

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 of 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 First Commandment:

You shall have no other gods.

What is this?

We are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things,

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Almighty and eternal God, you know our problems and our weaknesses better than we ourselves. In your love and by your power help us in our confusion and, in spite of our weakness, make us firm in faith; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 14:25-33

Now large crowds were traveling with (Jesus) and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." ³¹ Or what king, going out to wage a war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN ?

Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Luke xiv:27.

Although we must not count our suffering and cross for merit, or regard it as a means to win salvation, we must follow Christ in His suffering in order that we may be made like Him. For God has ordained that we shall not only believe in Christ crucified, but that we shall suffer and be crucified with Him; as He clearly shows in many places in the Gospels.

Therefore each Christian must bear a part of the holy cross, and it cannot be otherwise. As St. Paul says (Colossians i. 24): 'I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh'. As if he would say: His whole Christian company is not yet complete. We, too, must follow after, that nothing of the suffering of Christ fail to reach fruition, but all be gathered up into one. Therefore each Christian should consider that his own cross will surely come.

But it must be a cross that really presses and hurts, such as great risk to honor and possessions, body and life. Such suffering does really hurt, and if it did not hurt, it would not be suffering.

But if you know this, it is all the lighter and easier, and you can comfort yourself, saying: If I will be a Christian, I must bear the colours. The dear Lord Christ issues no other garment for His Court. Suffering has to be.

Sermon on suffering and the Cross.

W.A. 32. 29.

