

The Sunday after Christmas

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We have now heard what we must do and believe, in what things the best and happiest life consists. Now follows the third part, how we ought to pray. For we are in a situation where no person can perfectly keep the Ten Commandments, even though he has begun to believe. The devil with all his power, together with the world and our own flesh, resists our efforts. Therefore, nothing is more necessary than that we should continually turn towards God's ear, call upon Him, and pray to Him. We must pray that He would give, preserve, and increase faith in us and the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments [2 Thessalonians 1:3]. We pray that He would remove everything that is in our way and that opposes us in these matters. So that we might know what and how to pray, our Lord Christ has Himself taught us both the way and the words [Luke 11:1–4], as we shall see....

HOLY BAPTISM

We always teach that the Sacraments and all outward things that God ordains and institutes should not be considered according to the coarse, outward mask, the way we look at a nutshell. But we respect them because God's Word is included in them. For we also speak of the parental estate and of civil government in this way. If we intend only to recognize that they have noses, eyes, skin, and hair, flesh and bones, they look like Turks and heathen. Someone might start up and say, "Why should I value them more than others?" Because this commandment is added, "Honor your father and your mother" [Exodus 20:12]. I see a different person, adorned and clothed with God's majesty and glory. The commandment, I say, is the gold chain about his neck. Yes, that is the crown upon his head, which shows me how and why one must honor this flesh and blood.

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