

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity

– Tuesday –

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. – Psalm 91:12

Everybody knows that one day he must die. No one, however, knows when he will die. And, although death is so “final” and so “absolute” an end to the unbelieving children of this world who reject the concept of an “afterlife,” most people are as unmindful of death as the animals of God’s lower creation. Some, of course, “plan” for it by providing life insurance for their families and even pre-paying their final expenses; but their plans are rather theoretical and, on a day-to-day basis are out-of-mind. Others, when confronted with even the thought of death, despair. Regenerate, believing Christians, on the other hand, who have been instructed by the Word of God about the true nature of temporal death and about “*the gift of God,*” namely, “*eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Romans 6:23b), should learn to pray as Moses does in the oldest of Psalms: “*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*” The ability to do this is a gracious gift of God. To number one’s days – to recognize that they may be many or few -- and to apply one’s heart to wisdom concerning both life and death, no one can do of himself. Only God, through the instrument of His Word, can teach a poor sinner to do this. True wisdom is gained from the Holy Scriptures, “*which are able to make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15) – the wisdom that is able to make us “*stand against the wiles of the devil*” (Ephesians 6:11) and against the fear of death (Psalm 23:4). In examining ourselves, we need to recognize that we deserve eternal death as “*the wages of sin*” (Romans 6:23) and humbly and sincerely to repent for having sinned against God and merited His just punishment. But we also need to understand and gratefully to believe that our Savior has redeemed us from sin, death, and judgment (Galatians 3:13), has purchased and won for us and all mankind God’s non-imputation of our guilt and His imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the ungodly (II Corinthians 5:19; Romans 4:5), and that these priceless blessings are our own by faith in His merits and what He accomplished for our salvation (Romans 3:28; 5:1). If we thus number our days, having applied our hearts unto “*the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4) and having found salvation by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith from sin, death, and the devil, then indeed we need not fear death and its sting (I Corinthians 15:56) but can rejoice, yea, exceedingly rejoice, in the glory that shall be revealed in us in heaven (Romans 8:18; I Peter 1:3-5). Such a meditation makes us glad and courageous to run our course in this world with the desire to depart and to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23) our Savior.

PRAYER – Lord, so teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart to wisdom. Teach me to remember in all humility, with contrition and sincere repentance, that by nature I am a sinner doomed to eternal death. But teach me above all things to trust and believe, rejoice and take comfort in Thy grace in Christ Jesus, that I may be ready every day to meet death cheerfully for His sake. Amen.

Help me now set my house in order that always ready I maybe to say in meekness on death’s border: “Lord, as Thou wilt deal Thou with me. My God, for Jesus’ sake, I pray Thy peace may bless my dying day!”

Hymn 598, 4