

FROM LUTHER'S PRAYERS:

Eternal God, you do love me and ask that with all my heart I rely on you in all things. It is your earnest desire to be my God and I must regard you as God or suffer the loss eternal salvation. My heart shall neither build on nor rely on anything else, whether it be property, honor, wisdom, power, purity, or any other creature. Amen.

FROM LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

The Apostles' Creed:

The Second Article: On Redemption

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

What is this?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also true human being, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. He has purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. He has done all this in order that I may belong to him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules in eternity. This is most certainly true.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Lord God, you call us to work in your vineyard and leave no one standing idle. Set us to our tasks in the work of your kingdom, and help us to order our lives by your wisdom; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL: Mark 9: 30 - 37

(Jesus and the disciples went on) and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it, ³¹ for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” ³² But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

³³ Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” ³⁴ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. ³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” ³⁶ Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN ?

So the last shall be first, and first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Matthew xx. 16.

Because this Gospel speaks of those who think themselves first before God, it aims high and strikes the most excellent people. Indeed, it frightens the greatest saints. And that is why Christ holds it up even before Apostles. For it sometimes happens that a man who appears weak and poor, and despised before the world, . . . yet secretly within his heart is well pleased with himself, so that he thinks himself the first before God; and even for this reason is he the last. On the other hand, there may be a man so fearful and fainthearted, that despite his gold, honor, . . . he thinks himself the least before God; and even for this reason is he the first.

It is also well known that the greatest saints have been moved with fear in this connection, and that many holding high spiritual office have fallen.

Behold, how Saul fell! How God let David fall! How Peter had to fall, and likewise some disciples of Paul!

Hence this is the essence of this Gospel; no man is so high nor can he rise so high, that he need no longer fear that he may be made the lowest. And again; no man has fallen so low, nor can he fall so low, that there is no hope of him becoming the highest, for herein all merit is set at nought, and God’s mercy alone is praised, and it is firmly decreed that ‘the last shall be first and the first last’. In that He says, ‘the first shall be last’, He takes away all pride. . . But in that He says, ‘the last shall be first’, He takes from you all despair . . .

Sermon from the year, 1525.

W.A.17. 139 f.