



TEACH US HOW TO PRAY

Blessings

- In the commentary on the Lord's Prayer in the *Small Catechism*, Luther considers this way of blessing God's name to be the first petition.
 - Luther asks, "*What is this? It is true that God's name is holy in itself, but we ask in this prayer that it may also become holy in and among us.*"
- We bless and honor God's name by first acknowledging that it is holy, and by asking that it be holy, or that we make it holy among us.
- As Luther says in the introduction to the Lord's Prayer in the *Large Catechism*: "*By invocation and prayer the name of God is glorified and used to good purpose.*"



HALLOWED
BE YOUR
NAME

- In the Hebrew Scriptures, we find often the words *berakah*, meaning, “blessing”, and *lebarek*, which means “to bless.”
- These words are distributed through many of the Hebrew Bible books.
- However, blessings are especially abundant in Genesis, given the promises of God given to the fathers and mothers of Israel there, especially the promises about offspring and land.



FIRST, TO
BLESS

- For example, Genesis 12:2: *I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.*
- The implications of such a promise are varied.
 - It could be a promise of prosperity in general, or of having a respectful name; or a promise strictly to Abraham, or to the people becoming a blessing to others.
- In other passage it seems clear that the blessing cannot be taken back or invalidated: it is given by God, who does not lie, and always stand by God's own word.



- Blessing was also given at different times and opportunities:
- At times of departure, or when death was expected.
- In the context of hospitality shown to a guest, including in response to a meal.
- The blessing that is sought after or asked for in different life circumstances.
- The wish for the wellbeing of another individual or group, like the wishing of God's peace or shalom;
- Even listening to the commandments alone is a blessing.
- To offer thanksgiving, to say grace, is also to bless.



OCCASION
TO BLESS

- Sometimes the blessing is in the gift, or the given, like goods brought to someone, water or a pool of water that is available to a people.
- A fruitful ground for cultivation, a good harvest, or some forms of property.
- Health and being “full of days” are counted as blessings.
- Blessings are also expressions of well wishes, or a form of greeting, a salutation, at a time of arrival or departure.



THE GIFT
AND THE
GIVEN

- In all the above instances, and more that we could mention, the common denominator is God, who is the ultimate source of all benediction.
- Overall, humans are the object of the blessing, but not just us alone but other nature as well.
- God is the primary source of all blessing.



GOD IS
THE
SOURCE

- There is a form of blessing which translates as reverence towards God, an expression of gratitude or praise to God.
- Sometimes the blessing is accompanied by an offering to God or dedication to the service of God.
- Even when the blessing is proffered upon another human, a gift, some form of service, or a tribute of some kind may follow.
- Showing concern for someone is a blessing as well.



GOD'S
PRAISE