

has recreated and established you in Baptism through water and the Word. He strengthens you through the Means of Grace. He causes you to settle in and on the firm foundation that is Christ so that when the tests and trials of life come, you will not falter or crumble.

Knowing this, and Lord willingly believing it, again, I ask, what are we anxious for? Why do we worry about anything? It is interesting that our Gospel reading today comes right after Jesus gives us the Lord's Prayer, which immediately precedes today's portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jesus, then, teaches us how to put the Lord's Prayer into practice. You heard the words "heavenly Father" two times today. This brings to mind the introduction of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven", which means, "God tenderly invites us to *believe* that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father."¹

God is our true Father by His grace for Jesus' sake. What makes Him "heavenly" is not merely His residence, but His divinity and holiness which "assures us... that... (He) has the power to grant our prayers."² **Psalm 124:8, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth"** as we confess together in the Divine Service!

Not only does Jesus teach us the sweet comfort of the introduction to the Lord's Prayer, He also teaches us to trust that God is going to give us our daily bread. So stop worrying. Jesus says, "**Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them**" (Mt 6:26). Interesting word play here, the Greek reads, "Look at the birds of the heaven" or "sky". In other words, the heavenly birds are cared for by the heavenly Father. Even the birds are the Lord's birds! How much more so are you going to be provided for, redeemed children of God, and therefore heavenly children of the heavenly Father! So don't worry about the things of this life – any of it!

Jesus says, "**The Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all**" (Mt 6:32). You don't *need* to seek after these things. Instead, "**Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you**" (Mt 6:33). Seek where the kingdom of God comes to you here in the Divine Service in Word and Sacrament, for these means will give you the faith which trusts that God is going to provide regardless of whether we believe or not. And when faith trusts in the Lord, you will realize the futility of worrying over things that you need not worry about. "**Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you**" (1 Pet 5:7).

In this sense Jesus isn't merely teaching us how to put the Lord's Prayer into practice, but He more importantly is teaching us how the *Lord* puts the Lord's Prayer into practice! His name is holy without our prayer. His kingdom comes without our prayer. He gives us our daily bread without our prayer. God doesn't forgive our sins because we pray for it. No, God forgives our sins because of Jesus, and faith believes it to be true! So what are we anxious for? "**No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money**" (Mt 6:24). Who is going to provide for you everything you need? Your pay check or God? Your retirement fund or God? You know the right answer. Stop trusting your money. God's going to give you everything you need. "**All these things will be added to you**" (Mt 6:33b). And as David confesses in the Psalm, "**our cup runneth over**" (Ps 23:5); God provides in overabundance. This will always be true. In Jesus' name, Amen.

¹ Luther's *Small Catechism*, Lord's Prayer, "The Introduction".

² Luther's *Small Catechism*, Explanation, 1991 ed. Q. 207, p. 181.