

## FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Completely Dependent

September 6, 2020

### AS WE GATHER

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus’ disciples asked. Our Lord responded by welcoming a child into His midst. “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Children are highly valued by our gracious God because they are completely dependent. On their own, they have nothing, yet they need everything. This is true for all of us in our relationship with God! In Jesus, we are, like children, completely dependent. We have nothing to offer, yet everything we need is ours to receive from the gracious hands of our Savior.

### Children of the Heav’nly Father [LSB 725]

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.

### PRAYER

O God, our gracious and loving Father, we are Your dependent children. Although we in no way deserve Your goodness, You freely offer Your grace to all who turn to You. Grant us faith to trust in Your Son, who humbled Himself for our salvation. We pray this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### OLD TESTAMENT *Ezekiel 33:7–9*

<sup>7</sup>“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn

the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

### **HOLY GOSPEL** *Matthew 18:1–6*

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”<sup>2</sup> And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them<sup>3</sup> and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup> “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me,<sup>6</sup> but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

I am quite sure that the answer that Jesus gave to His disciples’ question was not what they had expected. A child is completely dependent upon adults for food, clothing, shelter, and education. Without adults a young child is virtually helpless. To be told by Jesus that the disciples had to become like children probably did not make sense to them at the time. However, realizing their dependency upon Jesus was absolutely necessary. After Jesus’ death and resurrection it became abundantly clear. They were totally dependent upon Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and their eternal salvation. It is also abundantly clear that so are we. Before God we are children. We are dependent upon Him for everything as He is the Lord of Creation. We would not exist without Him. We certainly have an uncertain future without Him. Yet the human race are ungrateful children who do not think of being dependent upon their heavenly Father. Evolution is their godless evidence of existence and science their evidence of their self-sufficiency. Such is the danger of our not acknowledging our dependence on God. It is to not see our sin nor the need for forgiveness or the gift of eternal life. When we become dependent on our Lord Jesus through faith in Him and what He has done, we enter the kingdom the heaven. We are forgiven and we have a certain future.

### **LORD’S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9–13*

**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.**

### **BENEDICTION**

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.