

Our Daily Lives in Song

In the name him who loved us and gave himself for us, dear friends in Christ: The Christian Church in general, and the Lutheran Church in particular, is blessed with a rich tradition of hymns – hymns that address every season in the church year such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost; hymns that address special occasions and themes such as holidays and festivals, missions, stewardship, and the ordination of pastors; and hymns that address every aspect of the life of a believer such as Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, marriage and family life, and finally, death and life eternal in glory with Christ.

In the past we've considered some of these themes in special services of song. Not too long ago, for example, we sang our way through the entire church year. Today we're going to do it again; but this time we're going to narrow our focus and concentrate on a group of hymns that accompany our daily lives in Christ.

We begin, quite naturally, where the day begins: at sunrise, with a hymn that is actually a prayer to the Lord – that he who kept us safely through the night would also keep us in the faith and lead us by his Spirit in all that we think, say, and do.

Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun (LSB #868)

The Christian life is above all a life of repentance. It begins in Holy Baptism. That's when and where the Lord gives us his Spirit to bring us to repentance for our sins and to faith in Christ who bore the penalty of our sins on the cross. That's where we were first washed in the blood of the Lamb of God, made children of the heavenly Father, and redeemed and forgiven for Christ's sake. But Baptism is not a one-time thing. It has ongoing significance in the life of a believer. In the Small Catechism we learn that baptizing with water indicates "that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." That is to say, at the beginning of each and every day is good to return to our Baptisms by confessing the sins that have piled up against us in the last 24 hours and remembering that we are God's children washed in the blood of Christ and forgiven for his sake.

Baptismal Waters Cover Me (LSB # 616)

Singing the faith has been part of what it means to be a child of God from the very beginning. It may surprise you to know that Adam's first recorded words are in verse – that is to say, he probably sang them. And so it's been ever since. God's people have always responded to the Lord's abounding grace in song. The hymn book of ancient Israel is what we have in the book of Psalms – and it's long been the practice of many Christians to include at least one psalm as part of their daily devotions. With that in mind, and knowing that just about everyone's favorite is the 23rd Psalm, which reminds us that Jesus is our Good Shepherd who attends all our daily and eternal needs, let's sing the next hymn, which is nothing more than the 23rd Psalm set to music.

The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want (LSB #710)

The most important facet of every Christian's daily life is time spent in God's holy Word. It is the Bread of Life that sustains and strengthens our spirits. And it's where we meet with Jesus and build upon our relationship with him who is the Word of God made flesh. As we approach God's Word, it's fitting that we ask the Lord to send his Spirit in order to open our hearts and minds to receive the heavenly food with which he wants to feed us.

Speak, O Lord, Your Servant Listens (LSB #589)

"Lord, your Words are waters living when my thirsting spirit pleads. Lord, your Words are bread life giving; on your Words my spirit pleads." Two of today's readings from Holy Scripture reflect these themes. As you listen to them, consider how it is that in the hands of Jesus what seem to be mere words are in fact a feast to feed multitudes.

The Readings:

Isaiah 55:1-5

Romans 9:1-5

(Stand)

Matthew 14:13-21

In response to hearing God's Word, it's fitting that we give praise and thanks to the Lord for sending Jesus, the Word, to be our Savior, and for giving us his life-giving truth.

(Seated)

Praise and Thanksgiving (LSB #789) *(The offering will be received during the hymn)*

Great. The Christian life, of course, is about much more than receiving God's Word and grace in Christ Jesus. It's also about going forth to pursue our daily lives – our studies, our vocations, our work in the family and community, and even our recreation – all in the transforming power of God's Word, which is recreating us in the image of Christ. As such, we understand that having received God's love and forgiveness through the sacrifice of his Son, we are the Lord's hands and feet in the world, that our good works are Christ's works, and that through us even now he is at work to serve and love all people. It's what we call sanctification. Even the most humble task done in love for Christ's sake for someone in need is a sacrifice pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

Lord, Whose Love, through Humble Service (LSB #848)

No day in the life of a Christian would be complete without time spent in prayer. That the Lord opens his arms with the invitation for us to come to him with all our cares and concerns promising to hear us for Jesus' sake is a great gift indeed – one that we all too often don't take full advantage of. The next hymn reminds us of both the pleasure and the treasure we have in prayer.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus (LSB #770)

(Stand)

The Prayers (beginning with the Collect for the Day, followed by petitions offered by the worship leader, and concluding with all joining together in)

The Lord's Prayer

Toward the end of each day, it's good to set aside some time for quiet reflection – to meditate upon the goodness of the Lord and all the blessings of life that he granted this day freely for Christ's sake. This next hymn sums up such thoughts quite well.

How Great Thou Art (LSB #801)

And finally we come to the close of the day. And as we do, we remember that each time we lay down to sleep abiding in Christ and with trust in him, we are rehearsing for the day on which we will lay down this life for the last time, only to rise again with him in the Light of the endless day. Therefore let's ask Christ our Lord to abide with us all the days of this life, in our deaths, and for all eternity.

Abide with Me (LSB #878)

Soli Deo Gloria!