

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

You're greatest dad in the world. Dad, you're #1. You're tops in my books! Isn't that what most Father's Day cards are getting at? A day to not just remember our dads, but to be thankful for them, and maybe even show that love for them, especially if they happen to have made the trip halfway across the country just to see you.

But why would those cards have phrases like that. Singing praises of our fathers? Well, I think it's rather obvious, wouldn't you agree? It's because of the great place they can have in our lives. Some children even look at their dads as superheroes, can do anything. I was the same way when I was younger as well.

And I'll tell you, even today I do. Not so much because I think my dad can do anything in the world (*sorry Dad!*). But because my dad did a wonderful job of providing for his family. Food, clothes, a roof over my head, even the occasional toy.

You know why dads do that? Because that's what good dads do. They love their children. They long to provide for their children. They strive to meet their needs.

Well, that's exactly what our heavenly Father does, too. In our text for this morning, King David praises God the Father for providing for all of our needs. Today, as we continue our study on the Apostles' Creed through the eyes of Luther's Catechism, which we began a couple of weeks ago, we look at the first article, which talks about our heavenly Father. Not only has our heavenly Father created you and me, but we see that Our Father Feeds His Children. And looking at Psalm 145, we ask with Luther, "What does this mean?"

First of all, our Father feeds us BY his love. In his explanation of the First Article, Luther writes, "I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life..."

Our Father preserves you. He preserves me. Do you know what that means? It means our Father does what it takes to keep us alive. In his providence, in his great and surpassing wisdom, God provides all we need for our earthly lives. By his love, because of his incredible love, the same love that caused God to create each of us as the crown of his creation. That love moves God to take care of our needs.

And not just our needs, but God cares and provides for all creation. Isn't that what our verses this morning are getting at when they say, "The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing."

God satisfies the desires of all creation. I hope you wouldn't expect anything less from him. Jesus even says, "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

A loving father would not give his child a poisonous snake or a huge rock to eat when that child is hungry. He might joke about it, but no loving father would do that. He would give them bread or fish, or any kind of food to satisfy their needs. I'd bet that even an evil dictator would do the same for his children. So how much more won't a God who loves you, really, who's crazy about you, take care of our needs?

Our heavenly Father does. He opens his hand, no effort on his part, and you and I are taken care of. Don't have to worry where our next meal is coming from, whether we'll have clothes to wear tomorrow, or if there'll be a place for us to sleep tonight. As a church, we don't have to worry if there'll be someone to preach, people to preach through, whether we'll be able to support our ministries here. God provides all we need.

God satisfies our every desire. So, then that means you and I can say to God, "Well, God, if you're going to take care of my desires, here's what I WANT!" And we proceed to place our order, you know, not being content with what God has given us. But our malcontent says, "God, you haven't given me enough!" Or, we're often quick to complain, "If only I had _____, then I would be happy."

Or, how about misusing the gifts God has given you in your life, which really, is everything you have. Misusing them or abusing them. Using God's gifts for perverted and selfish uses. Maybe God has given you a computer, an incredibly useful tool. But you use it for evil purposes, like illegal downloads, playing violent games, maybe even the temptation to lust over pornography.

Or, we've been given food in many varieties and great amounts, much more than others throughout the world can say. And we over-eat and under-exercise. Or carelessly throw away mass amounts of food. We've been given dollars from God (who gives us the ability to work for them), and we spend them frivolously and recklessly. Maybe the most common way we do is by putting our giving back to God, the best way we can thank God for lovingly providing all we need, by putting that at the bottom of my list of priorities for those dollars, the mindset, "What I have left over, if there is any, can go to God. If I have to!"

Do you know what the result of our sinful complaining, what the result of our sinful misuse of God's gifts is? We incur God's wrath. We try his patience by constantly saying, "God can I have this? God can I have this?" "God, that's not good enough. I want more." "God, I'm not happy with what you've given me."

Now, if it were your children saying those things, how long would you put up with such arrogant demands driven by a sense of entitlement and ingratitude? I'm guessing you'd get annoyed and even angry pretty quickly. That's what you and I are often like with God. And he should be angry with us.

And where we would expect that God would just get sick of us and our sins, and just take everything away from us, and make on fend on our own, which he ought to, which would be deadly, spiritually. It would be hell. Literally, if God took his blessings away from us, that would be hell.

But he doesn't. Instead, our Father feeds his children, us WITH his love. God doesn't get angry with us as he ought. Instead, the greatest Father in the world, he's slow to anger. That's how Psalm 145 characterizes God a couple of verses before our verses this morning. It says God is "gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love."

You know, 'slow to anger' literally, in the Hebrew, is long in nose. Do you get that picture? If you're angry, you get flushed. Red in the nose like Rudolph. But if you're long of nose, it takes a long time to get lit up. You're patient. God is patient with us all.

And even more, he is compassionate. He abounds in love. We've seen that love not only in the gifts he gives us, in how he satisfies our daily physical needs. We have seen his love and his compassion in satisfying our greatest need, our need to be saved from sin, be saved from hell.

Our Father did that for us through his Son, Jesus. God gave us righteousness and forgiveness through his Son Jesus. Jesus, God became man, he lived a perfect life on this earth, one where he didn't gripe and complain against God. He didn't misuse the blessings his Father had given him. No, he was perfect.

And then, being perfect, Jesus saved us. He did great deeds in dying for us and rising again. Jesus was God's gift of abounding love and grace to you and me because his life, death, and resurrection resulted in our righteousness, all our many sins taken away, for now and forever.

And of course, we know how God's love continues to abound in our lives, how God satisfies our many other desires, how he preserves and provides for us. Let's talk about some of the gifts God gives us in our loves. Like his Word. This past week, at our District's Convention, as we discussed different Bible translations, I was reminded again what a blessing it is that we have a Bible in English at all! That's because God in his grace preserved the truth for us. From our spiritual fathers, from our pastors, and in many of our cases, through our physical fathers, we've been fed these truths. Thanks, dad!

Our Father provides what we need the most. Maybe not what I want, but what I need. Now, you might think, "What about 'satisfy the **desires** of every living thing?!?!'" You know, what we desire often changes. But God's Word tells us, "He, God, fulfills the desires of *those who fear him*." We fear God and don't want sinful things. We don't want what will serve me and my sinful nature. We want what brings glory to God. Those are desires God is eager to satisfy in our lives.

I need forgiveness. God provides it. He opens his hand to satisfy that desire, the same hand he opened to be nailed to a cross. Our Father feeds us with not just physical food, but with spiritual food, with the Gospel. With his body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. By that food, he assures us we are forgiven.

And how do we respond to our loving Father? You and I praise him! We can't not praise him! By how we live, every day. We tell others about him, everyone about him. Don't keep his love to yourself. And especially from your kids. Let the next generation know the satisfaction our heavenly Father provides. Support the work of the church here, who seeks to share the food of the gospel with God's children,

young and old. Support the work of our synod that trains pastors and teachers so that the next generation may know the love of our God.

The greatest dad in the world. That's often the loving title we give to our own dads, especially on a day like today. But there's a dad even better than them. Our heavenly Father. He provides. We rejoice. He feeds his children. We rejoice. God grants us forgiveness. We rejoice. He is the greatest dad in the world, in all the universe, in this life and the next. He's the greatest dad. And we rejoice. Amen.