

Rev. Danny Mackey
Good Friday
March 30, 2018
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Muncie, Ind.

[Adapted from Rev. Brent Kuhlman's sermon series in *Concordia Pulpit Resources*, Vol. 27, Part 2 (Concordia: St. Louis), 64-65.]

With the Second Commandment, God wants you to use His name properly. You are to fear, love, and trust in God so that you call upon His name in every trouble. That's called...prayer. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble," God invites. Then His promise, "I will deliver you," as well as your response, "and you shall glorify Me" (Ps 50:15).

PRAYER, KEEPING THE SECOND COMMANDMENT,
IS THE LIFE OF DEPENDENCE ON GOD FOR EVERYTHING.

When you don't believe or trust in God, you don't pray to Him. When you do believe and trust in God, you pray. To pray is to be a Christian.

It's really no surprise, then, that believably obedient, reverent, submissive Jesus is always praying to His Father, especially in the day of trouble. For example, He prays when He faces the ferocious onslaught of Satan's attacks through Peter's denials, Iscariot's betrayal, Israel's unbelief, and Pilate's violation of his vocation by condemning sinless, innocent Jesus and releasing murderer, terrorist Barabbas.

In John 17, when the supreme hour of Jesus' life on earth has arrived—namely, His suffering and Good Friday death, drinking the cup of God's wrath against all sin and every sinner—Jesus dependently prays. He prays for Himself (Jn 17:1-5), asking the Father for the promised gift (cf. 12:28) of His glorification through suffering and death. Jesus prays for His disciples (17:6-19), that His Father would preserve them in an alien and hostile world, sanctify them in the truth of His Word, and equip them as apostles to preach the Gospel to the world. Jesus prays for His future disciples, you and me, who will believe in Him through the preaching of His apostolic witnesses (17:20-26). He prays for their unity, "that they all may be one [perfectly one]" (17:21), and for their remaining with Him. That's why John 18:1 remarks: "When Jesus had spoken these words."

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death" (Heb 5:7). As His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow, "even to death" (Mt 26:38), the praying went like this: "My

Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Mt 26:39). This is Jesus' High Priestly work! On His way to do the "it is finished" job of offering His perfect and obedient life as the one and only sacrifice of atonement for all sin, Jesus prays, intercedes for you and for your salvation.

Jesus was "made perfect" because He lived totally by faith in His Father's promise to use Him to become "the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9) for all sinners. Jesus did what Adam did not and could not do. Jesus perfectly succeeded where Adam miserably failed. Jesus, as the second and last Adam and the head of a new humanity, lived by faith. In other words, Jesus was the perfect human; He was totally dependent on His Father's will to achieve the world's salvation that He accomplished in His Good Friday "it is finished" suffering for all sin and every sinner.

Again, as Jesus "offered prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death" (Heb 5:7), they went like this: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Mt 26:38). And the Father's will, Isaiah says, is to lay on Jesus "the iniquity of us all" (Is 53:6); that He "bear their iniquities" (53:11); and be "numbered with the transgressors" (53:12). Isn't that incredible? Mind-blowing? After all, Jesus never sinned. He was tempted "as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15).

And yet, for your sake, sinless and perfect Jesus gets counted as the sinner on the cross. This is what it takes to save you. Jesus takes all your sin away from you, wraps Himself with it, and bears it in His body on the cross. He bears the sin of Paul, the former blasphemer, persecutor, and killer. He bears the sin of Peter, who, as he denied Jesus three times, mused God's name by calling down curses on himself and swearing falsely. He bears the sin of King David, the adulterer and murderer. Yes, Jesus has and carries all the sins of every person as well as yours in His body to make satisfaction for all sin with His divine blood, which gushes and drips from His crucified body.

All this is for you. So St. Paul says in Galatians 3:13 that "for us" Christ Jesus "became a curse." In addition, the apostle preaches in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that, "For our sake [God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Again, the prophet Isaiah spoke about this for-you Suffering Servant named Jesus: "He bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors [the

sinner]” (Is 53:12). Transgressors! Sinners! That’s you! So Jesus intercedes—He prays as the great High Priest from the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).

This is His constant prayer for you too! After all, you think you know what you’re doing, but you really don’t. You fail to live by faith, and therefore you don’t pray either at home or with the baptized holy and royal priesthood at church. You let your old Adam run your life. You let your sinful nature be the lord of your life. So you misuse God’s name to curse people instead of blessing them. You misuse God’s name by invoking it to deceptively get what you want. You misuse God’s name by joining in the worship of false believers and by employing it in superstitious practices. You misuse God’s name to tell all sorts of lies and to deceive. Consequently, you live inhumanly or inhumane because you refuse to live dependently on God through faith—a faith that obediently prays in the way of the Second Commandment. Let’s recite it together, as it’s printed in your bulletin:

The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Here is the good news for you this Good Friday. Jesus, the Son of God, is the great High Priest for you. His dying breath was this: “The salvation job that I came to do, ‘It is finished.’” Accomplished! Totally and completely! You are given to “hold firmly” to this truth. After all, what He says and does for you is sure and most certainly true.

As your pastor, I have been sent by Jesus to tell you that the throne of His Good Friday grace is extended to you tonight. Confidently, I declare to you Christ’s forgiving mercy and grace. He is the great High Priest, and His prayer for you and for your forgiveness has been answered. The Father listens. He hears His crucified and risen Son on your behalf. His sacrifice did atone for you. You are forgiven. All your sin is answered for—all of it! The body and blood that Jesus offered and shed on the cross counts for your salvation.

In the name of Jesus.