

Hymn Luther Wrote for Instruction

The Lord's Prayer

In 1539, Luther wrote this hymn and set it to a musical tune, which was not well received at the time. The setting was later set to a popular Bohemian tune. The words are from *Luther's Small Catechism* with the first line declaring the petition of the prayer followed by an explanation of its application to our daily lives.

Our Father, who from heav'n above bids all of us to live in love
As members of one family and pray to You in unity,
Teach us no thoughtless words to say, but from our inmost heart to pray.

Your name be hallowed. Help us, Lord, in purity to keep Your Word
That to the glory of Your name we walk before You free from blame.
Let no false teaching us pervert; All poor deluded souls convert.

Your kingdom come. Guard Your domain And Your eternal righteous reign.
The Holy Ghost enrich our day with gifts attendant on our way.
Break Satan's pow'r, defeat his rage; preserve Your Church from age to age.

Your gracious will on earth be done as it is done before Your throne,
That patiently we may obey throughout our lives all that You say.
Curb flesh and blood and ev'ry ill that sets itself against Your will.

Give us this day our daily bread and let us all be clothed and fed.
Save us from hardship, war, and strife; in plague and famine, spare our life,
That we in honest peace may live, to care and greed no entrance give

Forgive our sins, Lord, we implore that they may trouble us no more;
We too will gladly those forgive who hurt us by the way they live.
Help us in our community to serve each other willingly.

Lead not into temptation, Lord, where our grim foe and all his horde
Would vex our souls on ev'ry hand. Help us resist, help us to stand
Firm in the faith, a mighty host, through comfort of the Holy Ghost.

From evil, Lord, deliver us; the times and days are perilous.
Redeem us from eternal death, and when we yield our dying breath,
Console us, grant us calm release, and take our souls to You in peace.

Amen, that is, So shall it be. Make strong our faith in You that we
May doubt not, but with trust believe that what we ask we shall receive.
Thus in Your name and at Your Word we say: Amen. Oh, hear us, Lord!

The Ten Commandments

Martin Luther understood the need to instruct the German people in God's Word and he used worship, hymns, a Catechism for instruction, and family devotion time to do this. The first verse is an introduction to the commandments followed by the commandments.

These are the holy Ten Commands
God gave to us by Moses' hands
When high on Sinai's mount he stood,
Receiving them for our good. Have mercy, Lord!

"I am alone your God, the Lord;
No other gods shall be adored.
But you shall fully trust in Me
And love Me whole-heartedly." Have mercy, Lord!

"Do not My holy name disgrace,
Do not My Word of truth debase.
Praise only that as good and true
Which I myself say and do." Have mercy, Lord!

"You shall observe the worship day
That peace may fill your home, and pray,
And put aside the work you do
So that God may work in you." Have mercy, Lord!

"You are to honor and obey
Your father, mother, ev'ry day.
Serve them each way that comes to hand;
You'll then live long in the land." Have mercy, Lord!

"You shall not murder, hurt, nor hate;
Your anger dare not dominate.
Be kind and patient; help, defend,
And treat your foe as your friend." Have mercy, Lord!

"Be faithful to your marriage vow;
No lust or impure thoughts allow.
Keep all your conduct free from sin
By self-controlled discipline." Have mercy, Lord!

"You shall not steal or cheat away
What others worked for night and day,
But open up a generous hand
To feed the poor in the land." Have mercy, Lord!

"Bear no false witness nor defame
Your neighbor, nor destroy his name,
But view him in the kindest way;
Speak truth in all that you say." Have mercy, Lord!

"You shall not crave your neighbor's house
Nor covet money, goods, or spouse.
Pray God He would your neighbor bless,
As you yourself wish success." Have mercy, Lord!

You have this law to see therein
That you have not been free from sin
But also that you clearly see
How pure toward God life should be. Have mercy, Lord!

Our works cannot salvation gain;
They merit only endless pain.
Forgive us, Lord! To Christ we flee,
Who pleads for us endlessly. Have mercy, Lord!

God, the Father, be Our Stay

Luther rephrased this medieval Germany litany into a hymn of invocation for the Holy Trinity. Although he only changed the first line in each verse, the litany is a powerful song of inspiration asking God three times to:

- Forgive our sins
- Grant us life with Him
- Protect us from evil
- Uphold our faith
- Trusting in God's promise to help us
- Asking for a humble heart

God, the Father, be our Stay; Oh, let us perish never!

Cleanse us from our sins, we pray, And grant us life forever.
Keep us from the evil one; Uphold our faith most holy,
Grant us to trust Thee solely With humble hearts and lowly.
Let us put God's armor on,
With all true Christians running
Our heav'nly race and shunning the devil's wiles and cunning.
Amen, amen, this be done; So sing we alleluia!

Jesus Christ, be Thou our Stay; Oh, let us perish never.

Cleanse us, from our sins, we pray, And grant us life forever.
Keep us from the evil one; Uphold our faith most holy,
Grant us to trust Thee solely. With humble hearts and lowly.
Let us put God's armor on,
With all true Christians running
Our heav'nly race and shunning The devil's wiles and cunning.
Amen, amen, this be done; so sing we alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Holy Ghost, be Thou our Stay, Oh, let us perish never!

Cleanse us from our sins, we pray, And grant us life forever.
Keep us from the evil one; Uphold our faith most holy,
Grant us to trust Thee solely with humble hearts and lowly
Let us put God's armor on,
With all true Christians running
Our heav'nly race and shunning the devil's wiles and cunning
Amen, amen, this be done; So sing we alleluia!

All Glory be to God Alone

This hymn became the battle cry of the Reformation in the Schmalkaldic Wars because it captured the importance of Luther's teaching of GRACE ALONE! Note the words in the first and fourth stanzas.

1 Corinthians 15:10: *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."*

The evidence suggests that this was a hymn Luther wrote for one or two choirs to sing in the opening of the liturgy when the congregation sings, *Glory to God in the Highest!* It was likely first used in a worship service in the trading city of Naumburg in 1537 and set to the music of different settings over the years. Naumburg was a predominately Roman Catholic city about 40 miles south of Leipzig.

All glory be to God alone,
Forevermore the Highest One,
Who doth our sinful race befriend
And grace and peace to us extend.
Among mankind may His good will
All hearts with deep thanksgiving fill.

We praise Thee, God, and Thee we bless;
We worship Thee in humbleness;
From day to day we glorify
Thee, Everlasting God on high.
Of Thy great glory do we sing,
And e'er to Thee our thanks we bring.

Lord God, our King on heaven's throne,
Our Father, the Almighty One.
O Lord, the Sole-begotten One,
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father's Son,
True God from all eternity,
O Lamb of God to Thee we flee.

Thou dost the world's sin take away;
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.
Thou dost the world's sin take away;
Give ear unto the prayer we say.
Thou sitt'st at God's right hand for aye;
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.

Thou only art the Holy One;
Thou art o'er all things Lord alone.
O Jesus Christ, we glorify
Thee only as the Lord Most High;
Thou art, the Holy Ghost with Thee,
One in the Father's majesty.

Amen, this ever true shall be,
As angels sing adoringly.
By all creation, far and wide,
Thou, Lord, art ever glorified;
And Thee all Christendom doth praise
Now and through everlasting days.

If God Were Not Beside Us Now

This is a powerful paraphrase of Psalm 124 that reminds us of God's plan for our salvation. Notice in verse 2 how people will prepare deceptive traps for us allowing the tide of sin to overwhelm our lives. But in verse 3 we see God's redemptive power and His plan for our salvation. Luther writes we are like birds who can fly away from evil and temptation by calling on the name of Jesus! But, we deceive God, when we do not thank Him for His grace and worship Him for all that He has done for us!

If God were not beside us now, so Israel is saying,
If God were not beside us now, our state would be dismaying.
We are a weak and shrinking band looked down upon on ev'ry hand
By those bent to destroy us.

So set against us is their will that, if God's help had tarried,
They would have ground us in their mill and long since had us buried,
Like victims of a rolling tide when sudden dark waves inland ride
To trample all beneath them.

Thanks be to God, who did not let their eager jawbones snatch us.
Like birds our souls escaped their net, no snare of theirs can catch us.
Their traps are broken, we are free; God stands beside us with the key
To His good earth and heaven.