

Order of Teaching and Prayers for Sunday, May 10, 2020
Zion Lutheran Church, Ridgeville Corners, Ohio

This Order of Teaching and Prayers (adapted from Divine Service I) is part of Zion Lutheran's ministry during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and "Stay at Home" orders in the state of Ohio. Orders for festival days and Sundays will continue to be made available as long as normal worship opportunities are not available. I will post audio recordings of these orders on the appointed day on www.zionrco.org. You are invited to listen and pray with me and my wife at that time, or any time after. Pastor Carl Rockrohr

The teaching for this week continues with the sermon series "God's and His People" started at Zion Lutheran on January 26th. This week we consider the call of Abraham in Genesis 12. Next week the topic will be promises of God to Abraham in Genesis 15.

Invocation and Opening Verses

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

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father,

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Lord, have mercy; **Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

Scripture Reading Genesis 12:1-7 ESV

1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's

son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading Hebrews 11:8-12

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. 11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Teaching (The teaching is based on the readings from Genesis 12 and Hebrews 11 just read.)

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer.

God's call to Abraham and all his family to move to an unknown land is a very important narrative for us to understand the tremendous grace of God to His people and all their descendants, which includes you and me. We will consider three points:

1. The power of God's covenant promises depend on God, not humans.
2. The faith of God's people receives, believes and follows the promises.
3. What is impossible for men and women, is possible in God's promises.

1. The power of God's covenant promises depend on God, not humans.

It is a basic understanding throughout all Scripture, from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22, that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit created, redeemed and give new birth to men and women because God wants to be in a loving and caring relationship with people. In His relationships with people God makes promises to them. God's promises to people are a covenant relationship with them.

In human relationships, covenants like marriages, business deals, and neighborhood covenants all require the action of two or more parties to be followed. However, the clear teaching in the Bible is that apart from God people are sinners and cannot by nature obey God or love Him. (Ephesians 2:1-10) People are not in a relationship with God by virtue of sin human nature.

2. The Faith of God's people receives, believes and follows the promises.

What always happens in the Bible narratives is that God initiates the promises and the promises are fulfilled by the power of God, not by human power. Humans receive God's promises and His blessings *by faith* not by their own power. Scripture speaks of God calling people to be in relationship in Him, to love Him and obey Him.

The writer of Hebrews clearly points out that the plan to move was not Abraham's idea. He did not even know where he was going. God would show him. Abraham and Sarah each had faith, which together they received God's power to have a son through which God would bring many descendents and finally the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Faith of the Husband or Wife? ***Both***

An interesting note is that the ancient copies of the Greek New Testament differ at Hebrews 11:11 on whether it was through the faith of Abraham or Sarah that God gave the power to have a baby son at an old age. Bible Commentators disagree on this point. The translators of the English Standard Version, which we use, translate so that the faith of Sarah receives the power of God to conceive a child. In the Concordia Publishing House (LC-MS) Commentary on Hebrews it is suggested the faith that should be noted is that of Abraham. The manuscripts differ on this point.

But what does Scripture say in other places about a husband and wife? Before sin, in his perfect understanding of God's creation, Adam declares that Eve is one with her. Adam said:

“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Genesis 2:23)

When Pharisees tested Jesus on the subject of marriage, Jesus taught that Adam's words are the true and unending divine truth about marriage: (Matthew 19:3-6)

4 He [Jesus] answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

I suggest that according to teachings in God's Word there is oneness in marriage. Both Abraham and Sarah's faith were involved to receive God's promises. Both husband and wife were beyond child-bearing years. Both received God's miraculous blessing of a son in their old age through whom the world would be blessed. The prophet Isaiah teaches that people of God look to both Abraham and Sarah as their parents through whom God's gives His promise of salvation.

1 “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord:
look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.
2 Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him.
(Isaiah 51:1-2)

Today being “Mother’s Day,” we thank God for our mothers! Both St. Paul (Galatians 4:24-26) and St. Peter (1 Peter 3:6) honor Sarah and call her our mother in the faith. Thank God when He gives us Christian mothers who brought us up and have led us to know Jesus. God’s Word says women of faith who value godly lives above all other things in life are precious in God’s sight. Moreover, husbands must care well for their wives or their prayers to God are hindered. (1 Peter 3:1-7)

3. What is impossible for men and women, is possible in God’s promises.
The teaching today has gone long, so I will not go on much longer (but all these topics we could consider for hours and hours, so great is God’s Word!).

This COVID-19 era and “social distancing” is not at all easy for we humans whom God created to spend together in marriage and family life; with friends, neighbors, colleagues and even with strangers. There are great debates among governments, scientists, political leaders and in our communities what are the right responses to dealing with COVID-19.

As Christians we know that human knowledge and decisions can be right or wrong, for good or for evil. Christians should not cause trouble in society, but be part of building up society. (Romans 13:1-7) Whatever we think might be the right course of action in any given situation (and we might be right or wrong!), we go to God our Heavenly Father to help us, protect us and guide us. We pray and firmly believe God is with us.

Before Jesus bodily left this earth in His ascension, He directed that disciples would be made in all nations and He promised “*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*” (Matthew 28:20)

This promise of Jesus is His unbreakable covenant promise. We endure these days through Him and rest always in Him.

Please pray with me: Dear Lord Jesus, I need Your promises! Thank you for the great faith of Abraham and Sarah who endured long journeys in ancient days so long ago to obey God’s call, and thus were God’s blessings to all nations, including to me. Lord Jesus, help me on my journey today, tomorrow and all my days. Help me be a blessing to others, too! Amen.

Now may the peace of God that passes all understanding guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

1 When peace, like a river, attendeth my way;
When sorrows, like sea billows, roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

2 Though Satan should buffet, though trials
should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate
And hath shed his own blood for my soul.
[Refrain]

Prayers

Almighty Father, everlasting God, Your Son has revealed You to us as a merciful Lord. Give to us Your Holy Spirit, that we may believe in Him whom You have sent and do the greater works He has told us we will do in His name. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, You have promised to build up Your Church to be a holy priesthood, that Your people might offer the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving acceptable to You. Bless Your Church and bring all congregations back together again. Bless all pastors who proclaim Christ to us. Bless all church workers and those preparing for full-time church vocations, that Your Church may be supplied with faithful leaders and servants of Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, Your power brought all things into being and still You preserve what You have made. Bless our president, the Congress of these United States, our governor, and all elected and appointed civil servants so that they may honor You and Your purpose, establishing order and justice, encouraging virtue and protecting all life. Give wisdom, mercy and justice to them in their leadership for the well-being of the nation. Be with all who guard and help us in life, firefighters; law-enforcement; military personnel; nurses and doctors; food production and transportation workers; utility, construction and retail workers. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O merciful Father, You have compassion upon the sick and those in need and have promised not to ignore them in their afflictions. Turn back the pandemic across the globe, and give us relief. Bless the sick with healing, those who suffer with strength and patience, and the dying with peace. Hear us on behalf of those who have requested our prayers [*especially* _____]. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

3 He lives -- Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
[Refrain]

4 And, Lord, haste the day when our faith
shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;
Even so it is well with my soul. [Refrain]

(In Zion Lutheran's prayers: Margaret; Norma; Lillian; Carolyn; Charlotte; Henry; Lincoln; Isaac; Julie; Loretta; Cathie; Karlyn; Mark; Dan; Kathy; Shirley; David; Carlton; daughter of Julie; Bill; and Pastor Berlin. Thanks and praise to God for healing for Sandy, Bryceton, Pastor Scheiwe, Zack, and Wendy.)

Gracious God, You have established the home and blessed those who show us Your love. Bless all mothers and the children in their care. Bless all families and make their homes places of blessing and love, where Your Word is spoken, forgiveness reigns and love is displayed. Give us good examples to inspire youth to all that is good and pure, and to seek after these things. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We praise You, God, for Your goodness in hearing the prayers of Your people and granting us confidence to approach Your throne of mercy. Hear us now in the name of and for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom, with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is Yours, almighty Father, both now and forevermore. Amen.

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.

O Lord, hear my prayer. **And let my cry come to You.**

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen.**

Hymn *Jesus Loves Me*

Lutheran Service Book 588 (Public Domain)

1 Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong:
They are weak, but He is strong.

2 Jesus loves me! He who died
Heaven's gates to open wide.
He has washed away my sin,
Lets His little child come in. [Refrain]

Refrain:

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

You are invited to listen to hymns and use other resources at "Resources" www.zionrco.org.

Order of Prayer adapted from "Divine Service I," *Lutheran Service Book*, Concordia Publishing House. Prayer adapted from LC-MS Three-Year Series Prayers for May 10, 2020. <https://www.lcms.org/worship/three-year-series-prayers>