

Daily Prayer

MONDAY, JUNE 15

Today's prayer is based on Martin Luther's very first thesis in his famous *95 Theses* which he posted on the door of Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany, October 31, 1517.

When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" (Matthew 4.17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the work you did in raising up Martin Luther five hundred years ago to call your people back to the Scriptures as their rule for faith and practice. Thank you for Luther's clarion call to turn from law to faith. Please, Father, raise up such men in our day.

Father, I confess that I get tired of pastors and worship-leaders calling me to repentance week after week, Sunday after Sunday. I know - at least I think I know - what I have done, and I get tired of being called relentlessly to consider my failings.

But perhaps there are still things about myself that I simply do not see yet. Perhaps you have been gentle with me. Perhaps you consider me too frail to see myself as you see me. If so, then, Father, strengthen me so I *can* see.

This seems like such a negative way to begin a message leading to abundant life. Help me understand why your "good" news always seems to start with "bad" news.

Was Luther saying that believers will never make much progress? I have trouble thinking we are called to a life of futility.

Could he have been saying that repentance *is* the way we make progress? If that is so, then, Father, please grant me pervasive, all-of-life repentance. That would indeed be the best sign that I am growing deeply and rapidly into the character of Jesus, to turn ever more completely toward you in all things.

For Jesus and his kingdom's sake. Amen.

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God tolerates even our stammering, and pardons our ignorance whenever something inadvertently escapes us - as, indeed, without this mercy there would be no freedom to pray.

- John Calvin