to live forever in perfection. When sin came into the world, death came with it. When someone dies, we don't expect that person to wake up. He or she will not be talking or walking around anymore. If we cannot escape death, then how can Jesus say death is sleep?

Jesus defeated sin and death. He is God the Son and therefore has power over death. Death couldn't keep its hold on Him when He rose from the grave on Easter.

In our reading for today, Jesus told the girl's parents that their daughter was just sleeping. Then He raised her from the dead as if He were simply waking her from a nap.

Death is like sleep for us because God will one day raise us from the dead. Through faith in Jesus' victory over sin and the grave, we have eternal life. When we die, it will be like falling asleep and waking up in heaven, where there is no sin or death.

The grave could not hold Jesus, and it cannot hold anyone who believes in Him either. The grave is no longer victorious over those who die in Christ. Alleluia! Christ is risen! And we, too, shall rise!

*Jesus, thank You for conquering sin and death
so that we, too, may have eternal life. Amen.*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8



Read Matthew 10:1–23 ♦ Psalm 119:81–96

And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.
But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Matthew 10:22

Stand Firm in Faith

Some people won't like your faith. They may make fun of you. They may reject you, make your life difficult, or physically hurt you. Persecution, no matter what form it takes, is never easy. It can even tempt us to give up.

Giving up may seem like the easy way out, but think about what you would be giving up. Without faith that Jesus forgives your sins, that He died to take away your sins and then rose victoriously from the grave, where would you be? You are incapable of ever doing enough to pay for even one sin on your own.

It may make life here on earth easier if we give up our faith, but in the end, it will not be worth it. Jesus gave up His life so we could live with Him in eternity. That is far more important than any relief we may gain on earth by rejecting Him. In the end, those who reject Jesus will be the ones to suffer while we spend eternity in heaven.

When you're tempted to give up your faith because of how others are treating you, ask Jesus to help you stand firm. Tell Him how you feel. He knows what it's like to be ridiculed and persecuted because of who He is and what He came to do for us. Jesus will keep you strong.

*Holy Spirit, help me stay steadfast in the one true faith,
all to God's glory. Amen.*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9



Read Matthew 10:24–42 ♦ Psalm 16

Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Matthew 10:31

Your Worth

In Matthew, Jesus says that not one sparrow dies without God's knowledge. These birds had so little value in Matthew's time that they were sold two for a penny. Even today, sparrows are so common that we don't take much notice of them. There is nothing special about a sparrow.

Yet if God cares for even common sparrows, how much more must He care for us? God created us as His most important creatures. We are the only ones He sent Jesus to save. Our sins were condemning us to hell, but God didn't want that end for us. We are worth so much to Jesus that He gave His own life to save us.

When the world or our own sinful flesh causes us to doubt that we are worth enough to God for Him to bother with us, we can look to the cross of Christ, where our value was displayed. Jesus didn't die for the sparrows, but not one will die apart from His will. And we are worth infinitely more to Jesus than a sparrow. We have value because of God's love for us.

We do not need to fear that God will forget us or neglect our daily needs. He would never come to die for us and then leave us to fend for ourselves. Praise be to God for eternal blessings in Christ!

Dear Jesus, thank You for taking care of our every need.

Amen.