

# Confession and Absolution

## 725 Children of the Heavenly Father

- 1 Children of the heav'nly Father  
Safely in His bosom gather;  
Nestling bird nor star in heaven  
Such a refuge e'er was given.
- 2 God His own doth tend and nourish;  
In His holy courts they flourish.  
From all evil things He spares them;  
In His mighty arms He bears them.
- 3 Neither life nor death shall ever  
From the Lord His children sever;  
Unto them His grace He showeth,  
And their sorrows all He knoweth.
- 4 Though He giveth or He taketh,  
God His children ne'er forsaketh;  
His the loving purpose solely  
To preserve them pure and holy.

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832–1903; tr. Ernst W. Olson, 1870–1958  
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*Stand*

*The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

### Invocation

**P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

### Exhortation

*LSB 151*

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

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

*Kneel/Stand*

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

### Confession of Sins

*LSB 151*

**P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

**C** **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.**

### Absolution

*LSB 151*

**P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

*Stand*

## Service of the Word

**Introit***Psalm 103:15–19; antiphon: v. 8*

- P** The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
**C** **As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field;**  
**P** for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.  
**C** **But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children,**  
**P** to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.  
**C** **The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.**  
**C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;**  
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**  
**P** The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**Kyrie***LSB 152*

- A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**  
**A** For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**  
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**  
**A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**  
**A** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.  
**C** **Amen.**

**This Is the Feast***LSB 155*

- C** **This is the feast of victory for our God.**  
**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**  
**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.**  
**This is the feast of victory for our God.**  
**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**  
**Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His.**  
**This is the feast of victory for our God.**  
**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**  
**Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:**  
**Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**  
**This is the feast of victory for our God.**  
**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**  
**For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.**  
**This is the feast of victory for our God.**  
**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Salutation and Collect of the Day**

- P** The Lord be with you.  
**C** **And also with you.**  
**P** Let us pray.  
 Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**C** **Amen.**

*Sit*

**Old Testament Reading***Isaiah 55:10–13*

<sup>10</sup>“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup>so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.  
<sup>12</sup>“For you shall go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall break forth into singing,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.  
<sup>13</sup>Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;  
and it shall make a name for the LORD,  
an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**Epistle***Romans 8:12–17*

<sup>12</sup>So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*Stand***Alleluia and Verse***LSB 156*

**C** Alleluia.  
Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of eternal life.  
Alleluia, alleluia.

**Holy Gospel***Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.

**C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup>And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup>but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>He who has ears, let him hear. . . .

<sup>18</sup>“Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and

immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>23</sup>As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

## Apostles' Creed

**C** 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.

*Sit*

## 686 Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

- 1 Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
While the hope of endless glory  
Fills my heart with joy and love,  
Teach me ever to adore Thee;  
May I still Thy goodness prove.
- 2 Here I raise my Ebenezer,  
Hither by Thy help I've come;  
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wand'ring from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.
- 3 Oh, to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be;  
Let that grace now like a fetter  
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee:  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;  
Prone to leave the God I love.

Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
 Seal it for Thy courts above.  
 4 Oh, that day when freed from sinning,  
 I shall see Thy lovely face;  
 Clothed then in the blood-washed linen,  
 How I'll sing Thy wondrous grace!  
 Come, my Lord, no longer tarry;  
 Take my ransom'd soul away;  
 Send Thine angels soon to carry  
 Me to realms of endless day.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735–90, alt.

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## Sermon

Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Who are you? How do you define yourself? In today's "anything goes" world, one has wide liberty. The world no longer restricts people to two genders, male and female. Men especially have midlife or identity crises. According to the world, one can be whatever one wants. And to some extent, that is true. Countless people have broken new ground as the first of their family to go to college, or get a Master's Degree, or a doctorate. Some have become billionaires; some more than once. Some have risen in Corporate America to lead international companies. 45 people have been elected President of the United States, and only twice have two presidents been father and son. Others were born into a wealthy family and end up on the street. Some recover from substance abuse and then relapse. Others succumb to crime and fall from their lofty positions. Numerous religious leaders have found themselves abandoning God's call to pursue fleshly desires.

What about you? Does your faith define you? Does living in America define who you are? Are you a Christian American or an American Christian? Does your birth family define you? Or if you were adopted, did your adoptive parents define who you are? Does your work define you? Do your relationships define you? Were you blessed to have parents that you wanted to grow up to be just like? Or was your relationship with your parents strained, leaving you to want to be the opposite? For example, my Dad had a hair trigger temper such that my birth family walked on eggshells constantly, in fear that we would trigger Dad's temper. Or was substance abuse part of your family? Or physical abuse?

In today's Epistle reading, Paul focuses on your life in and through Jesus who suffered and died to redeem you and reconcile you with the Father. The Holy Spirit enables you to put to death the deeds of the body (v13b) and to focus on the spiritual and eternal life. You are not ultimately defined not by sinful nature during your earthly life but by God's action of sending the Holy Spirit into your life, making you an adopted son or daughter of our Heavenly Father. In loving response to this gift of God, you resist sin. Your eternal identity is no longer an enemy of God who deserves temporal and eternal punishment. Your eternal identity is "child of God", heir of God's eternal kingdom, a shared inheritance with Jesus who humbled Himself to be like you in all things but sin. Jesus rose from the dead, assuring you that you too will rise on the last day. Jesus appeared to the disciples, making them witnesses of the Resurrection who faithfully testify that Christ is Risen through the Scriptures, which makes you a witness of the Resurrection.

What does this mean for you, who you are, and your life? God sent the Holy Spirit to you to work faith in your heart. Led by the Holy Spirit through the proclamation and hearing of God's Word, you were called to the waters of Baptism and became God's own dear child. The Holy Spirit transforms you from a poor miserable sinner, a descendent of Adam and Eve whose sin changed everything, to God's child, God's Saint. The Holy Spirit moves you to repent and confess your sins. Your sins of coveting, desiring what you have not been given, be that money, possessions, relationships, or reputation. Sins of wanting to be like God, to be God. Sins of attempting to use the Law to somehow earn your salvation. Sins of not obeying those in authority over you,

be it parents, adults, or the government God has given you to care for you. Sins of failing to care for your neighbor's life, your neighbor's possessions, your neighbor's relationships, or your neighbor's reputation. Sins of not caring properly for your body, God's temple. Sins of not being a faithful steward, managing all you have been given as belonging to God, not as owned by you.

On your own, you can't help but sin, especially in this sinful world where good is called evil and evil is called good. In this sinful world that rejects God's Word. In this sinful world that glorifies sin and evil instead of condemning sin and evil. The sinful world that ignores the importance of marriage and the one flesh union of man and wife. The sinful world that espouses "me first" over putting others first. But that is where the Holy Spirit comes in. The Holy Spirit who testifies with your spirit that you are a child of God, fulfilling Deuteronomy 19:15 "A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established." While the Holy Spirit's witness is certainly sufficient, your spirit too testifies that you are a child of God. You have been changed. You are no longer a child of the flesh whose end is the grave and hell. Instead, you are a child of God who will live forever in the new heavens and new earth.

How does that change your identity? You have been given vocations and relationships which determine who you are. You may be a farmer, a hair stylist, a teacher, or a retiree. You may be a father, mother, grandmother, grandfather, brother, sister, son or daughter. You may be a husband or a wife or even a fiancé. All of these components of your identify stem from your identity as a redeemed child of God. You are first and foremost a Christian, a brother or sister of Christ, an heir of eternal life. And being a Christian, suffering should not be a surprise. After all, what happened to the only perfect human? His brothers and sisters in the faith put Jesus to death, a death He willingly endured, taking your sins and the sins of the whole world to the cross, dying so that you might live eternally.

As Jesus prepared to suffer and die for your sins in the Garden of Gethsemane, He called upon His Father in the same words as your spirit calls out to your Heavenly Father. In Mark 14:36 <sup>36</sup> "And he said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.'" These words, "Abba Father" in Aramaic and Greek, don't explain one another but emphasize one another. Abba is a term of endearment, a term of closeness, used by children to address their Daddy. Luther writes "But amid these terrors of the Law, thunderclaps of sin, tremors of death, and roars of the devil, the Holy Spirit begins to cry in our heart 'Abba! Father!' And His cry vastly exceeds and breaks through the powerful and horrible cries of the Law, sin, death and the devil. It penetrates the clouds and heaven, and it reaches all the way to the ears of God". Luther also explains your your closeness to the Father in the Introduction to the Lord's Prayer "With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father."

Your identity, first and foremost, is a redeemed child of God, an heir of His Eternal Kingdom, a co-heir of Jesus who died for your sins. And in response, you are focused on eternity, and on God's mission and ministry as you await the coming of God's Kingdom and being united with God, your "Abba Father". Amen.

And now may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

*Stand*

## Offertory

*LSB 159*

**☞ What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?**

**I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.**

**I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.**

**I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,  
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.**

*Stand*

## Prayer of the Church

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For repentance, that by every thorn and briar, God would warn us of sin and discipline us against temptation, so that we would place all trust in His promise of everlasting life, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For devotion to the Holy Word, which God sends as abundantly as rain on the earth, that we may never take it for granted but seek its help and refreshment in every circumstance, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For an abundant harvest of believers, that God would bless pastors and missionaries as they sow His Word to the nations, preparing the hearts of all who hear to believe and yield abundant fruit, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For parents, that the Lord would bless them with faithfulness as they plant His Word into their children; and for children, that by His Word the Lord would protect them amid the cares and troubles of this world, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For seasonable weather and bountiful harvest, that according to our Creator's Word, He would send rain on the earth to make it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those suffering from illnesses of body or mind, [*especially \_\_\_\_\_,*] that the Lord would give them healing, comfort them with His loving presence, grant them patience to endure suffering and assure them always of the glory of Christ that awaits them, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Almighty God, Your Spirit calls us by the Gospel to the new life of faith. We praise You and acknowledge You as our Lord. Deliver us from the devil's temptations, that we may live under You and serve You in righteousness, innocence and blessedness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the same Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **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.**

## Prayer

Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from above, that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, so that in steadfast faith we may serve You and, in the confession of Your name,

abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## Benediction

*LSB 166*

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**C** Amen.

## 921 On What Has Now Been Sown

- 1 On what has now been sown  
Thy blessing, Lord, bestow;  
The pow'r is Thine alone  
To make it sprout and grow.  
Do Thou in grace the harvest raise,  
And Thou alone shalt have the praise!
- 2 To Thee our wants are known,  
From Thee are all our pow'rs;  
Accept what is Thine own  
And pardon what is ours.  
Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive,  
And to Thy Word a blessing give.
- 3 O grant that each of us,  
Now met before Thee here,  
May meet together thus  
When Thou and Thine appear  
And follow Thee to heav'n, our home.  
E'en so, amen, Lord Jesus, come!

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