

In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who sustains our hearts in this one thing, that we fear His name. This same Jesus will support us on all sides when we are frail; He will strengthen us when we are weak; He will comfort us when we are sorrowful, and when our body and soul are fading He will be the stronghold and portion of our hearts; with His Father and the Holy Spirit most highly honored and praised now and forever. Amen.

Beloved and Chosen in the Lord Christ Jesus!

When our most beloved Lord and Savior says this in the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke: "One thing is needful! Mary has chosen the good part; that should not be taken from her," He in that way here praises and commends the good fortune of a pious woman, how the same can also freely have the most necessary and beautiful thing of all that a man can and should have, as she indeed has grasped and so faithfully understood. That is the love of the Word of God and the fear of His most holy name, which Mary, the sister of Lazarus at Bethany, had in her heart. <85> For while her sister was very busy in worldly and housekeeping affairs that serve for the nourishment and maintenance of the body, Mary sat at the feet of the Lord Jesus, listened to Him diligently, and rejoiced in the Word of God; she paid careful attention to the obedience of the kingdom of heaven and built herself up in the knowledge and fear of her God. That now pleased the dear Son of God above measure and He praised and commended it with His mouth. That is the one thing, He

says, that is needful; that is the good portion that Mary has chosen, and that should also not be taken from her.

What the dear, faithful Son of God has now praised here above all about Mary, the sister of Lazarus, that you have also indeed recognized during the time of her life in the late, well-respected, honorable, and very virtuous Anna [nee?] Floering, the blessed wife of the mayor, who is now resting in God and placed in the coffin before our eyes, the former beloved spouse of the well-respected, highly estimable, learned, and very wise Mr. M. George Weber, the well-appointed and worthy mayor of this praiseworthy capital Berlin. For as she realized very early in life how the world and everything that is in the world was so full of vanity, and that her heart could not stand and rest upon that, she therefore chose the one thing that is needful and all the time prayed diligently and appealed to God to grant this to her. "Preserve my heart in the one thing," she has prayed from Psalm 86 with David: "Preserve my heart in the one thing, that I may fear Your name."

As we are now gathered in the house of the Lord, therefore, to consider and to ponder with one another such words of David for today's Christian funeral, we thus pray first and foremost to the Father of all grace and mercy, that He would bestow on us in addition to this the grace and aid of His good Holy Spirit, that our doing and intention may redound to His honor, for the comforting of the troubled mourners and on all sides for our blessed edification. In order to attain to such great grace from the most high God, we want to humble ourselves from the heart and to pray with one another the holy Lord's Prayer.

In Christian love, you would surely want to hear the words that have been chosen as the funeral text for this occasion read with blessed devotion and for me to explain them. The same are to be found in Psalm 86 of the king and prophet David, and especially in that very same verse 11 just read: “Teach me Your way, O Lord, so that I may walk in Your truth; preserve my heart in the one thing, that I may fear Your name.”

Beloved and chosen in the Lord Jesus Christ!

In the twenty-third chapter of the first Book of Moses we read about an especially thought-worthy funeral that the famous patriarch Abraham had arranged in <87> Hebron in the land of Canaan. For when in that place his faithful and most beloved housemother [*Hausmutter*], Sarah, had died in the hundred and twenty-seventh year of her age, he did not merely mourn and grieve alone, but also considered a fitting and honest little resting place where he might lay her to rest. And he was not reproached or accused of impropriety by anyone, but each, whoever could here serve him in some way, accommodated and helped him, so that he could bury his wife honorably. We appropriately call that a memorable and noteworthy funeral. And indeed [it was].

1. Because the ones suffering had to attend to and bury the dead body. The widower with us today is like the patriarch Abraham, a pious and god-fearing man, an honorable and deserving man, also an old and beleaguered man. This Abraham had, among other earthly and temporal goods, received a pious, god-fearing and dutiful spouse from God the Lord,

who was always been a faithful helper to him, a companion of his cross and a comforter of his sadness and concerns. After, however, both these married people had indeed been united for the span of their life and had gotten along amicably with one another, it finally nevertheless came to pass that they arrived at a parting and separation: Sarah died and her dear old spouse was torn from her sight and from her side. <88> And although now Abraham certainly knew that it could not be otherwise: death and separation must one day arrive; although he was certainly all the same assured that Sara had died blessedly and that afterward her soul was already in heaven with God and His holy angels; in addition, he similarly had the same faith and hope that they would see each other again one day in heaven and in great joy, still he could not keep himself from weeping, but Abraham mourned and grieved his Sarah. He reflected upon the many long years which they had lived with each other and spent upon the earth; he remembered all the love and faithfulness that he had always enjoyed with this, his spouse; he considered her friendly words, her sweet conduct, her honorable and virtuous walk, and he lamented that everything that they once had with one another must cease and come to an end.

2. This [Old Testament funeral] is a memorable and noteworthy funeral for a second reason as well, with respect to the departed herself, to whom all had been attending and whom they were burying, that is, Sara, the highly beloved mother of all Christian and virtuous women. For the holy Apostle Peter introduces her as such in his first epistle, in the third chapter, where he wants to instruct the female gender about that which should be its chief and most beautiful adornment, namely, that it does not consist of external things—

braided hair, gold necklaces, or clothing—but of the inner adornment of the heart and soul, <89> the hidden man of a steady heart with a gentle and quiet spirit. “For this,” he says, “is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening,” (1 Peter 3:5,6). This high and worthy mother, who has [received] such marvelous praise and testimony, who has been endowed with such beautiful, precious virtues that the Holy Spirit Himself sets her forth as the master teacher of all other women, must now nevertheless also die and become a corpse. She lies here before her husband and he must allow himself to mourn and grieve with many fervent tears. Yet she certainly does not for this reason lack anything with respect to her praise and honor; but just as she has honored God the Lord in her life, He thus honors her now also in her death, and just as she has always allowed God the Lord to rest and live in her heart, He thus cares for her also now after her death with one fine, comfortable little resting place, where she can sweetly rest and repose for the resurrection until the day of Christ.

3. The funeral of Sarah is a memorable and noteworthy funeral for a third reason, with respect to the good heart and disposition that Abraham experienced in that regard. For as he intimated the powerful sorrow having befallen him to the children of Heth, among whom he lived, so he was not left not without a brotherly and friendly fellow mourner. And <90> when it came to point that he wanted to honorably bury his dead, there was not one of them who did not recognize him as sincere and would not have served and supplied him some of his own property for the occasion. And this was on account of for the good conduct

that they had found in Abraham up to now, for he had been a beneficial man for them, he had been a prince of God among them, as they themselves call him [Genesis 23:6]; that is, he had been set among them by God as a leader and had provided them much faithful and useful service, so that they now considered it fair to let Abraham in return use and buy their land. Such a good heart and disposition we now also fairly allow our presently troubled and grieving old lord burgermeister to see and experience from all sides. The same [widower] is indeed a father of this praiseworthy citizenry and a head of our dear, worthy city and community, whose many years of faithful governmental work is certainly well-known and renowned to each among us. Who then does not now want to offer their heartfelt sympathy, since now in his old age the mother of his household and the most faithful friend of his heart has been taken from him and torn from his side? And who would not himself readily and willingly want to be present at the honorable funeral and Christian burial of such a virtuous, pious matron as this one has been?

Now that we have accompanied the deceased's body into the house of the Lord, we also want at this time to take up and to consider in the true fear of God and Christian simplicity the funeral text just read, which our blessed wife of the mayor <91> herself chose a long time ago, having written it down with her own hands, and later desired to have it preached to her. In order, however, that such consideration does not pass without benefit and fruit, our dear God and Father in heaven wants once again to bestow upon us His grace and Holy Spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ, His dear Son. Amen.

Beloved and chosen in the Lord Christ Jesus!

When we now look at the words of our funeral text, already now read aloud and undertaken, we find again three separate thought provoking points that we, with the help of God, want to touch upon one after the other in an orderly and brief fashion. As

1. The most blessed diligent study that a Christian soul can encounter.
2. The one thing most desired of all to which a Christian soul can attain.
3. The most certain interpretation that a Christian soul can have of that one thing.

1.

Concerning the first question, the words run in this way: “Teach me, Lord, Your way, that I may walk in Your truth.” In these words the most blessed diligent study that a Christian soul can encounter is set forth, and we have to take into consideration in that regard:

<92> 1. The high knowledge in which a Christian soul wants to be taught and instructed. That is the knowledge of the way of the Lord. The way of the Lord, however, is understood in Holy Scripture in different manners and ways. Here especially the established way, apart from which we are not able to find our way into heaven and to the eternal Father, is found. That way is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who says in John, chapter 14, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” With Him is the way to the providence and the rule of God, upon which God Himself proceeds and which He takes into consideration in all His counsel and plans, works and affairs. For that

reason, [this way] is explained in Holy Scripture in part through the thoughts of God, as in Isaiah 55[:8,9]: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts;” in part also through the deeds of God, as in Psalm 103[:7]: “He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel;” in part also through the salvation of God, as in Psalm 67[:2]: “that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.” Finally, it is also the way of the revealed Word of God, which He has recorded for us men and in which He has admonished that we should walk and proceed. That is elsewhere called the way of His law, the way of His commands, the way of His rules, the way of His testimony, and thereby the holy Christian teaching is signified through which we will be transferred out of the darkness into the light, out of death into life, and out of hell into heaven. In the New Testament, it is now and again called the way of the Lord, the way of peace, the way of salvation, the way of the truth, since through it He guides and leads us into the one peace, the one salvation, the one truth. And this way is now also all here comprehended in our funeral text, that is, the way of the dear saving Word of God, the way of Christian teaching, the way of the truth, as David himself explains it, which especially keeps us free and secure from error, and brings us certainly and truthfully to that place where it will be eternally wonderful for us and our souls.

2. Concerning the second, we have to take into consideration here the great Master who should teach and instruct the Christian soul. He is the Lord Himself. “Lord,” says David, “teach me Your way.” David does not in any way unreasonably take the Lord as His refuge

here, since otherwise there is indeed no one in all the world able to serve and help him in this regard. A man surely cannot find and grasp the way of God by Himself, but it takes place as the Book of Wisdom says in chapter 9: “We poor mortals scarcely grasp that which is upon the earth, and we devise with difficulty what is under our hands. Who will, therefore, <94> to investigate what is in heaven? And who will come figure out the counsel of God?” And although wise people have always been found upon the earth, who have revealed all kinds of mysteries and brought all kinds of secret things into the light of day through their understanding, yet nevertheless no one has been found who could show and reveal to us the way of God. “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom,” Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1[:21]. Indeed, not only has the world not known the wisdom of God, but even if the same is indeed shown and revealed, they still cannot understand it with their powers and abilities. For, “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them,” Paul reiterates in 1 Corinthians 2[:14]. God the Lord Himself must therefore now show and teach us His way. And indeed He does that faithfully and candidly. And once certainly through His most beloved only-begotten Son. For, “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known,” the Evangelist John says in chapter 1 [, verse 18]. And the Epistle to the Hebrews says in chapter 1[, verses 1 and 2], “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” And the disciples of the Pharisees, although they were like raving enemies to the Lord Christ in their heart, still testified about him with their own

mouths that He was true and <95> rightly taught the way of God (Matthew 22). God the Lord also teaches His way to us through His Holy Spirit and the faithful servants and the instruments of the same. Also the holy Apostles are testified in Acts 16[:17] to be the servants of the most high God who proclaim the way of salvation to men. And when they have instructed someone in the holy gospel it says they have laid out the way of God and have instructed him in the way of salvation (Acts 18[:25]). What the Apostles have given for teaching and instruction, however, they have given not from themselves, but from the Holy Spirit, according to the consolation of the Lord Christ, which He gave to them multiple times before His departure.

3. Concerning the third, we also have to take into consideration here the perfection to which this master Teacher should bring the Christian soul: that, namely, it walks in His truth. All that lives and moves upon the earth has its way upon which it walks. But not all are good ways, not all are the way of God, not all are the way of the truth; but, on the contrary, most are crooked ways, are erroneous ways, are false, seductive ways. And although they sometimes have a nice glimmer and appearance, and indeed are also held by the children of this world as good and right ways, they are nonetheless still pure shams, ways of death that throw men into destruction and limitless misfortune. Therefore David now prays, and each <96> pious Christian soul, that God would still want to allow him to walk in His truth, in His right, true way that would guide him rightly and well, and that He might never again allow him to err and be found lacking.

And this first part now shows us how God the Lord so gladly wants men to have life and to inherit eternal salvation. We can learn that well from the first part of the Davidic text before us, where this holy man sighs and prays, "Lord, show me Your way, that I may walk in Your truth." For in that way he indeed explains sufficiently how God has prepared a way for us on which we should go and a truth in which we should walk. A way, namely, that leads us to life, and a truth that leads us to eternal salvation and blessedness. Disaster has befallen us poor men through the fall of our first parents, so that we have tumbled from life into death, and from salvation into damnation. And it is surely not only the earthly paradise of which we have been deprived, but we have also been shut out of the heavenly paradise; and if we had been left to ourselves, we would have eternally walked about in error and never again found the right place. But God has prepared a way for us and made available a truth that should lead us back again to the place from which we have fallen. Yes, not only has God prepared this way for us, but He also points us to the same, He shows us the same, He reveals to us the same, <97> since we would otherwise not find it by ourselves. That is certainly now clear evidence that God does not want us to suffer nor eagerly desires our destruction. It brings Him no joy that we get mixed up in error and wander about in the darkness of tribulation. He does not want us to be deprived of His heavenly kingdom and to be eternally cast away from His countenance. For, if that were so, He would surely not show us the way that leads us to life and the truth which leads us to salvation. For that reason, our God is a true and pious God, a faithful, merciful, and good God, a lover of life and One

showing compassion to the fallen and lost human race, for which we can never offer Him enough praise and worthily expound upon His honor.

2.

The second part in the funeral text before us is the one thing most desired of all to which a Christian soul can attain here upon earth. That is all described for us here.

1. As a benefit of the heart. "Preserve my heart," David says, "preserve my heart in the one thing." Dear David has still more powers and members of his body that he can use and employ to honor his God. As one instance, he thus has his eyes, to which he refers a number of times, that they always see the Lord [Psalm 25:15], that they look upon the Lord, their God, as the eyes of the <98> servants to the hands of their masters and as the eyes of maidservants look upon the hands of their mistresses [Psalm 123:2]; indeed, that he lifts them up to the hills from which his help comes [Psalm 121:1]. In addition to that, David also has his hands, about which he says that they also are stretched out in the night, that he lifts them up as an evening sacrifice and stretches them out to the Lord [141:2] his God. Moreover, David also has his mouth, about which we so often hear, that he calls and cries out to the God, that He sighs and prays to God, that he speaks and preaches about God, that he praises and thanks God, proclaims His glory and declares all His wonders that He does for the children of men. But David lets all that go by the wayside and concerns himself only with his heart, that that may be good and pious [Psalm 119]. And he also has good reason for that. For just as the heart is the wellspring of all evil [Proverbs 10:11], out of

which all slander and vice springs forth and floods the entire life of men, the opposite is also true, wherever the heart of a man is good, everything also is good; wherever the heart is pious, there the entire man is pious; wherever the heart is beautiful and well adorned, so is the entire man beautiful. For that reason, the heart is indeed the first thing that God looks at and inspects in a man. Therefore, according to the same He judges the entire man with all His actions and essence. Therefore, a person may be as close as he wishes be to God with his lips: where the heart is not in it, so he will not be pleasing to God. The man may outwardly set himself up as pious, as repentant and humble as <99> he wishes, he may give alms as he wishes, he may come to church and to the Holy Supper as he wishes: where the heart is not in it, where the heart is not pious, repentant, humble, virtuous and generous, so indeed all that external work will not be pleasing to God the Lord.

2. In the second place, the one thing is described here as the best of all, as the most useful and necessary good. For David indeed calls it the one thing here to indicate thereby how all his salvation and well-being, all his weal and woe rests in that. He may otherwise have whatever he may have in all the world: whenever he does not have the one thing, it thus could surely not go well for him. Whereas whatever he may be in need of or lack here upon the earth: wherever he has this one thing, he thus has entirely enough and moreover will be happily satisfied and make do. The human heart has very many and all kinds of good things which it otherwise idolizes and for which it longs. The human heart is also entirely erratic in the choice and high estimation of such good things; at one time it regards this, at another it regards another thing as its highest good; one wants this, another wants that; one

wants here, the other wants over there. For that reason, as God the Lord found pleasure in Solomon's heart and wanted to do well for him according to his selfless wish when He did not dictate to Solomon what good thing he should pray for and desire from Him, but gave Him a free, unlimited power to pick for himself what he wanted to have. And when Solomon then decided upon and requested wisdom, that God <100> might give him only a wise and understanding heart, God the Lord explained to him how many men, if given the same opportunity, would have asked for something else; namely, the one would have desired riches, the other a long life, the third victory and the conquering of his enemies. David now has all this before his eyes here; he knows well what marvelous gifts honor, riches, long life, power and strength, might and dominion would be. But he wants to turn his back on such things and let go if only God will give him the one thing. And if he can only have this one thing, then God may add to him some of the other things or none of them [however He'd like], either way it should still all be good for him.

3. In the third place, the one thing is also described for us here as such a good thing as to again tear us away and turn us back from what the heart gladly cherishes [apart from grace]. For that reason. David prays with regard to preservation: "Preserve my heart in the one thing." But God the Lord must preserve the heart against very great, mighty, and powerful enemies, especially against Satan and his dandruff [*Schuppen*], against the world and its children, and finally also against our own flesh and blood. For they all are occupied with trying to avert the heart from the one thing. And such either upon the right or upon the left hand; upon the left indeed, that the heart despairs of God and regards itself unworthy of

all His grace and kindness; upon the right, however, that the heart despises God and <101> seeks its desire and joy instead in something other than His grace and goodness. In both cases, the preservation of God must do the best, which must help us “to the right hand and to the left hand, so that we offer strong opposition, firm in faith and well armed, and through the comfort of the Holy Spirit.”¹

And this second part now shows us how a refined, quiet, tranquil and peaceful disposition may yet exist among the true children of God and the heirs of eternal life; namely, when others are not able to be satisfied, they then nonetheless have entirely enough in their God and desire to have no more. We can learn that from the second part of the little Davidic phrase before us, where we hear about the one thing desired most of all to which a Christian soul can attain. “Preserve my heart in the one thing,” David says. And he indicates how [the Christian] does not make great work for his heart with cravings and hankerings, but he desires only one thing; if he may have that, then he makes do and indeed is thoroughly contented with the dear God. If one looks at the hearts of the children of the world, the same for the most part are stuck in the great day to day troubles of running after the world and plagued with unending and insatiable hankerings. No one wants to be content with his condition in that regard, no one wants to make do with that which God has

¹ This may be a quotation from a sermon on Matthew 13:24-30 for fifth Sunday after the Epiphany of Christ, by Hermann Samson, an early seventeenth century Lutheran preacher. The language is almost identical. Samson himself may have been quoting someone else. Samson preaches, “to the right hand and to the left hand, help us offer strong opposition, firm in faith and well armed through the power of the Holy Spirit.” It appears on page 113 of *Die bedeutendsten Kanzelredner: Der älteren Lutherschen Kirche von Luther bis zu Spener in Biographien und einer Auswahl ihrer Predigten*, by Wilhelm Beste, published in 1856. It can be accessed on the internet here: <http://books.google.com/books?id=iRwMcrrMkyUC&pg=RA2-PA113&lpg=RA2-PA113&dq=%22zur+rechten+und+zur+linken+hand%22+%22starken+widerstand%22&source=web&ots=b3zVaNBMe&sig=VKLoQ9rAQIF4do5clgE8q5FyuZI#PRA2-PA104,M1>.

apportioned and measured out for him according to His gracious will; but he always wants to have more; when he has the first thing, then he desperately wants to have the second thing as well; when he has the second thing, then he pines <102> for the third thing, the fourth, and so forth. When one is sick, then he longs to be well; when he gets well, then he longs to be rich as well; when he becomes rich, then he longs to live long as well, and in that way the misery thus proceeds. For since everything that a man has in this world yet must be subjected to alteration and change, either the man leaves the goods, or the goods leave the man, so it now comes to whatever it wants, so it then ends in worry and anxiety, grief and angst, and all comfort and joy comes to an end. But whoever hangs on to the one thing with dear David need not be subjected to such misery and trouble; but when others desire much, so this one lets himself to be content with the one thing. And although all other things fade and pass away, and only this one thing remains standing, still the man nevertheless has lost nothing. And even when he also should die and leave this world, still this one thing all the same comforts him also in death so that he can sing and say with old Simeon: “With peace and joy I depart according to God’s will, my heart, courage, and mind are comforted, calm and quiet, as God has promised me; death has become my sleep.”

3.

The third and last part in the funeral text before us consists of the most beautiful and certain interpretation which a Christian soul can have of <103> this one thing. The text thus

says: "Preserve my heart in the one thing, that I fear Your name." That is an interpretation of three words, and each word has its special power and emphasis.

1. The first is the little word "fear," where David suggests that he longs to fear God. He in that way seizes upon the first commandment, which requires that we should hold the one true God as our God and serve Him. For that is the manner of the Holy Scriptures, that, when they want to say: The man holds this or that as his God, he worships this or that God, they say: He fears this or that God. Also it is various times said about the people of God that they have feared the heathen gods, and it is at once explained that they had attached themselves to the heathen Gods, that they had followed the heathen gods, that they had given honor to and worshipped the heathen gods. And when King Darius of the Medes wanted to proclaim that all his subjects should receive the God of Israel as their God, should honor, serve, and pray to Him, he thus said: they should "fear the God of Daniel," (Daniel 6 [:26]). The reason, however, for such a way of speaking is without a doubt this, that in all worship [*Gottesdienst*] one finds a fear, namely a fear of God's majesty, a fear of His wrath, a fear of His revenge and punishment, which one gladly would like to stave off. And that is in the righteous servants of God a childlike fear, that when a pious heart <104> indeed is frightened and reverent before God, it may also nevertheless still have a childlike confidence and trust in that regard, may love God for the sake of His goodness and mercy, displayed in Christ Jesus, and may offer praise and thanks to Him for all His good deeds.

2. The second is that little word "name," when David says that he would like to fear the name of God. The name of God, however, is in most instances in Holy Scripture the

same as God Himself; it is also entirely usual that one is mingled and transcribed with the other, as in Psalm 20[:1]: “May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!” and in Psalm 72[:18]: “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel and blessed be his glorious name forever.” As when Psalm 124[:8] says, “Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth,” so Psalm 68[:20] explains it: “Our God is a God of help, and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death.” So also in the New Testament one is called to believe on the name of the only-begotten Son of God as often as to believe on the Son of God Himself (John 3[:18]). The interpretation of this way of speaking is given by the scholars in this way, that we deal with God and about God in no other way than as He Himself has named Himself in His holy Word, that is, has revealed Himself. And the name of God would also be as much as the named God, the preached God, the revealed and proclaimed God, the glorious, most praised and widely called upon God, whose honor proceeds as far as heaven is and His truth so far as the clouds [Psalm 57:10].

3. The third is the little word “Your,” when David says: “That I may fear Your name.” For in this way He speaks with God, the God of his fathers, with Jehovah, as He has called Him in the beginning of our text, with the great God, with the true, living, and almighty God, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He has certainly now revealed Himself in His Word, that He is in three persons and called God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, but He still for that reason does not want to be a threefold God, but He is one God, one Lord, one individual, undivided and inseparable essence. Therefore, although he equally fears the names of all three persons: he fears the name of God the Father, he fears the

name of God the Son, he fears the name of God the Holy Spirit, he nonetheless did not want to accordingly make three different names in this way, but he sticks with one name:

“Preserve my heart in the one thing, that I may fear Your name.”

And this third part now shows us how it would not be enough for eternal salvation that a man has the right true God over him, but he must also render and conduct himself correctly toward Him. We can learn to do that from the last part of the little Davidic passage being presently expounded before us now, where this holy man makes an interpretation of that one thing for which he has such a fervent craving and longing. For there he sets forth the fear of the name of the Lord. Lord, he says, <105> that is the one thing that I wish and desire from You: that I may fear Your name. He indicates with these words with complete clarity that he and his soul are not helped by the fact that the name of the Lord may be in and of itself great, glorious, and praised, that He may dwell over him in heaven and have the highest power and dominion in all the world, that He may also be by and with him and ceaselessly show him love and kindness; but he must also conduct himself fittingly and worthily toward this Name, he must open his heart to Him and let Him move in and dwell there, he must have fear and knowledge of Him and place all his trust, hope, and confidence upon him. And appearances and daily experience also demonstrate that. All the heathen, who from the beginning of the earth have lived here, have had the name of the Lord over them. For there has still never arisen any other god that has set its throne in heaven and has had authority and power over all that exists except for the one real true God, the Lord, the God of all flesh, who gives His honor to no other and His name to no idol. He has always

had all nations and heathens under His hand; He has created and prepared them, He has sustained and preserved them, He has given them food and drink, He has showered them with His good gifts and has provided them with all that is necessary and required for their body and life. And yet not all heathen have become partakers of eternal life, but most have come into eternal ruin <107> and destruction. And that is the case for this reason, that they have not feared the name of the Lord that they have over them. They have not known the real true God, not loved Him, not honored Him, but have given themselves over to the works of their hands and have said to their self-made idols: "These are our helpers, which have saved us, which we want to fear, honor, and worship." So it goes and remains still in the present day. There is no people under the sun so barbaric, so insolent and wild, that it did not have the name of the Lord over itself, that is, that it was not under the jurisdiction and rule of the real true God, and yet did not have a great many of them turn away from eternal salvation, for the reason that they do not fear the name of the Lord that they have over them, but rather blaspheme, reproach, and curse it. Indeed, what may I say about wild barbaric people? One may look upon us Christians, how we now and then live and dwell in the world. Have we not all the name of the Lord over us? Is not the name of the Lord Jesus daily preached and proclaimed among us? And yet it is known how not all who live in Christendom become children of life and of eternal salvation and that we do not all fear the name of the Lord that we have over us. We do not all have the Christ, after whom we are named, in our hearts. We do not all know Him, we do not all believe on Him, we do not all set our trust, hope, and confidence upon Him. Therefore, it will also be said one day regarding

most: "I have never known you; depart from me all you evildoers" [Matthew 25:12; 25:41].

In whomever there exists an earnestness for the salvation of his soul, let that one surely see to it that he does not in this way miss out on or forsake anything in this regard. May he allow the Lord, his God, not only to sit over him and to daily give him all love and good, but also learn to properly render himself to Him and conduct himself for Him. May he not only allow the name of the Lord Christ to be preached and expounded to him daily, but also let Him come into his heart and dwell and abide in that place, may He fear the name of the Lord, love the name of the Lord, praise and glorify the name of the Lord, and serve and follow Him so long as He lives, thus will his name also then be written down in heaven and his portion be in the land of the living [Psalm 142:5]. God will give him a beautiful inheritance, a glorious, beautiful inheritance, an inheritance, namely with His saints and elect, "coming out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence" [Revelation 14b, 15]. Such a blessed and glorious inheritance that has already been prepared [for her], the soul of our blessed, deceased wife of the mayor, who is now also resting in God, has now certainly without a doubt attained. For just as she has so often not in vain sighed and prayed to God: "Preserve my <109> heart in the one thing, that I may fear Your name," but God has granted her that prayer and has given the fear of His name into her heart, so also her Christian walk here upon heart has adequately attested it, indeed God the Lord has recognized her to the end of her life as part of His family, and the soul, which has always

been faithfully devoted to Him, He has received into His kingdom. “There she will now eternally live together with Him in joy” [verse seven from the Lutheran chorale, *Christ, wahr Mensch und Gott*, by Paul Eber]. Now she sees the comfort of her heart and the joy of her soul, for which she has so often longed in this life. God has her in His fatherly arms and lap. And He, to whom she has here appealed for the one thing, gives to her there the entire store of His riches, the fullness of joy and lovely pleasures at His right hand always and eternally.

To His holy name be praise, honor, blessing, thanks, and glory now and for all eternity. Amen.