

Everyday **FAITH** Family Page

I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

Our resistance or failure to listen to God's Word leads Him to disrupt our self-glorifying plans. **Such disruptions are calls to repentance, which our heavenly Father follows up with His grace, forgiveness, and eternal life.**

Bible Words

My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:2

Fun Fact

People still build tall towers. The tallest building in the world is the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, India, which is 2,717 feet tall!

The Big Picture

All the people on Earth at this time were direct descendants of Noah, who built the ark and survived the flood, which is why they all spoke the same language. After their languages were confused and they spread across the earth, they split into many nations. Two of these nations played a big role in the rest of the Old Testament. The Canaanites became one of Israel's biggest enemies, and Jesus descended from the Shemites.

The Case of the Broken Debris: Tower of Babel

Genesis 9:18–19; 11:1–9

Pride. It's a word we know well. We struggle with the temptation to take credit for our own accomplishments when they are really gifts from God. We become focused on our own concerns and forget the One who lovingly created us in His image.

After the worldwide flood that killed all but one family, Noah's descendants were strong and united. All shared one language and one goal: to build a tower that would reach the heavens. Unfortunately, the people also had another thing in common, a sinful nature. Their desire was not to get closer to God but to glorify themselves.

God commanded the people to be fruitful and multiply and to spread themselves across the earth. The people did not listen and chose to stay together. God realized that if people continued to share one language and a sinful, selfish mind-set, their rebellion against God and His commands would never end.

So, God used His divine power to confuse the people's languages so they would not understand one another's speech. They could no longer communicate and continue their sinful plans. Although separated from one another, their offspring spread across the earth and benefited from the whole of God's creation.

Blessings after Babel

The tower of Babel shows us that when we give in to the selfish desires of our sinful nature, we are driven apart from God and from one another. But God sends His Holy Spirit to bring us back to faith in Him when we stray, just as He used Babel to establish many nations of people who would be blessed by the saving work of Christ Jesus.

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for loving us even when we stray. Please lead us to follow Your commands joyfully and to remember that all good gifts come from You. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

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Sin, death, and the devil try to tempt, oppress, discourage, and enslave us because they are opposed to the joy of life in Christ. **God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, born in a humble way, to deliver us from this temptation, oppression, discouragement, and slavery.**

Bible Words

You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD.
Psalm 70:5

God's Work through Moses

As an adult, Moses led the Israelites through the desert for many years as they journeyed to Canaan, the Promised Land. God spoke directly to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, the moral law that we are still called to follow today.

Just Joking

How does Moses make his coffee?
Hebrews it!

The Case of the Floating Basket: Birth of Moses

Exodus 1:8–2:10

After spending many years in Egypt, God's people, the Israelites, grew strong in might and numbers. This worried Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, and he forced the Israelites into slavery.

Next, Pharaoh commanded all sons born to Israelite women to be killed. God used this situation to bring about the birth of a child named Moses, who later led His people to freedom.

God used several faithful and clever women to help protect Moses and other Hebrew babies. Shiphrah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives, feared God and convinced Pharaoh that they could not kill the baby boys because the Hebrew women gave birth too fast.

Then, when Pharaoh commanded the Egyptians to throw the baby boys into the Nile River, Moses' mother, Jochebed, made a basket lined with tar to float him safely in the river.

His sister, Miriam, watched over Moses and offered to find a nurse when the Egyptian princess discovered the baby. Miriam brought their own mother to nurse the baby, and the princess even paid her to do it! Later, Moses lived with the princess, and grew up in her household.

Freedom from Slavery and Sin

In the midst of slavery, the Israelites probably thought that God was far away. But God was with them and worked to bring them a faithful leader in Moses. God used Moses to help liberate His people and lead them to the Promised Land.

When we feel as if God is far away, we can also find hope in knowing God is with us. The Holy Spirit builds faith in our hearts and gives us forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Christ's sacrificial death and victorious resurrection from the dead.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help us to trust that You are always with us and keep us from harm, just as You protected Moses on the Nile. In Your name we ask this. Amen.

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God will punish all who fight against Him and refuse to fear and trust Him, as happened with the people of Jericho. **God's mercy is even greater than His wrath, for He forgives and restores to life all who repent and fear Him, as happened with Rahab.**

Bible Words

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
Psalm 103:8

The Big Picture

From the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, we see that Rahab's family joined the Israelites after the fall of Jericho, and that she became an ancestor of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Read and Reflect

Read Hebrews 11:1–2, and 31. Consider these questions and discuss them with your children to explore how Rahab's story helps us understand the idea of faith without sight.

1. Could Rahab see God? How did she know she could trust and believe in Him?
2. How did Rahab show her faith through her actions?

The Case of the Scarlet Cord: Rahab Believes

Joshua 2

After the Israelites had wandered in the desert for forty years, God prepared to give the Israelites the land He promised them. Joshua, the new Israelite leader, sent two spies to examine this land, especially the nearby city of Jericho.

When the king of Jericho tried to capture the spies, a prostitute named Rahab hid them in her house. Even though she was a Canaanite, an enemy of the Israelites who worshiped idols, Rahab heard about how God blessed the Israelites by parting the Red Sea and helped them defeat other powerful kingdoms. She believed in God's promises and confessed, "The LORD your God, He is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath" (2:11).

Rahab had no earthly reason to help the spies. She came from a large city with a strong military. She could have turned in the spies for a reward. But because of her faith in God, she protected the spies. In return, they promised to protect Rahab and her family when the city fell.

A Special Symbol

The spies gave Rahab a scarlet cord to hang in her window as a symbol of her faithfulness and their promise to protect her family. When the Israelite army invaded Jericho and saw the cord, they knew to spare everyone inside Rahab's house.

The cord's vibrant color is also a symbol of the blood shed by Jesus on the cross to cleanse the sins of all people. This promise of salvation by grace through faith is for Rahab and for us today (Ephesians 2:8–10).

Even though Rahab was a prostitute from idolatrous and sinful people, God offered her His merciful forgiveness and used her to play a role in His salvation story. God offers us this same hope of forgiveness and uses us to further the work of His kingdom through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the forgiveness and grace won by Your Son's cleansing blood on the cross. Like Rahab, help us faithfully trust in Your promises. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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I Spy Salvation's Story

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The Lord is not pleased with those who provoke others, as Peninnah did to Hannah, or with those who ignore Him and mock His worship, as did Hophni and Phinehas. **When we are abused by others, we may suffer for a time, but the Lord has not forgotten us. He shall bless us through His Son, Jesus.**

Bible Words

[God says,] "You will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will hear you."
Jeremiah 29:12

Sing

To Hannah, praying childless
Before Your throne of grace,
You gave a son and called him
To serve before Your face.
Grant us her perseverance;
Lord, teach us how to pray
And trust in Your deliv'rance
When darkness hides our way.
"For All the Faithful Women," stanza 6, by
Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., *Lutheran Service Book* 855, copyright © 2006 CPH. Text © 1993,
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The Case of the Little Coat: Hannah's Prayer

1 Samuel 1:1–2:21

Hannah was one of two wives of a man named Elkanah. His other wife, Peninnah, had children and she mocked and provoked Hannah because she was childless.

While Hannah's husband favored her, he did not seem to do anything to stop Peninnah's hurtful behavior. When the family went to the temple for the yearly sacrifice, Hannah sought comfort and help from God. She promised that if the Lord gave her a son, she would dedicate the boy to serve Him.

As Hannah prayed silently, Eli the priest saw her moving her lips without speaking. He thought she was drunk, so he confronted her. Hannah told Eli that she was pouring out her soul before the Lord. He told her God would answer her prayer. And He did.

God blessed Hannah with a son, whom she named Samuel. When he was old enough, she brought him to the temple to study under the priests and serve the Lord, as she promised.

Faithful Actions

As Samuel grew older, he faithfully ministered before the Lord (2:18). Hannah showed her love for her son by bringing a special robe to Samuel when the family visited the temple each year. Hannah and Samuel's faithful actions contrast with the cruelty of Peninnah and the selfishness of Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas, who stole sacrifices meant for God.

Hannah and Samuel's trust and faithfulness remind us of God's compassion for His people, even when we feel hurt or abused by others. In love and compassion, God sent His own Son to pay for our sin on the cross and rise from the dead to give new life to all who believe in Him.

Prayer

Dear Lord, please protect us from those who would harm and hurt us. Help us stay faithful to You, even in times of despair. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

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I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

Our stubborn unrepentance leads to God's continued and deepening discipline. **God disciplines us not for our ultimate destruction but so we will rise again in new life in Christ, the "holy seed" of the stump.**

Bible Words

Here I am! Send me.
Isaiah 6:8

The Big Picture

Isaiah prophesied to Israel from the death of King Uzziah in 740 BC until the reign of Hezekiah in the early 600s BC.

Fun Facts

Two of Isaiah's children had prophetic names.

- Isaiah's oldest son was named Shear-jashub, which means "a remnant shall return." This showed that a portion of Israel would survive the exile and return to the Lord.
- Isaiah had another son named Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means "The spoil speeds, the prey hastens!" This foretold the defeat of parts of Israel by their enemies, the Assyrians.

The Case of the Burning Coal: Isaiah Sees the Lord

Isaiah 6:1–13

After years of prosperity in the Promised Land, the Israelites turned away from the Lord. Even though God rescued them from Egypt, helped them defeat their enemies, and made them a strong nation, the people trusted in idols and in wicked, selfish kings.

This angered God, and He called a man named Isaiah to share His Word with the people. God gave Isaiah heavenly visions with messages.

During his first vision, Isaiah felt afraid because he knew he was a sinful person who had seen the face of God and therefore deserved death. Still, he faithfully answered God's call to be a prophet, saying, "Here I am! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8). God mercifully sent a seraph, an angel with six wings, to touch a coal to Isaiah's lips and cleanse him.

The task God gave Isaiah was not easy. He had to tell the people God would send destruction to Israel because they disobeyed God. Their enemies would defeat them and take them into exile because they failed to turn away from idolatry. God did not do this just to punish the people, but to provoke repentance and turn their hearts back to Him.

Called Messengers

Though some of God's actions in this narrative might seem harsh, we also see His mercy. When the seraph touched the coal to Isaiah's lips, his sins were forgiven. God told Isaiah to prophesy destruction, but He also offered the hope of a "holy seed" (v. 13) that would spring up and bring new life to the people.

This seed is Jesus, the promised Messiah, who leads God's people to forgiveness and mercy. Through His Word and Sacraments, God offers us forgiveness. We are called to serve as messengers, telling how God reveals Himself to us through His Word.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to trust in Your mercy and to gladly answer when You call us to serve as Your messengers. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



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I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

Neglect of the Word of God leads to discipline and destruction.

Through His Holy Word, God grants His children faith, favor, and blessing.

Bible Words

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Colossians 3:16

From the Catechism

What is Confession?

Confession has two parts.

First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation
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The Case of the Missing Scroll: King Josiah

2 Kings 22:1–20

Imagine being eight years old and tasked with running an entire kingdom. That was reality for Josiah, who was made king of Judah after his father, Amon, died at the hands of servants who conspired against him.

Thankfully, King Josiah had faithful elders to guide him, such as Hilkiah the high priest, and “he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD” (v. 2). Josiah put aside the ways of his father and grandfather, Manasseh, who worshiped idols and even sacrificed their own children.

Josiah directed the people of Judah back to their covenant to serve God and obey His laws. He destroyed the idols built by his ancestors and commanded carpenters and other workers to repair God’s temple, which had been damaged.

A Startling Discovery

During the repair of the temple, the high priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law, which contained God’s commands to the people. When Josiah’s secretary read it to him, he realized how far the people had strayed from God’s commands.

Josiah sought the help of a prophetess named Huldah, who told him that God would punish the people for rejecting Him and worshipping idols. However, because Josiah was faithful, God promised that he would be buried peacefully with the other kings, and no destruction would come while he remained alive.

Like the people of Judah, we are also condemned in our sin. Like Josiah, God calls us to repent and seek His forgiveness. If we repent, God is merciful and leads us to the hope of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your great forgiveness and mercy won by Jesus on the cross. In Your Son’s name we pray. Amen.

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I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

Without Jesus, we all are crippled in sin, unable to restore ourselves. **Through Jesus, the disease of sin is taken away and we are granted eternal life.**

Bible Words

Bless the LORD . . . who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.
Psalm 103:2–3

Fun Facts

People believed the pool of Bethesda had magical healing properties. It was said that when an angel stirred the waters, the first person to go into the pool would be healed. The word *Bethesda* means “House of Mercy,” and today’s story shows us that true mercy and healing come not from a special pool of water, but from Jesus Christ.

The Big Picture

Even though the water at Bethesda did not have healing properties, God uses water in a special way when it is combined with His Word in Holy Baptism to bring forgiveness of sins, to rescue us from death and the devil, and to give salvation to all who believe.

The Case of the Old Bed: Jesus Heals at Bethesda

John 5:1–15

When Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for a Jewish feast, he met a man at the pool of Bethesda who had been unable to walk for thirty-eight years. Disabled people gathered at this pool, hoping for healing they believed would be available for the first person in the pool when an angel occasionally disturbed the water.

Although the man put his hope in the water, the true source of hope had arrived. When Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be healed, the man thought Jesus would help him enter the water. Instead, Jesus told him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk” (John 5:8). At once, the man was healed!

As the man left, he met a group of Jews who scolded him for carrying his mat on the Sabbath, actions they interpreted as work on the day designed for rest and worship. They did not understand that by picking up his mat, the man gave thanks and witnessed to God’s work in him.

A Source of Healing

When He commanded the man to pick up his mat, Jesus demonstrated that He is God, but the man did not realize who He was. He only knew he received healing.

Later, Jesus found the man in the temple and revealed His identity. Jesus showed the man God’s saving grace, which rescues us from death and eternal separation from God, a fate much worse than sickness or disease.

Like the man at Bethesda, we receive new life from Christ, delivered in the cleansing waters of Holy Baptism. In God’s eyes, we are no longer infected with the sickness of sin but instead are holy and blameless because of Christ’s saving work

Each day, say the words of your Baptism to remember that you are baptized into Christ. When you do, you drown your sinful nature and engage the Holy Spirit’s help to live as God’s child.

Prayer

Jesus, wash us in Your cleansing blood that, with the help of Your Holy Spirit, we might find healing and life in You. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

The command to love our neighbor is a command to be perfectly compassionate to everyone whom we encounter. **Though we fall short, Jesus acts compassionately toward us, forgiving our sin, binding us up, and restoring us to eternal life.**

Bible Words

Love one another: just as I have loved you.
John 13:34

The Big Picture

Even though Jews and Samaritans were both descended from the Israelites of the Old Testament, they had different religious beliefs.

- The Samaritans believed that the books written by Moses were the only true Word of God and did not consider Jerusalem to be the center of worship as the Jews did.
- The Jews believed that the Samaritans had broken God's covenant with Israel and were no longer part of God's chosen people.

As a result, the two groups avoided each other.

SOURCE: *The Lutheran Study Bible*, p. 1557
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The Case of the Oil and Bandages: Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25–37

A teacher of the Law tested Jesus by asking how to inherit eternal life. Jesus pointed him to God's commands to love the Lord and to love one's neighbor. Instead of realizing that sin kept him from doing this perfectly and that he needed a Savior, the man tried to justify himself. He asked, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29).

Jesus answered the question with a parable, a story with deep meaning. In His story, robbers attacked a traveling man and nearly killed him. Three different men walked by the injured man on the road.

The first man, a priest who served in the temple, passed by on the other side of the road to avoid him. The second man was a Levite, a temple worker. He also walked past the injured man.

The third man was a Samaritan, an enemy of the Jews. But instead of walking by, this man dressed the man's wounds, used his own animal to bring the man to an inn, and paid for his care.

Jesus asked which person showed he was a neighbor to the assaulted man. When the teacher of the Law identified the last man, Jesus told him, "Go, and do likewise" (v. 37).

Love Your Neighbor

Jesus' parable undoubtedly made the teacher of the Law uncomfortable. The priest and Levite who failed to help the injured man were dedicated to serve God and would have known the Law, like the teacher. Their actions show their sinfulness and their desires to serve themselves rather than others.

We also should feel uncomfortable when we hear this parable. Too many times we act like the priest and Levite, hurrying through our lives without stopping to help people in need. But like the Samaritan, our Savior shows us mercy, granting forgiveness to His sinful people. How blessed we are to have a God who loves us and motivates us to love and serve others.

Prayer

*Jesus, help us to gladly love and serve others, just as You have loved us.
In Your holy name. Amen.*

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I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

Cares of this world, which may be good of themselves, may lead to anxiety, despair, and unbelief when they crowd out hearing and believing the Word of God. **The Word of God grants eternal peace and happiness and protects us from turning the cares of this world into anxiety and despair.**

Bible Words

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
John 6:68

Sing

We sing of busy Martha,
Who toiled with pot and pan
While Mary sat in silence
To hear the Word again.
Christ, keep our hearts attentive
To truth that You declare,
And strengthen us for service
When work becomes our prayer.

"For All the Faithful Women," stanza 9, by Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., *Lutheran Service Book* 855, copyright © 2006 CPH. Text © 1993, 1997, 2003 GIA Publications, Inc.

The Case of the Worn Broom: Jesus with Mary and Martha

Luke 10:38–42

Work. School. Chores. Activities. Friends and family. With many daily responsibilities, it's easy to forget to take a moment to relax. In today's lesson, Martha illustrated that struggle.

When Jesus arrived at her house with a group of people, Martha worked hard to cook and provide hospitality for everyone. She expected her sister Mary to help, but Mary sat at Jesus' feet, listening to Him teach.

This frustrated Martha, and she asked Jesus to tell Mary to help her. Instead, Jesus lovingly told her, "You are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41–42).

Martha's desire to be a good host was understandable, but Jesus wanted her to see that Mary's desire to hear God's Word was better. Martha became so anxious about everyday tasks that she failed to hear the comforting words of love and salvation Jesus offered.

The Good Portion

Like Martha, it is good to be dedicated to our earthly vocations, but we should not turn them into a source of anxiety that blinds us to God's Word. When Jesus said that "one thing is necessary," He pointed to the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit uses to give and sustain saving faith.

The food Martha cooked satisfied physical hunger, but Jesus' words satisfy spiritual hunger.

From the Catechism

What is a Christian?

A Christian is someone who, by the power and work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, believes in and confesses Jesus as Savior and Lord. Through Baptism, a Christian is adopted into the Father's family, the Church.

Question 4, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, copyright © 2017 CPH.

Prayer

Dear Lord, when we are weighed down by earthly tasks, help us to seek comfort in Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

In our sin, we fail to see Jesus as He really is when we ask Him to meet only our temporal needs.

Jesus came not as a conquering king to subdue opposition but to bring spiritual peace as He overcomes sin and death through His cross and resurrection.

Bible Words

Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!
Mark 11:9

The Big Picture

Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on a colt fulfilled a prophecy that was made centuries earlier in the Old Testament:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Zechariah 9:9

The Case of the Dried Palms: Triumphal Entry

Luke 19:28–40

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! These words greeted Jesus as He journeyed into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a colt. The people quoted Psalm 118 to welcome Jesus as their King, the promised Messiah prophesied long ago.

The disciples placed their coats on the colt's back, and the people waved palm branches and rejoiced. Jesus did not enter as a military conqueror like Solomon when he rode on a mule and was proclaimed king of Israel in the Old Testament (1 Kings 1:33). Jesus did not arrive to establish an earthly kingdom or defeat earthly armies, as many assumed.

Jesus, our heavenly King, came to bring "peace in heaven" (Luke 19:38) and to destroy the enemies of sin, death, and the devil. The people did not realize this at the time, but they soon learned the truth through Jesus' death and resurrection.

That day, the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke His disciples for praising Him as the Messiah. He replied, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out" (v. 40).

Hosanna!

When the people cried "Hosanna!" to Jesus on Palm Sunday, they shouted a Hebrew word of praise that means "save us now." How fitting that later in the week, Jesus completed His saving work for us by dying on the cross and rising again so that all might live.

Prayer

O heavenly King, Your name is holy and wonderful. Direct our hearts to gladly praise You, the one who saves us. In the blessed name of Jesus. Amen.

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Our prayers and courage falter in the face of fatigue and threat of physical harm. **Jesus prays for us and suffers all, even to the point of death, in order to rescue us.**

Bible Words

[Christ Jesus] loved me and gave Himself for me.
Galatians 2:20

Sing

Go to dark Gethsemane, All who feel the tempter's pow'r;
Your Redeemer's conflict see, Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away; Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.

"Go to Dark Gethsemane," stanza 1, by James Montgomery., *Lutheran Service Book* 436, copyright © 2006 CPH.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You made the ultimate sacrifice, giving Yourself over to death so that we might have eternal life. Thank You for never deserting us, even when we desert You. In Your merciful name we pray. Amen.

The Case of the Sharp Sword: Jesus in the Garden

Matthew 26:36–56

After sharing His last Passover meal with His disciples, Jesus led His friends to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Jesus often came here to pray and the disciples knew it well.

Now, knowing the great pain and death He would endure on the cross to take the punishment for the sins of all people, Jesus felt greatly troubled. Unlike every other human being, Jesus did not deserve death; He was perfect and sinless (1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 4:14–16).

But obedient to His Father's will, Jesus prayed that the work of salvation would be completed even if it meant death for Him. He prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).

Sadly, instead of praying with Jesus, the disciples slept. When Judas arrived with a crowd to identify Jesus for arrest, the other disciples deserted Him. He gave Himself willingly so that "the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (v. 56) and that we might be saved.

From the Catechism: Prayer

231. What is prayer?

Prayer is speaking to God in words and thoughts.

235. How does God answer prayer?

God our Father hears the prayers of His children and answers in His own way and in His own time.

236. For whom should we pray?

We should pray for ourselves and for all other people, even for our enemies.

237. Where should we pray?

We should pray everywhere—when we are alone, with our families, and in church.

238. How often should we pray?

Our Father encourages us to pray regularly and frequently—even constantly, and especially in time of trouble. The Holy Spirit turns even our sighs and groans into prayers.

Questions 231, 235–238, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, © 2017 CPH.



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I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

Without Jesus' Word, we are ignorant of the truths of salvation.

Jesus makes His salvation known to us through teaching and the breaking of bread.

Bible Words

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.
1 Corinthians 15:3

The Big Picture

Though the men invited Jesus to stay with them as a guest, He took on the role of the host by breaking the bread and passing it to them, the traditional way of beginning a meal. In that moment, Jesus revealed Himself to them, and they recognized Him as the risen Messiah.

These actions were similar to how Jesus broke bread and gave it to His disciples at the Last Supper before His death and established the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Breaking bread with the two men is not a reference to Holy Communion, but His actions remind us of the way we enjoy the gifts of life and unity with Christ in the Lord's Supper.

The Case of the Broken Bread: Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35

From the women who saw the angel on Easter morning to the disciples who ran to the empty tomb, the joyful news spread: "Jesus is alive!" The men on the road to Emmaus were discussing these events when Jesus came up and walked with them, but they were kept from recognizing Him.

When Jesus asked what they were talking about, the men were shocked that He had not heard the news. The men felt confused by the news that Jesus, who had been crucified, was alive. They wondered if it was really true.

Seeing their lack of faith, Jesus explained from the Scriptures why the Son of God had to suffer, die, and then enter His glory.

Later in the day, the men arrived in Emmaus and invited Jesus to stay with them. When they sat down for the evening meal, Jesus blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to them. In that moment, their eyes opened, the men realized it was Jesus, and He vanished from sight.

Excitedly, the men hurried to share the good news with the rest of Jesus' followers. It was true! Jesus had risen from the dead.

Resurrection and Redemption

While talking to Jesus on the road, the men spoke about how they "hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). They, like many others, believed the long-promised Messiah would establish an earthly kingdom and free Israel from Roman rule.

Through the Scriptures, Jesus helped the men understand that His cross was the true means of redeeming God's people. Through His sacrifice and empty tomb, Jesus defeated the enemies of sin, death, and the devil. All who believe in Him receive the gift of new life, now and forever.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for redeeming us through Your death and resurrection. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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Everyday FAITH Family Page

I Spy Salvation's Story

Law/Gospel

Without the Holy Spirit, we would be excluded from God's salvation.

Through His Word and Baptism, God grants repentance and His Holy Spirit to forgive our sins and gather us into His holy, saved people.

Bible Words

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses.

Acts 1:8

The Big Picture

The curse at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11), where all the people's languages were confused, was reversed for a moment at Pentecost as all the people were able to hear the same message of Christ in many different languages. Even after the events at Pentecost, God's Word was able to spread quickly and bear fruit in many countries because of the prominence of Greek and Latin brought about by the Roman Empire.

The Case of the Wind and Fire: God Sends the Holy Spirit Acts 2:1–21, 37–47

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He commanded His disciples to go into the world and preach the Good News. The events at Pentecost mark the beginning of their ministry.

Pentecost was a harvest festival that occurred fifty days after Passover. The disciples were in an area of Jerusalem where a large crowd had gathered, when suddenly there was a sound like a rushing wind, and tongues of fire rested on the disciples. The Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in other languages. People from all over the world gathered and understood them as they proclaimed God's Word in their native languages.

Some mocked this miracle of God, claiming that the disciples were drunk. Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, quickly rebuked them and spoke to the people, explaining how the words of the prophets had been fulfilled through Jesus' earthly life, death, and resurrection.

Repent and Be Baptized

As the people listened to Peter, they realized that they sent Jesus to the cross and deserved condemnation. When they asked Peter what they should do, he said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you . . . and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Through the Spirit's work through the disciples, over three thousand people believed, and the Church grew and flourished.

Just as the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples through wind and fire, we receive the gift of the Spirit through Holy Baptism. In this Sacrament, God forgives our sin and lovingly welcomes us as His children. We are united to Christ and all believers through God's Word and Sacraments.

Prayer

Holy Spirit, come among us as You came among the people at Pentecost, to unite with You and one another in faith, fellowship, prayer, and praise. In our Lord's name we ask this. Amen.

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