

"O God, My Faithful God"

August 29, 2021

"O God, my faithful God, true fountain ever flowing, Without whom nothing is, all perfect gifts bestowing; Give me a healthy frame and may I have within a conscience free from blame, a soul unstained by sin."

"Keep me from saying words that later need recalling; Guard me lest idle speech may from my lips be falling; But when within my place I must and ought to speak, Then to my words give grace lest I offend the weak."

Our hymn reflects a life of prayer, a life of trust in our faithful God and, perhaps, a brief review of the *Catechism*. Our faithful God is our loving Heavenly Father, from whom we receive "every good gift and every perfect gift" (James 1:17a). As we confess in the Apostles' Creed, the God to whom we pray is "the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," who created and sustains us. Our Father knows our earthly needs, so just as we ask for "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer, in this hymn we pray for a "healthy frame." We ask our Father for "a conscience free from blame" and "a soul unstained by sin" because our faithful God sent His Son to be our Savior. It is only through faith in Jesus, through His redeeming death and triumphant resurrection, that sin's deadly stain is removed.

In the prayer that Jesus taught us, we ask, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." In the hymn we pray that God would keep us from trespasses of the tongue, from sins of speech. As the apostle James warns us, the tongue is "a world of unrighteousness" (James 3:6b). We have all been involved, at one time or another, in that unrighteous world of careless—and sometimes deliberately harmful—speech. We have said words "that later need recalling," words that we

cannot really recall and for which we must repent. Remembering God's command, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16), we ask Him to guard us from "idle speech" so that we will instead use gracious words that will not "offend the weak."

The tongue and speech, although we sinfully misuse them, are good gifts from our Creator. There are times when we "must and ought to speak." We are called to speak the truth of God's will in a world that rejects His Word and ways. We use our words to testify to Jesus, the Word made flesh, doing so "with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience" (1 Peter 3:15b-16a). Like an overflowing fountain, God gives us His gifts—our earthly frame, the gift of speech and a soul unstained and blameless through Jesus' saving work. We pray that we might use our earthly frame, our hearts and hands, in acts of service, our gracious words to build up others and our gentle words to witness to the love of our faithful God and Savior.

THE PRAYER: Almighty Father, help me to use the gifts You have given me to serve others in Your Name. Amen.

This Devotion is based on the hymn "O God, My Faithful God," which is number 696 in the *Lutheran Service Book*.