Week 1 January 1st, 2027, Our Father

From a confessional Lutheran (LCMS) perspective, you approach God strictly as a redeemed son or daughter, not as a servant trying to earn his favor.

While the New Testament frequently uses the imagery of being a "servant" or "slave" (*doulos*) of Christ, this describes our outward relation to our neighbor and our life of good works. When it comes to your vertical standing before God, your status is entirely defined by adoption through holy baptism.

1. The Distinction Between Status and Service

In Lutheran theology, confusion arises when we mistake our *identity* for our *activity*.

- **Your Status (The Vertical Relationship):** You are a child and an heir. In Galatians 4:7, Paul explicitly writes, *"So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God."* You do not approach the altar or the throne of grace to punch a timecard; you approach it as a member of the household.
- **Your Activity (The Horizontal Relationship):** You serve out of love for the neighbor. As Martin Luther famously wrote in *The Freedom of a Christian*: *"A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."* You are a servant to the world, but a child to God.

2. Law vs. Gospel Diagnostic

If you find yourself approaching God like a servant *only*, you are slipping into a legalistic framework where you view your relationship with God as contractual.

Approaching as a Servant Only (The Law)	Approaching as a Son (The Gospel)
Motivation: Fear of punishment or desire for a wage/reward.	**Motivation:** Joy and thanksgiving for an inheritance already given.
Focus: Your own performance, obedience, and faithfulness.	**Focus:** Christ's performance, obedience, and faithfulness for you.
Prayer Life: Tentative, bargaining, and plagued by spiritual anxiety.	**Prayer Life:** Bold, crying out "Abba, Father" because the Holy Spirit dwells in you.

3. Delivered through the Means of Grace

This identity is not an emotional state you have to manufacture; it is an objective reality delivered to you externally:

- **In Baptism:** God officially adopted you. He put His name on you, drowning the old slave to sin and raising you as His own child.
- **In the Lord's Supper:** You are invited to the family table, not to the servants' quarters. You eat the very body and blood of the Son, which cements your familial bond with the Father.

When spiritual anxiety tells you that you are just a servant who hasn't done enough, the Gospel reminds you that the cost of your adoption was entirely paid by Christ on the cross. You approach God with the ultimate confidence of a son.

Interested in diving deeper? Email us for an in-depth listing of Study Materials!!