

10 GREAT TEACHINGS FROM THE BIBLE

A STUDY OF BASIC
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE



Rev. Mark Willig

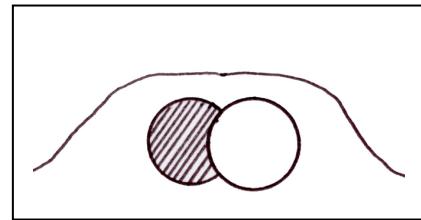
TEN GREAT TEACHINGS FROM THE BIBLE

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INTRODUCTION – THE PATTERN OF EASTER

Pastor: Christ is Risen!

Class: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



1. We begin with the one truth that is at the center of all we say and do as Christians. Christ is risen! Jesus is the living one and He is with us. He hears our prayers. He rules His Church. He guides our lives. We worship and pray to Him. This changes everything, because we are not talking about ideas, theories, or simple knowledge. We are talking about the relationship we have with a living person.

In the first lesson we will talk about Scripture. Scripture is the living Word of the Living God. So the Bible is God's word to us, where God calls us to know Him and live forever. The reason we believe the Bible is because we believe in God and know Him in Jesus Christ.

There is a two-way relationship here. We believe the Bible because of our relationship with God and we have that relationship in, through and because of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the Bible is the living word of the living Lord, so it has the power to create faith. We do not simply jump in and believe whatever is written because it is written. We believe because of the work of God. So how does it all begin?

2. **HOW WE BEGIN TO KNOW GOD**

Our encounter with God begins as God comes into our world. It is Christmas and Easter. It is Jesus being born, living, dying and rising for us. That is where our knowledge of our Triune God begins, with knowing Jesus.



John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only[-begotten] God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

So God comes to us; and we begin learning about God as we come to Jesus and learn about Him.

3. **ORIENTATION**

The books we will use are:

The Bible

The Small Catechism (Burgundy Catechism from Concordia Publishing House)

This book "Ten Great Teachings from the Bible"

The course is arranged around 10 Teachings that we take from the Bible and use to guide our discussions. They are:

- (1) Scripture – The living Word of the Living Lord
- (2) Law & Gospel – How we are (or are not) right with God
- (3) Creation – God knew you before the world began and personally created you
- (4) The Savior – Jesus died and rose for you
- (5) Conversion – The Holy Spirit calls you (within your soul) to believe in Jesus
- (6) The Church – God puts Christians together to help and strengthen each other
- (7) Prayer – It's a relationship given to us by Jesus
- (8) Baptism – God calls us His own
- (9) Absolution – Forgiven by God we give forgiveness to each other
- (10) Communion – How Jesus gives us Himself in that meal

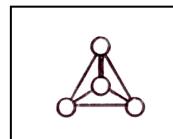
4. THE SIX CHIEF PARTS

The idea of gathering Christian teachings around certain topics has been used for centuries. In fact the Small Catechism gathers Christian teachings around what are called the Six Chief Parts:

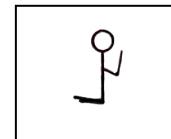
- (1) 10 Commandments



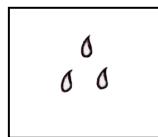
- (2) Apostles' Creed



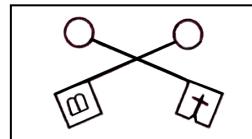
- (3) Lord's Prayer



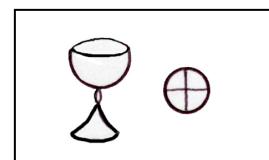
- (4) Baptism



- (5) Office of the Keys



- (6) Communion

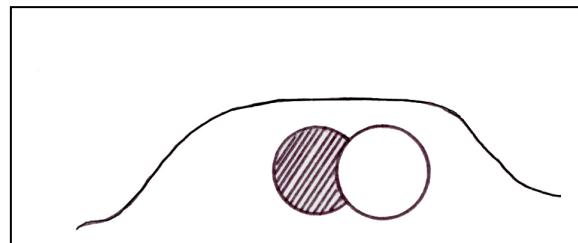


5. THE EASTER PATTERN

Let's begin once again:

Pastor: Christ is Risen!

Class: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



How did the disciples respond to Jesus' resurrection? They did not accept the truth easily. In fact their response and experience fits into the fourfold pattern of: Denial; Hearing; Encounter; and Confessing & Proclaiming.

- (1) **Denial**— at first every one of them denied that Jesus could possibly be risen.
- (2) **Hearing (The Message was Proclaimed to them)** – before they saw Jesus every one of His followers heard the message that He was risen; from angels or others who had already seen Him. But they still refused to believe.
- (3) **Encounter with Jesus** – only after hearing that Christ is Risen did they get to see Him. This is when the disciples finally believed Jesus was alive.
- (4) **Confessing & Proclaiming** – they confessed their faith in Jesus; and then began proclaiming, telling others that Jesus is risen.

5.1 Study the fourfold pattern in the life of the following people. Identify which verses tell about (1) Denial; (2) Hearing; (3) Encounter with Jesus; (4) Confessing & Proclaiming:

The women – Matthew 28:1-10 or Luke 24:1-10

- (1) Matthew 28:1 (they were there to anoint the dead body)
- (2) Matthew 28:5-7 (the words of the angel)
- (3) Matthew 28:9-10 (on the way they met Jesus)
- (4) Matthew 28:10 (they were sent to tell)

- (1) Luke 24:1
- (2) Luke 24:5-7
- (3) --
- (4) Luke 24:9

The disciples – Luke 24:11-12, 33b-48

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)

(Exercise # 1 gives more examples of this pattern in the life of the disciples.)

5.2 This four-fold pattern does not only describe the disciples. It is the common pattern for all who have come to know God. (This is exercise # 1; Part 2)

CATECHISM & MEMORY VERSES – (1) Scripture

(Scripture Passages, unless otherwise noted, are from the English Standard Version. The total number of words in each passage is listed in () after the verse.)		Completed / Words missed
10-a	Hebrews 1:1-2 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 . . . (30)	
10-b	John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only[-begotten] God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known. (21)	
10-c	Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (20)	
10-d	John 20:31 But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. (29)	
10-e	2 Peter 1:21 No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (24)	
10-f	Isaiah 55:10-11 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, . . . so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (57)	
10-g	Genesis 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (11)	
10-h	John 5:39 [Jesus said], "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me." (25)	

CHAPTER 1 – SCRIPTURE

Small Catechism, Questions # 1 - 12

10. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

Scripture is the living Word of the Living God. So the Bible is God's word to us, where God calls us to know Him and live forever.

11. MORE DETAILS

DEFINITION ((Small Catechism Questions # 2-5))

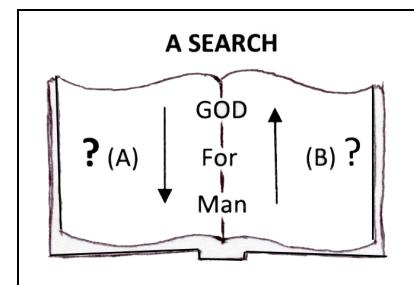
There are two ways of looking at the Bible. Either

- (A) As a record of God's search for man, or
- (B) As a record of man's search for God.

The first view is that of conservative churches; the second is that of liberal churches. (This is a specific definition of how we look at the Bible – not the same use of “conservative” and “liberal” as in politics or in anything else.)

According to this definition the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod is a conservative Church body. We say that Scripture is the record of God's search for man.

When we use the word Scripture we mean the Bible. So we say "The Bible is God's Word."



When Bad Theology Gets Worse

What would happen if I began by not saying “The Bible is God’s Word” but instead say “The Bible contains God’s Word”? What happens ends up looking like this:

1. If the Bible “contains” God’s Word, who decides which parts are and which parts are not God’s Word? (Very simply, each would decide for himself. I would decide for myself; you would decide for you.)
- 1a. If we each get to decide for ourselves we won’t ever agree. (Disagreeing about almost every part of faith is exactly what is happening among the liberal denominations.)
2. If I get to decide what is and isn’t God’s Word I will only accept the parts I already agree with anyway; and reject the other parts (and call them “out of date” or “irrelevant”).
3. And then I will never actually have God’s Word tell me I’m wrong and correct me. I will miss God’s call to repent, again and again. If God is not “just like me” I will miss Him.
4. In all this, I would have exalted myself over God’s Word, judging it instead of being judged by it. That is a place I do not want to be in my relationship with God.

11.1 INSPIRATION – Part 1 (God-breathed)

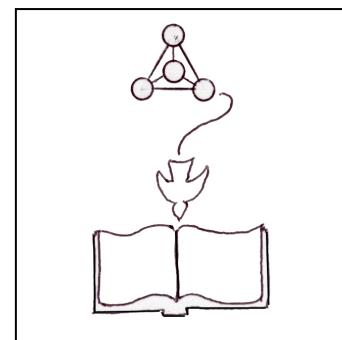
Inspiration means "God breathed." Again, the Bible is God's Word to men and women.

So this is one of our main ideas:

The Bible is God's Word.

We believe that:

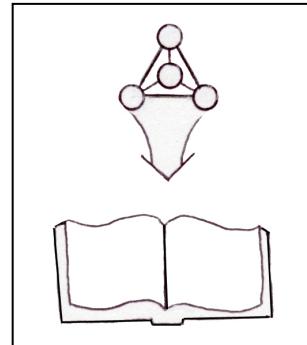
1. Every part of the Bible, every verse is inspired by God.
2. The Bible does not contain errors.



3. The writers of the Bible were guided by the Holy Spirit so that the words of the Bible, and the way things were said, reveal to us what is absolute truth.

11.2 WHOSE WORD IS IT?

Scripture is the Word of the **Father**: In John 12:49 Jesus said, "the Father who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment – what to say and what to speak." See also John 14:10, 24; John 17:6, 8, 14, 17; and Hebrews 1:1-2.



It is the Word of Jesus: In Matthew 24:35 Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." See also Mark 8:38 and Luke 9:26; John 8:47; and Colossians 3:16.

And it is the Word of the **Holy Spirit**: In 2 Peter 1:21 Peter wrote, "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God, as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." See also John 16:13-14 and Ephesians 6:17.

The Bible is the word of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

11.3 THE PARTS OF THE BIBLE

Before we go on we take some time to talk about the parts of the Bible.

There are 66 books;

39 in the Old Testament

27 in the New Testament

11.31 IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

The first 5 books are called: "**The Books of Moses**," "**The Pentateuch**," and "**The Law**."

Genesis – Tells the stories of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

Exodus – Tells about the people coming out of Egypt and going to Mt. Sinai to meet with God.

Leviticus – Tells of laws and rules for sacrifice.

Numbers – Tells stories of the Israelites' continued journey to the promised land

Deuteronomy – Is mostly Moses' last sermon, remembering God's great works

11.32 Next come the **Historical Books** (sometimes also called the "Former Prophets")

Joshua – Tells about entering the promised land

Judges – When Israel was ruled by judges (like Gideon, Deborah and Samson)

Ruth – Was one of Jesus' ancestors (Notice the idea of a Kinsman Redeemer)

1st & 2nd Samuel – Are about the prophet Samuel and the kings Saul, David and Solomon.

1st & 2 Kings – Are about Solomon and the later kings; until the exile in Babylon.

1st & 2nd Chronicles – Repeat genealogy from Adam and history until Babylon.

Ezra – Tells of the return to rebuild the temple.

Nehemiah – Tells of others returning to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

Esther – Tells one story of God's amazing acts protecting His people in exile.

(A lot of this part of the Bible tells the history and stories of what happened.)

Much of this is just plain interesting reading. There are also parts that many in our time find hard to read through, including some long family trees.)

11.33 Next come the **Poetic** books and books of **Wisdom**.

Job – Ponders the meaning of suffering.

Psalms – Is a collection of songs used in Old Testament worship and prayer.

Proverbs – Is a collection of wise sayings, built around Solomon's wisdom.

Ecclesiastes – Solomon meditates on the meaning of life.

Song of Songs (or) Song of Solomon – Solomon meditates on love.

(These books are written mostly in poetry, not rhyming as in English but in couplets of 2, or sometimes more, lines where the one repeats the meaning of the other.)

11.34 Next come the books of the **Prophets**. There are three **Major Prophets** (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) and a collection of 12 **Minor Prophets**. Jeremiah wrote a 2nd book, a book of Laments about the fall of Jerusalem. Included here also is the book of Daniel. A lot of these books are written in poetry.

Isaiah – Speaks great prophecies of hope and of the coming Christ.

Jeremiah – Speaks about God's judgment and salvation.

Lamentations – Jeremiah mourns the fall of Jerusalem and seeks for hope in God.

Ezekiel – Sees visions of Jerusalem's destruction and talks about the new heart.

Daniel – While in Babylon sees the coming of different kingdoms and the coming of God's Kingdom.

The 12 Minor Prophets:

Hosea – God called His people to return from other gods to Himself.

Joel – Called for repentance and heard God's promise of restoration.

Amos – Pronounced judgment poetically and with object lessons.

Obadiah – Is about God's judgment on Edom.

Jonah – Spent 3 days in a fish (a prophecy of Christ) and preached about repentance.

Micah – Said Jesus would be born in Bethlehem and call the nations back to God.

Nahum – Told how Nineveh had abused God's people and would fall.

Habakkuk – Told how the righteous will live by faith.

Zephaniah – Said Jerusalem would be judged and restored.

Haggai – Called God's people to build His house and not withhold their offerings.

Zechariah – Told details about Jesus' life & called to mourn for "the one they pierced."

Malachi – Waited for the coming of Jesus, heralded by John the Baptist.

11.35 IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

First there are the four **Gospels**. The first three (Matthew, Mark and Luke) follow a similar pattern. Many stories are included in 2 or 3 of them. This is useful for comparing a story from different viewpoints, and getting extra details.

Matthew – Was one of the 12 apostles. He was called from being a tax collector to follow Jesus.

Mark – Was a companion of Peter. His writing is full of action and words like “immediately.”

Luke – Was a fellow traveler with Paul. He says that he carefully researched everything.

John – Was another one of the 12 apostles. It looks like he wrote his Gospel later than the first 3. He includes a lot of different material. Most scholars believe that John intentionally did that. Since Matthew, Mark and Luke had already told about many things it looks like John wanted to be sure to tell about many other things that Jesus did. John is also fascinating in how he writes with simple words and yet teaches some of the most profound ideas.

11.36 Next is the one **historical book**

Acts – Tells what happened after Easter and after Jesus ascended into heaven. It tells the story of how the Gospel message about Jesus spread through the Roman Empire and beyond.

11.37 Next come the **letters of Paul**. They are not arranged in chronological or logical order but simply sorted by how long they are. First come the letters to churches in different cities (named by the name of the city); then the letters to individual people (Timothy, Titus & Philemon).

Romans – is Paul's great exposition of salvation.

1st & 2nd Corinthians – Deal with issues of Christian faith and life.

Galatians – Asks and answers the question what is Grace? (Freedom in Christ and fighting our old sinful nature.)

Ephesians – What is the Church? (In theme it follows after Colossians)

Philippians – Is about the conquering joy of the Christian life.

Colossians – Who is Christ? (In theme it is followed by Ephesians)

1st & 2nd Thessalonians – Are about the Christian life and the end of the world.

1st & 2nd Timothy – Deal with issues of pastoral care and how to remain faithful to God in the face of opposition.

Titus – Deals with more issues of pastoral care and faithfulness.

Philemon – Deals with slavery and how Christianity crosses boundaries in society, bringing freedom.

God's Library for You				
Par 2 – The Fulfillment				
New Testament				
27 books				
The Gospels (4)				
M	M	L	J	
a	a	u	o	
t	r	k	h	
h	k	e	n	
w				
History (1)				
A				
c				
t				
s				
Letters of Paul (13)				
R	I	2	6	E
o	C	3	7	P
o	o	4	8	o
r	l	5	9	T
a	t	6	0	T
y	e	7	5	M
z	z	8	4	o
z	z	9	3	h
z	z	z	2	h
z	z	z	1	y
z	z	z	0	Y
z	z	z	z	Y
z	z	z	z	
Letters of Others (8)				
H	J	I	Z	I
e	o	2	2	2
b	p	3	3	3
m	e	4	4	4
r	o	5	5	5
o	o	6	6	6
w	t	7	7	7
s	r	8	8	8
		9	9	9
Prophecy (1)				
R				
e				
v				
e				
t				
i				
o				

11.38 Next come the **letters of others**. They are named after who wrote them; except for Hebrews. (We don't know who wrote that letter, but it is sent "to the Hebrews" namely to the Jewish believers in Jesus, so that is how it is named.) Peter and John were among the 12 disciples. James and Jude are called brothers of Jesus.

Hebrews – Christ is the fulfillment of the priestly and sacrificial system.

James – Christian faith is living and active.

1st & 2nd Peter – The Church loving one another and witnessing to the world.

1st, 2nd & 3rd John – God is love.

Jude – Avoid sin and error and pursue growing in faith.

11.39 Finally there is the one **prophetic** book of the New Testament

Revelation – Written by John it contains a series of visions, difficult to interpret without knowing how they are related to other parts of the Bible. Its main theme is Jesus as the Lamb of God returning to gather His Church and rule forever.

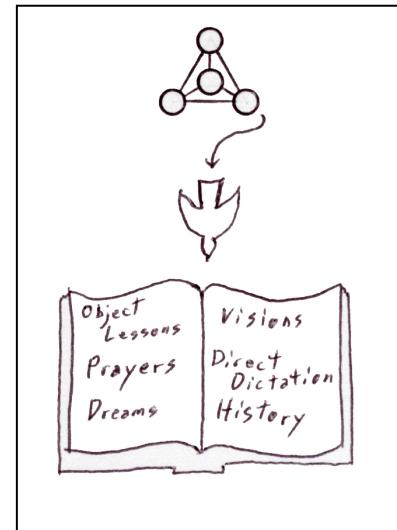
11.4 **INSPIRATION – Part 2 (Different Patterns)**

We say the Bible is inspired; and that every word comes from God; and that the Bible does not contain errors.

The Holy Spirit has guided the writing of every word and every verse. That is what we mean when we say that "The Bible is God's Word."

There is **a great variety of ways** in which the parts of the Bible came to be written. Comparing them is a fascinating study.

The following verses were inspired in a variety of ways. Match the descriptions in this list with the verses:



Court Historian

Historical Research

Object Lesson

Direct Dictation

Leaked Secrets

Prayer

Epilogue at the end of a book

Meditation on Shepherding

Vision

- 1) **Ezekiel 33:1-2** The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, 'If I bring . . .'"
- 2) **Isaiah 6:1-2** I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him stood seraphim. Each had six wings: . . .

3) **Amos 7:7-9 (NIV)** This is what He showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in His hand. And the Lord asked me, "What do you see, Amos?"

"A plumb line," I replied.

Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer."

4) **Psalm 132:1 (NIV)** O Lord, remember David and all the hardships he endured.

5) **Psalm 23** The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

6) **2 Kings 3:1** In the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria and he reigned twelve years.

7) **Deuteronomy 34:5** So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

The next two examples are especially important:

8) **Luke 2:19 (at the end of the Christmas story)** But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.
(How did Luke find out so he could include this in the Gospel according to Luke?)

9) **Matthew 28:12-14 (NIV)** *(Later on Easter day what happened with the guards)*
 When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble."
(How did Matthew find out about this?)

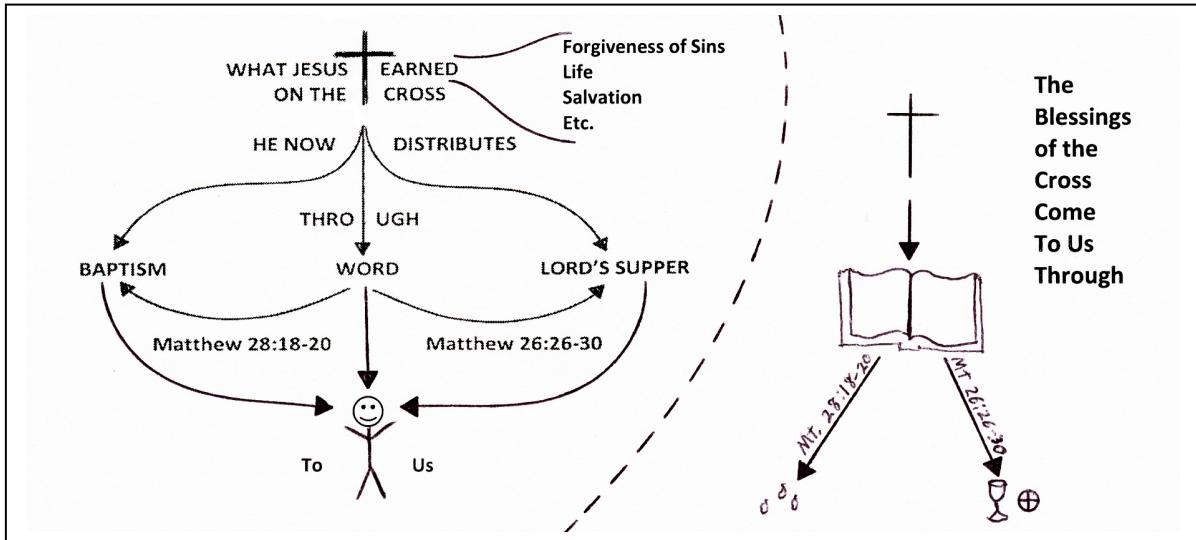
11.5 **INSPIRATION – Part 3 (Means of Grace // Word & Sacraments)**

The Word of God is life giving, faith producing, sin forgiving, faith renewing, faith strengthening, and faith keeping. It is a "Means of Grace" thing.
 "Means of Grace" things are those things that God uses "to distribute and give to us the forgiveness of sins that is earned by Jesus."

The diagrams that follow show the difference between how Jesus has earned our salvation and how Jesus gives us that salvation.

The phrase "Means of Grace" tells what God does. The things that God uses as Means of Grace are in the middle of the diagram. They are also named by another phrase, focused on what they are. So we have the phrase, "Word and Sacraments."

Using the diagrams, answer the questions before going on.



- (1) If Jesus suffered, died and rose for us and for our forgiveness but we never heard about it would it do us any good?
- (2) What Jesus earned on the cross must be distributed to us. According to the diagram how is forgiveness given to us?
- (3) Among the three things that are "Means of Grace" there is a specific relationship. (For example: The power found in the one comes from the other.) Describe the relationship between the three things that are "Means of Grace". See also Baptism Question # 3 (and Lord's Supper Question # 3) to help sort out the relationship.
- (4) So, when we say that the Word is the central thing in the "Means of Grace" what do we mean?

In Baptism and the Lord's Supper God gives us the forgiveness of sins that Jesus earned for us. It is because of their connection with the Word of God that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are also "Means of Grace."

The Word is at the heart of the Means of Grace. Since it is the Word it must be received by faith. This is how we receive the Word (written or spoken); and how we receive the blessings in Baptism; and how we receive the blessings in the Lord's Supper – by faith. The forgiveness of sins always must be received by faith.

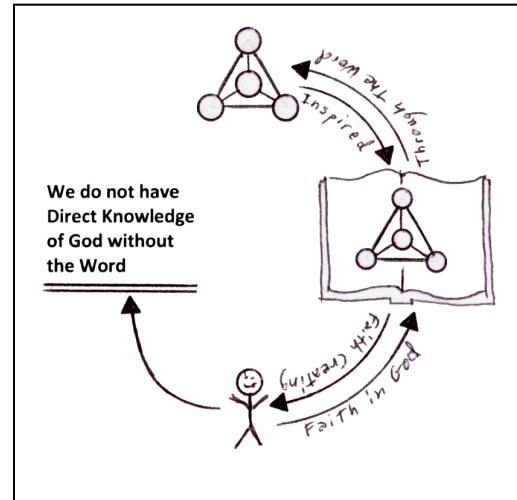
Just like with the disciples on Easter (the 4-part pattern of how they received the news that "Christ is Risen!") it is the Word of God that creates faith within us. The Word of God that comes to us is the same Word of God with the same power as in Genesis 1:3.

Write out what God said in Genesis 1:3 _____

Also read Isaiah 55:10-12

11.6 INSPIRATION – Part 4 (No Other Way)

There are multiple parts of this relationship. The Bible is the inspired Word of God. It has faith-creating power. Also, through the Word (the Bible) God Himself comes to us and does the work of creating faith. So **we believe the Bible because we believe in God. And we have come to believe in God through the words of the Bible.** But **we do not have a direct knowledge of God** without the Bible. We cannot truly know God except through the Word.



Because the Bible is God's Word to us we will trust and believe it even when it tells us something we do not like or do not want to hear. We will share some **unpopular teachings** in the lessons ahead. Those things are about: **Morality** (Unit 2); **Creation** (Unit 3); that **Jesus is the only way** of salvation (Unit 4); **who may be a Pastor** (Unit 5); **why we baptize babies** (Unit 8); and that we really do believe in the "Real Presence" in the Lord's Supper (Unit 10).

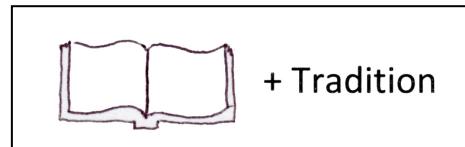
As we come to those teachings we want to simply follow God's Word. That is the only way that makes sense. **The Bible is the final authority** in all things. In fact this is the only sensible way of understanding who has authority in the Church. It is the Word of God (the Bible) that has all authority; and whoever is correctly quoting and applying the Word of God is to be heard and listened to.

Here is an "extreme" example:

If a Pastor and Voter's Assembly together are discussing and deciding something and a 10 year old child asks, "But doesn't the Bible say . . . ?" and that child is right; everybody else must yield to the Word of God spoken by the child.

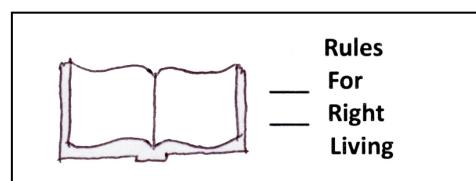
11.7 DIFFERENT WAYS OF LOOKING AT THE BIBLE

- 1) **Scripture & Tradition** – The Roman Catholic church teaches that Scripture is supplemented by tradition (things the Church teaches that are not in the Bible).



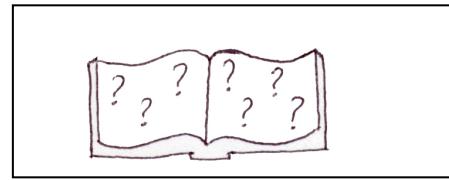
But, Scripture alone is the final source of our teachings. Tradition is subject to Scripture, underneath Scripture, and must be obedient to Scripture. If a teaching isn't Biblical we don't want to teach it.

- 2) **Legalistic** – Too many Protestant churches and pastors do not clearly distinguish Law & Gospel. There are many who say that the Gospel is "God's rules for right living."

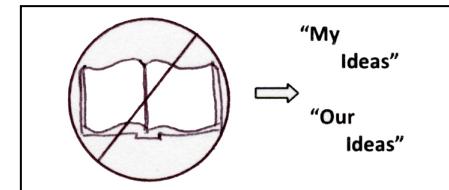


People are told that the way to be saved is to follow God's ways, or obey God's Law. But, following the 10 Commandments can't save anybody. We are saved by Jesus alone and only through believing in Him.

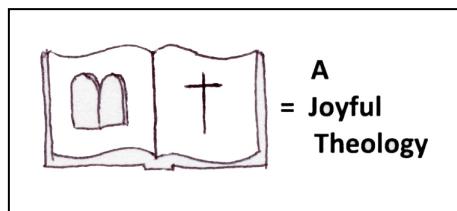
3) **Mysterious Prophecies** – Some draw up complicated "End of the World" charts, and try to figure out how close we are to the end of the world. Others read "The Bible Code" and search for hidden messages in the Bible. But, the Bible is plainly spoken, if only it is studied well and taught clearly.



4) **Heretics** – There are groups that so completely twist the words of the Bible that even the simplest teachings are lost. Some taught that Jesus was not really human. Others taught that He was not really God. Others taught that there is no Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There's a very long list of other teachings that would destroy saving faith.



5) **A Joyful Theology** – Lutherans talk about the "Words and Promises of God." We focus on the gifts of God and the "Means of Grace." The central teaching for us is the love of God in Jesus Christ -- "Justification." When we understand the message of the Bible that salvation is a gift from God it is natural that we should rejoice, celebrate and be glad. We are free to worship and serve God -- because we are saved, not in order to win salvation. A church that understands the meaning of "Grace" is a church that knows joy and happiness.



11.8 THE THEME OF THE BIBLE ((Small Catechism Questions # 6-12))

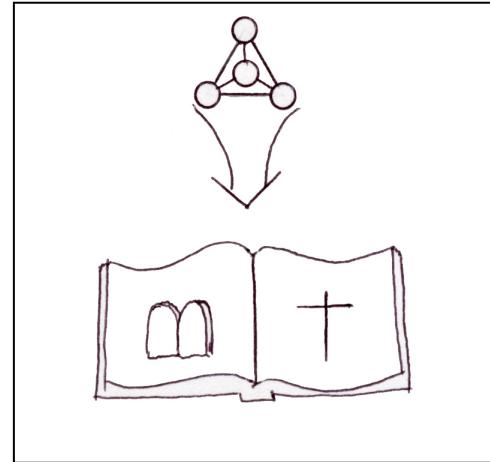
The theme of the Bible is the message of salvation.

That is taught in the two main teachings: Law and Gospel.

The Law teaches us that we are sinful and need a Savior.

The Gospel teaches us who that Savior is, namely Jesus, and what He has done for us, living a life of perfect obedience, and suffering, dying and rising for us.

We will cover this more completely later on.



11.9 THE TEXTURE OF THE BIBLE

All of Scripture is **inspired**, but not all of Scripture is **equal**. What does that mean?

An Explanation:

1. The **clear passages** of Scripture **explain the less clear**. That is a good rule and keeps us focused on the central teachings of the Bible.

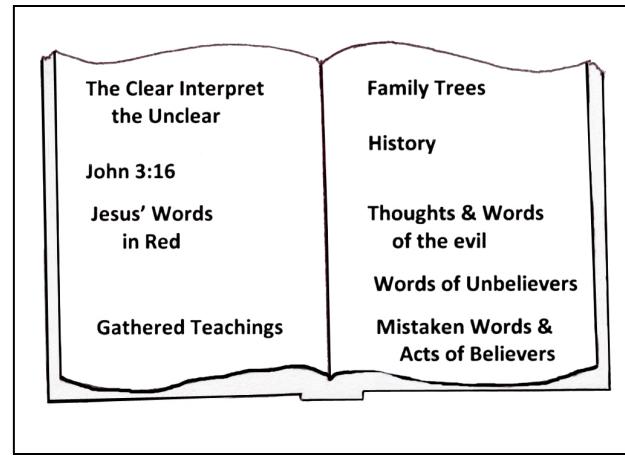
There are **parts** of the Bible we are naturally **drawn to**.

John 3:16 has been called the Gospel in a nutshell.

Many Bibles print the **words of Jesus in red**, to highlight them.

2. There are **passages that sum up** all of the Bible's teaching about a particular **topic**.

Such as The Lord's Prayer, The 10 Commandments, and others.



3. Then there are parts of the Bible that are simply **family trees**, or **history**.

4. Other parts of the Bible record the **thoughts and words of the evil**, or of the **unbelieving**, or **mistaken words and acts of believers**. The Bible does not "whitewash." It gives us a true picture of human nature, including the mistakes of the great saints of the Bible. This aspect of the Bible makes it unique among religious writings.

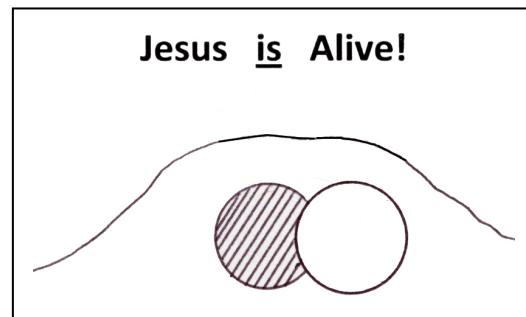
5. There are **parts** of the Bible that are written **for all people everywhere** and there are **parts that have a special impact on certain people** at a certain time and place.

12. BACK TO THE BASIC STATEMENT (from the beginning of this unit)

Scripture is the living Word of the Living God. So the Bible is God's word to us, where God calls us to know Him and live forever. The reason we believe the Bible is because we believe in God and know Him in Jesus Christ, not the other way around.

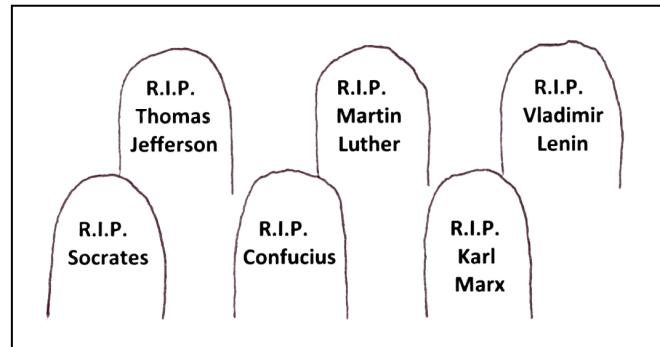
13. THE PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH THE LIVING LORD JESUS

Malcolm Muggeridge wrote a book "Jesus Rediscovered." He talked about touring the holy land planning to "debunk" the stories about Jesus. He was going to say they did not happen. But as he began he was **confronted with an awareness that "Jesus is alive."** He could not get that thought out of his mind. This is not the same as saying that Jesus "lives on in our memory, or that His spirit lives on." He is alive and interacts with us. We talk to Him. He acts in our lives.



In contrast Socrates is dead.

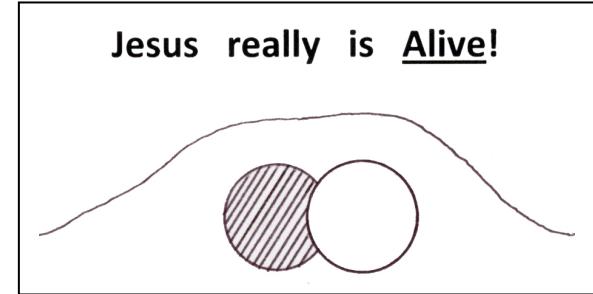
Lenin is dead although his body is in a transparent plastic case in Red Square in Moscow and he got a new suit in the winter of '03-'04. The same goes for Karl Marx, Confucius, Thomas Jefferson, Martin Luther and others, no matter how many claim to follow their teachings. They are not able to interact with us.



14. THE LIVING JESUS

Jesus is alive.

It is **not** that we are committed to **an idea**; or that we have bought into certain principles by which we will live our lives. It is much more than we are talking about.



Many around the world will say that they follow the teachings of _____ (fill in the blank: Marx, Confucius, Thomas Jefferson, Martin Luther, and others). But they do not talk about a personal relationship with them, or talk to them.

What would happen if I visited the tomb of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois and claimed to be having a conversation with him? I would stand a pretty good chance of having the guards take me by the arms and lead me away. The whole world knows that anyone who claims to talk with Abraham Lincoln and thinks he answers is not fully sane.

We say **prayer is talking with Jesus**. The rest of the world may look at us as odd and old fashioned, religious fanatics and out of touch. But they do not try to tell us that it's "just as insane" as talking with Napoleon.

The claim that **Jesus is alive** is so powerful a claim and it is right at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. Even the world around us has backed off and ridicules prayer for other reasons.

15. THE DAILY PRESENCE OF JESUS

It is a basic part of our faith; **the presence of this living Jesus** interacting with us.

There is a risk in talking about this part of the Christian life in a certain extreme way. Some may think that if they have not had a dramatic encounter with God; well then, they must not know Jesus. They may begin to think, "Maybe I'm not spiritual enough." Or they may turn the opposite way and think, "Maybe there is no Jesus." Others may go another direction and chase after an "every second awareness of Jesus" that is not Biblical. Part of what we teach is that Jesus is simply there regardless of how we feel.

And He is there for us when we gather in His name, when we share His word, and as we receive His gifts.

The living Jesus is constantly with us in numerous ways. Most of them are not dramatic and startling:

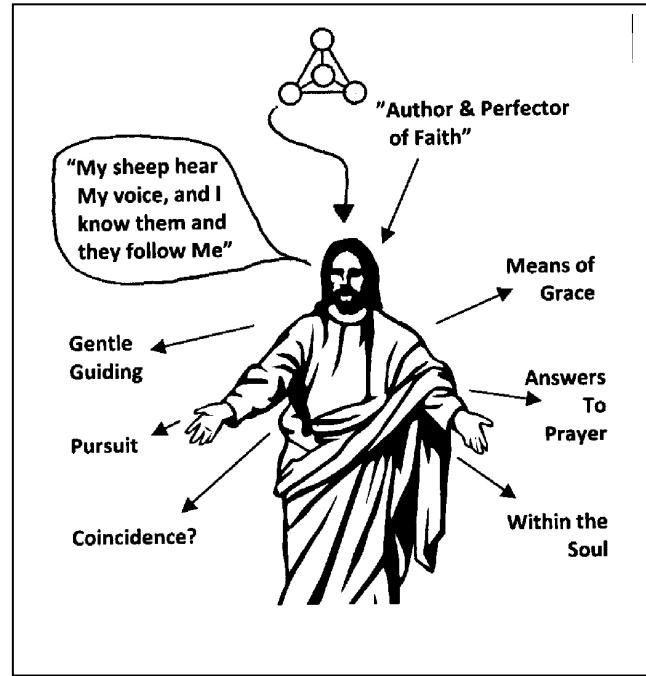
.1 **Sometimes Jesus acts with gentle guiding - a nudge.** (For example a compelling drive after one day in July that I needed to visit a certain person in the hospital . . .) These things are real and pastors call them by different names - but we realize that we are working for and working with a living Lord Jesus.

.2 **Sometimes He pursues us** as we evade and ignore His presence in our lives. (Malcolm Muggeridge tells how he sought to avoid becoming a committed Christian; but there was nowhere he could go where the awareness of Jesus and of Jesus' claims on his life was not there.) This is not just remembering "what you learned as a child." There is a living Jesus who is calling you and as the Good Shepherd is seeking for your soul.

.3 Sometimes He acts in **ways that look like coincidence**. There was a day when I planned to go make hospital rounds in the mid morning. There were repeated interruptions for more than 3 1/2 hours (telephone calls, visitors, etc.). Finally when I did get there I met with a person being brought in by ambulance right at that moment, who needed to talk with someone about God. A few moments later or earlier and we would never have met.

.4 Jesus Christ constantly interacts with us through what we call **the Means of Grace**, God's Word, Baptism & the Lord's Supper. This becomes **the constant pattern of our lives**, so that we live with an awareness of God's presence day by day.

.5 Sometimes God shows Himself through **dramatic answers to prayer**. You have heard the stories of prayers answered about everything from weather to medicine to dramatic stories of repentance. Many of us have seen them happen - so much that the Christian understanding of prayer is completely unique among world religions.



.6 Sometimes Jesus acts in peoples' souls in very powerful ways. Many of these are called **conversion experiences**. A conversion experience is a powerful intervention by the living Jesus, calling someone to faith. Those who have had a conversion experience should remember the parable of the sower and the seed. (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23) After it is sown some seed springs up but does not develop roots. After receiving the word with joy some fall away. Others allow the concerns and worry of the world and the preoccupation with riches to distract them from their relationship with God.

So the writer of the letter to the Hebrews says, *"let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* (Hebrews 12:2-3 NASB)

.7 Pastor Taglauer went to visit the lady in the nursing home. She was very old and had forgotten a lot. She did not recognize her children. She did not recognize him. But he had learned something about her. She had been confirmed in German. So he had gotten a copy of the Lord's Prayer in German. He had practiced through it until he could kind of say it.

When he visited her that day he said hello and told her they were going to pray "der Vater Unser." He began and as he prayed her lips started moving. She prayed with him all the way through. How did that happen?

God puts His words so deep in our hearts that they are still there even when everything else is gone. **He holds on to us** even through the worst that can happen in this life. Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He is alive and very present in our lives.

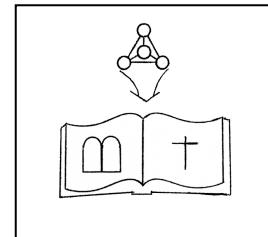
16. RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The Word of God is "the living word of the living Lord." So what is your proper response, the response of faith? There are three parts:

1. Believe it,
2. Study and learn it, and
3. Love and Worship the One who spoke it.

16.1 BELIEVE IT

Since it is God's Word it is absolutely true. We trust it. We trust it even more than we trust ourselves. Even when we do not completely understand it we know that we can trust it.



This is part of what faith is, and it's easy to say in theory. But the Bible is filled with the stories of those who have faced challenges in life and continued to trust the Word of God. Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, and John the Baptist are just some of the examples. Read Hebrews, chapter 11.

The Bible is also filled with stories of those who did not believe and trust the Word of God. Adam & Eve, Pharaoh, Jezebel, and King Ahab are some.

16.2 STUDY AND LEARN IT

What does the Word of God give us? It gives Truth – the central thing that comes from God and is the foundation of the whole creation. And it gives Truths – all the many facts (both real world and spiritual) that we can learn and can guide our lives.

So we study and learn it. A very good prayer in our worship asks God to grant that we may “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest” it. When we study God’s Word and grow in understanding it, God’s Word changes us. It changes how we think about our lives, about God’s blessings, about this world. It changes how we think about our fellow human beings, about our reason for living and about our goals in life. It changes how we think about the future and heaven and eternal life.

The Bible is filled with the stories of those who studied and meditated on God’s Word. They are called wise. Among them are:

David, who wrote Psalm 19 (see verses 7-11);

Solomon, who wrote most of the book of Proverbs (see Proverbs 1:1-7), and Ecclesiastes;

Daniel (see Daniel 1:20-21); and

The Bereans (see Acts 17:11-12).

Jesus also studied and learned the Word of God. Isaiah 50:4-5 describes Him as having an “instructed tongue” (NIV) and being awakened “morning by morning . . . to listen like one being taught.” (NIV)

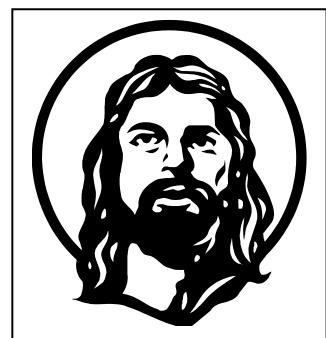
But there are also many who have not read, studied or learned; or who have forgotten and disregarded God’s Word. The rich man in the parable (in Luke 16:19-31), Esau who despised his birthright, King Saul who turned away from God, the Pharisees who would not believe, Ananias and Sapphira who thought they could lie to the Holy Spirit, and Simon Magus who tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8) are some who: despised God’s Word, or thought they were too smart to need it, or just didn’t pay attention.

16.3 LOVE AND WORSHIP THE ONE WHO SPOKE IT

This is very important. If you study and learn the word of God, but do not love and worship the One who spoke it, what is the result? You would become a more able, more educated and more effective disrespector of God. That is not a good thing to be.

The Bible is God’s Word to you so you may have forgiveness, eternal life and be with Him forever. It comes from the one who loves you, and loves you perfectly.

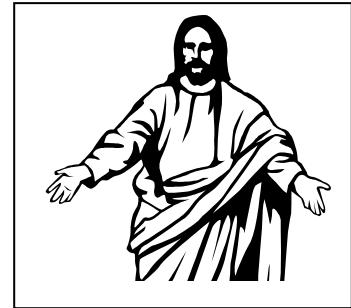
When God speaks His Word into your soul and creates faith in you He gives you a relationship with Him that is designed to last forever. Paul says, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)



John says, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1 NIV) What God has in mind is to make you glorious ("who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body" Philippians 3:21). We are to be changed and the pattern is the risen Lord Jesus Christ ("when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2). The Bible calls us "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17) and tells in so many other ways of the promises of God. See Revelation 21-22. My favorite verse about all these promises comes at the end of the parable of the prodigal son, where the father tells the older brother, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours." (Luke 15:32)

There are some who don't seem to care. Paul talks about some turning aside, and of others making shipwreck of their faith. Jesus warns us that the love of many will grow cold. Again, we could list Esau, King Saul, Ananias and Sapphira and many others.

God has given you amazing blessings. This is all from His love. He wants you to be with Him in His kingdom living forever. How do you respond? "Do not refuse Him who is speaking." (Hebrews 12:25) When God invites walk with Him. When you have God's Word treasure it and treasure Him. Worship, praise Him, tell what He has done. "We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) Sing His praises. One day "He will exult over you with loud singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)



The Old Testament Psalms call us to praise. The Letter to the Hebrews says, "do not forsake the gathering together of yourselves." The book of Revelation tells us again and again about the celebrations in heaven. Do not treat this gift with boredom or neglect it. Hold onto it with joy and loyalty to the One who gave it to you.

17. THE THREE GREAT PROOFS

Over the centuries there have been many ways that we Christians have set our faith before the world, and defended our beliefs. What follows are three claims that have been tested and found to be solid. These are not proofs of an idea or a philosophy. They are proofs and evidences of the presence of God and His acting in our world. They are places where God has left "fingerprints" so that we may know that He lives and cares about us. These are the clearest places where God has left "fingerprints" for everyone to see.

1. The record of fulfilled prophecy.

There are hundreds of verses in the Old Testament telling about the life of Jesus, everything from the general information about His life to the small details. Where He was born – Micah 5:2
When He was born – Daniel 9:25
Who betrayed Him – Psalm 41:9
What was the price – Zechariah 11:12

3 GREAT PROOFS

1. FULFILLED PROPHECY
2. MIRACULOUS LIFE & TEACHINGS OF JESUS
3. THE RESURRECTION



What was done with the silver – Zechariah 11:13

What crucifixion feels like – Psalm 22

Jesus' resurrection – Psalm 16:10

This is just a very small sampling. There are many more.

No other religion has such a record of fulfilled prophecy; none even tries.

2. The miraculous life and teachings of Jesus

(b) **The Sermon on the Mount** has been called the "Greatest collection of ethical teachings that has ever been gathered." (Mahatma Gandhi)

(a) We have **the arrest warrant** for Jesus: "Wanted, Jesus of Nazareth, for sorcery and leading the people astray. He shall be stoned. Anyone able to speak concerning him report to the Greater Sanhedrin."

What do you call a miracle when you want to say something bad about it?

Several other details have to do with why Jesus was crucified (according to Roman customs) rather than being stoned (according to Jewish customs).

3. The Resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus is one of the most thoroughly attested events of history. His enemies knew that Jesus said He would rise -- so they made sure a resurrection could not be faked. The Roman soldiers made sure Jesus was dead. Then the Pharisees had guards posted outside the tomb and an official seal put on the tomb.

Jesus' disciples were all reluctant to believe until they saw Him face to face. But one after another they saw Jesus and believed. The list includes: Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-17); The other women coming from the tomb (Matthew 28:8-10); Cleopas and his friend (Luke 24:13-32); Peter (Luke 24:33-34); The disciples except for Thomas (Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:19-23); Thomas (John 20:24-28); Paul (Acts 9:1-19); and others (1 Corinthians 15:5-8). Read through those passages and also Mark 16:9-16.

The tomb is empty. If Jesus' enemies had His body they would have shown it in order to stop the disciples from saying "Christ is risen, . . ." If the disciples had taken the body they would not have been so willing to die for a lie. But every one of them was willing to face death and keep on proclaiming, "Christ is risen, . . ."

But more about this in lesson four.

18. A FINAL WORD

Notice that we have talked about both evidence and encounter – that is (1) about objective truths that are true even if we do not know them and (2) about God who is

personally involved in your life. The two parts go together because (1) He is real and (2) He is living. Everything starts with the statement "Christ is risen!" "He is risen indeed!"

BETWEEN CHAPTERS

The challenge is to read through Exodus 1-20 and Matthew 1-7
Also go ahead and read through the next chapter.

19.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Definitions used in this section and in other "The Language of Faith" sections:

Designated (SC) – Are taken from Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation; "An Explanation of the Small Catechism"
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Designated (DIT) – Are taken or adapted from the Deaf Institute of Theology website.

Designated (W) – Are taken from Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged,
Second Edition. Copyright (c) 1983 by Simon & Schuster, a division of Gulf & Western Corp., New York, NY.
Many other definitions were formed with the help of Webster's Dictionary.

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Scripture

Scripture Writings, anything written. The Books of the Old and New Testaments. (W)

Catechism A book of teachings of the faith. Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism and the Large Catechism. The Lutheran Church uses the Small Catechism for confirmation classes. (DIT)

Catechumen A student of the catechism. (DIT)

Six Chief Parts The main divisions of Luther's Small Catechism

Reformation The movement started by Martin Luther in the 16th century that aimed at reforming the Roman Catholic Church and resulted in the establishment of Protestantism. (W)

Reformer Those who were part of the Reformation, which called for renewal of the church based on the Word of God. Martin Luther was the most influential. (DIT)

Augsburg Confession A basic statement of Lutheran beliefs. It was written in 1530 by Philip Melanchthon and approved by Luther and many others. The first part contains 21 articles of faith and the second part contains 7 abuses that called for reform. (DIT)

95 Theses The statements nailed by Martin Luther to the Church Door in Wittenberg that were the public beginning of the Reformation.

Book of Concord The collected confessions, or statements of belief, of the Lutheran Church.

Word (1) The Bible, the Scriptures are the words of God revealing His truth to us.

Evangelist A writer of one of the Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

(Biblical) Conservative In biblical questions a conservative Christian is – a person who believes the Bible is the Word of God and does not contain errors.

(Biblical) Liberal In biblical questions a liberal Christian is – a person who believes the Bible is a record of man's search for God, and so can and does include human errors.

Doctrine Teachings. The teachings of Jesus or the teachings of the Scripture.

Inspiration The influence of God on the writers of the Bible, so that the Bible is the Word of God and without error. Inspiration means “God-breathed.”

Inerrant Without error, completely true.

Old Testament The Books in the Bible from Genesis to Malachi -- those written before the birth of Jesus, and looking forward to Jesus.

New Testament The Books of the Bible from Matthew to Revelation -- those written after the birth of Jesus.

Law (1) The first 5 books of the Bible, Genesis - Deuteronomy, also known as the Books of Moses, or to the Jewish people as the Torah.

Prophet A messenger whom God chooses to speak for Him.

Minor Prophets The 12 last books of the Old Testament, they are shorter than the Major Prophets.

Prophecy A message from God: either (1) about what is right and wrong, or (2) about future events.

Gospels The first four books of the New Testament telling about the life of Jesus.

Apostle Messenger, a person sent. Jesus chose 12 Apostles and sent them to preach the Gospel.

Bible The word means Book. The Bible is the sacred book of Christianity, containing the Old and New Testaments.

Legalistic A strict and literal adherence to the law including every minor detail.

Heresy False, incorrect teaching about God and the Bible that destroys saving faith.

Three Great Proofs Three ways that Christians have shown strong evidence about the truth of the Bible.

CATECHISM & MEMORY VERSES – (2) The Ten Commandments

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If there is brief alternate wording it is marked by (()); the original underlined; and the alternate wording printed in italics. The teacher should instruct the students which wording is being used and have them line through the other words.

If there is more extensive alternate wording the section will be repeated and marked in the heading with the words (ALTERNATE WORDING).

INTRODUCTION

20-a **Exodus 20:2** "I am the **LORD** your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." (21)

20-b **Exodus 19:4-6** "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured inheritance among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (65)

20-c **THE FIRST COMMANDMENT**

You shall have no other gods ((*before Me*)).

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things. (23)

20-d **Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (56)

20-e **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** Hear, O Israel: The **LORD** our God, the **LORD** is one. You shall love the **LORD** your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (32)

20-f **Romans 4:3** (*Genesis 15:6*)

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." (11)

20-g **Mark 9:24** Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (15)

20-h **THE SECOND COMMANDMENT**

You shall not misuse the name of the **LORD** your God.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks. (49)

20-i **THE SECOND COMMANDMENT (ALTERNATE WORDING)**

You shall not take the name of the LORD, your God, in vain*.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks. (52)

"in vain" means to treat it as an empty or powerless thing.

20-j **Psalm 50:15** "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." (17)20-k **Psalm 103:1-2** Bless the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, bless His holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget none of His benefits. (26)

20-l **THE THIRD COMMANDMENT**

Remember the Sabbath day, by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it. (38)

20-m **Matthew 11:28-30** Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. (51)20-n **Psalm 122:1** I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD!" (17)20-o **THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT**

Honor your father and your mother, ((*that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth*)).

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them. (56)

20-p **Deuteronomy 6:6-7** These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk about them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (47)

20-q **THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT**

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and ((support / befriend)) him in every physical need. (36)

20-r **Matthew 5:21-22** "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire." (66)

20-s **I John 3:15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (20)

20-t **Galatians 6:2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (11)

20-u **THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT**

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do and husband and wife love and honor each other. (38)

20-v **I Corinthians 6:19-20** Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, Whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you have been bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (40)

20-w **Matthew 19:4-6** He answered, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (62)

20-x **THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT**

You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income. (43)

20-y **Matthew 6:32-33** The Gentiles seek after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (36)

20-z **Ephesians 4:28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. (30)

20-aa **THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT**

You shall not (give false testimony / bear false witness) against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way. (52)

20-bb **James 3:8-9,10** But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (48)

20-cc **Ephesians 4:29** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (NIV) (31)

20-dd **THE NINTH COMMANDMENT**

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it. (51)

20-ee **Matthew 5:5,7,9** Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. . . . Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. . . . Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (31)

20-ff **Hebrews 13:5-6** Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear; what can man do to me?" (48)

20-gg **THE TENTH COMMANDMENT**

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty. (62)

20-hh **James 2:10** Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point, is guilty of breaking all of it. (NIV) (19)

20-ii **Matthew 5:20** For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (22)

20-jj **Psalm 16:5-6**

The LORD is my ... portion and my cup; You hold my lot.
The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. (27)

20-kk **THE CLOSE OF THE COMMANDMENTS**

What does God say of all these commandments?

He says, "I, the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Ex. 20:5-6) (55)

20-ll **What does this mean?**

God threatens to punish all who break these Commandments.

Therefore, we should fear His wrath
and not do anything against them.

But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these Commandments.

Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him
and gladly do what He commands. (53)

20-mm **THE CLOSE OF THE COMMANDMENTS (ALTERNATE WORDING)**

What does God say of all these commandments?

He says this:

I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children
to the third and fourth generation
of those who hate Me;
but showing steadfast love
to thousands
of those who love Me and keep My commandments. (55)

20-nn **What does this mean?**

God threatens to punish all who break these Commandments.

Therefore, we should fear His wrath
and not do anything against them.

But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these Commandments.

Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him
and gladly do what He commands. (53)

20-oo **2 Corinthians 5:21** [God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (24)

CHAPTER 2 – LAW & GOSPEL

Small Catechism, Questions # 13 - 85

(Part A – Distinguishing Between Law & Gospel)

20. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

THE BASIC TEACHING OF LAW & GOSPEL

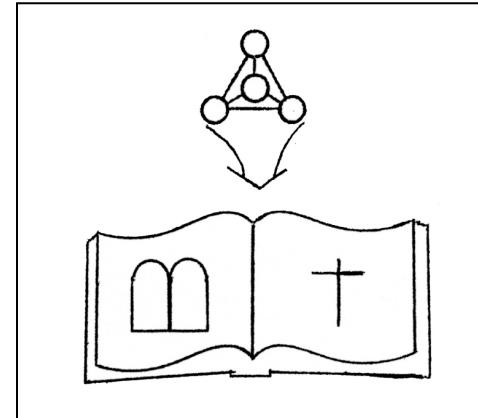
The teaching of the Bible is divided into two doctrines; Law & Gospel.

The Law teaches what God commands and forbids. When we break His commandments or fail to love as Jesus has loved us we become guilty before God. The penalty for sin is (1) suffering in this life, (2) physical death and (3) eternal separation from God (damnation).

What is the standard we must measure up to?

Jesus said, "You . . . must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

The letter of James says, "Whoever keeps the whole Law and yet stumbles at just one point, he has become guilty of all." (James 2:10 NIV) There is no way that any of us can fulfill the demands of the Law and we are all judged worthy of hell.



The Gospel tells what Jesus has done for us. He suffered in our place and has earned forgiveness of sins. Since Jesus has fulfilled the Law we are set free. The forgiveness Jesus earned is complete. On the cross He said, "It is finished." So we do not earn our way into heaven. We do not show God that we are worthy of forgiveness. And there is no Purgatory. So we refuse to take any credit whatsoever for our salvation. That would take away from the glory of Jesus.

The Law is incomplete. It serves to point us to the Gospel. The Law makes demands on us, and tells us that we must serve God and love our fellow man. But it does not say it is possible for us to do those things, only that if we do not there will be judgment.

21. THE PROPER DISTINCTION BETWEEN LAW AND GOSPEL

The following diagram details 5 differences between God's Law and His Gospel.

THE LAW	THE GOSPEL
<p>1. Says:</p> <p>Do (what God has commanded) Don't do (don't sin) Be (holy – "You must be perfect for I, the LORD your God, am perfect")</p>	<p>1. Says:</p> <p>Done (God has done all in Jesus Christ)</p>
<p>2. Shows:</p> <p>Our Sin God's Wrath</p>	<p>2. Shows:</p> <p>Our Savior God's Grace (God's Riches At Christ's Expense)</p>

3. Works in our hearts: Sorrow over sin Fear of Punishment	3. Works in our hearts: Faith in Christ Love of God Hope for eternal life
4. Is to be preached to: All sinners (especially those who do not repent)	4. Is to be preached to: Sinners who are Troubled by their sin, Fear God's wrath and Hunger for righteousness
5. For Christians: Guides us in living our faith	5. For Christians ← Creates in us a living faith

21.1 HOW IS THE LAW OF GOD LIKE A GOOD SHEEPDOG?

If you have ever watched "Sheepdog Trials" you may have seen this. The shepherd brings out his sheepdog. At this point the sheep are scattered around out in the field. Then he signals his sheepdog, who races off at top speed.

The dog races around to the other side of the sheep, opposite the shepherd. He runs back and forth on that far end, sometimes barking, sometimes lunging at, sometimes growling at the sheep. He sometimes pretends to nip at their legs. He acts terrifying, threatening the sheep with all kinds of destruction. He shows them the alternative to the safety of the shepherd, and as he does his job the sheep begin to head toward the shepherd, first out of fear of the dog, and then seeing the safety of the shepherd.

That is how it is with the Law. God sends out His Law to teach us the alternative; what awaits us without God. The Law threatens with all kinds of destruction. There is death, the devil, and hell if we are lost and without God. You could say the Law mimics those threats. But in fact remember that the Law of God is a servant. It is sent to teach us our need and our danger; our need for a Savior and our danger without Him. It works to chase us toward God. At first we might come to God for fear of the dangers; but then the Gospel takes over and teaches us about God's love in Jesus and the joy of being with Him.

21.2 LAW /or/ GOSPEL?

Distinguish whether the following verses are Law or Gospel

Genesis 22:18 (NIV) Through you and your seed all nations on earth will be blessed.

Isaiah 6:5 (NIV) "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

Isaiah 1:15-17 (NIV) When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; . . . Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed.

Micah 6:8 (NIV) He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Isaiah 9:6 To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 28:12-13 (NIV) They would not listen. So then, the word of the Lord to them will become: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule, a little here, a little there

Isaiah 29:13 (NIV) "These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me."

Isaiah 35:10 (NIV) The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Isaiah 44:22 (NIV) I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.

Isaiah 53:10 (NIV) It was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, if He would render His soul as a guilt offering.

Matthew 8:26 "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?"

Matthew 9:13 "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Matthew 10:37 "Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me"

Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

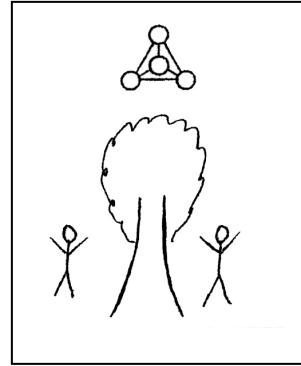
(Part B – The History of the Law)

22. **THE HISTORY OF THE LAW** ((Small Catechism Questions # 13-14))

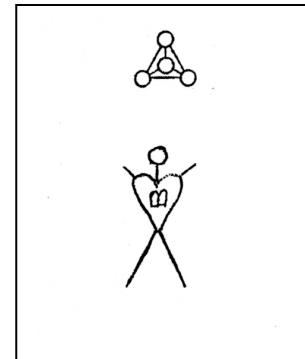
.1 **In the Garden of Eden**

The first example of the Law is from the Garden of Eden where God told Adam and Eve not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, "for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17) They broke that command and were judged. "For you are dust and to dust shall you return." (Genesis 3:19)

Martin Luther called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil "The Altar to God in the Garden of Eden." Why? Because at that tree, when they were standing under it and seeing that the fruit looked good, at that time and place they would be able to offer their fullest worship and obedience to God. Worship means to trust in God and to believe that His will is the best even when we do not fully understand. Away from the Tree on the other side of the Garden it would be easy not to eat the fruit. (For us also, it is easy to trust in God when everything is going well.) It is only when they were standing there under the Tree that it would really mean something if they did not eat the fruit. (For us also, it is exactly at the time when we have difficulties and problems in life that we have the opportunity to give to God our worship and trust.)



Here is a thought that has guided me and others through some hard times: When you have problems in your family or marriage (or with health, at work, or even in church life) that is a time when you can offer worship and obedience to God in a special way. Those times of special worship and obedience to God don't happen all that often in our lives. When they do, don't let the opportunity pass you by. Seize the opportunity. Realize that when things are difficult that is also a time of special opportunity in your relationship with God.



.2 The Conscience

From the time of the fall until the 10 Commandments God spoke His law within the conscience. In their hearts, people knew they were sinful and they had a partial knowledge of right and wrong. For us too, deep inside our conscience accuses us. That is part of God's Law.

This was the focus during the time of the Patriarchs.

Example – Joseph's brothers after they had sold him into slavery: Their consciences bothered them. The guilt was terrible. We know this from Genesis 42:21. Joseph was governor in Egypt and they were there to buy grain. They did not know Joseph and he tested them by giving them a bit of a hard time. They say to each other: It's because of what we did to Joseph; "that is why this distress has come upon us."

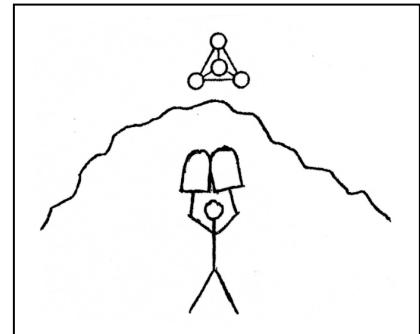
Example – Joseph responding to Potiphar's wife: She invited him to sin with her, and he answered, "How . . . can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

But the conscience is not completely accurate. "The heart is deceitful above all things." (Jeremiah 17:9) The conscience can be turned around until we don't know right from wrong. For example someone may be raised in a family of thieves and have pangs of conscience because they failed to steal what was possible to take. Another example that is very much in the news – a young man may become a suicide bomber killing himself and others because he believes that act is required by God.

Since the conscience can be turned and twisted, it is not a fully and completely accurate guide to what is right and wrong. The conscience must be **formed**. Our consciences must be given and taught the pattern of right and wrong. That pattern comes from God's Word, the Bible. Without His Word we are just guessing. So – even before it is our duty to follow our conscience, it is first our duty to learn what is right and wrong.

.3 Moses and the 10 Commandments

Then came Moses. We talk about the written Law of God as the 10 Commandments. In the 10 Commandments God gathers together all the teachings in the Bible about right and wrong. They are a summary of what God wants for us to do; and avoid doing.



The 10 Commandments are the Moral Law. In addition; the Law given to Moses includes rules for national life (Civil Law) and directions for worship and sacrifices (Ceremonial Law).

.3a THE THREE PARTS OF THE LAW

- (1) **The Moral Law** speaks about right and wrong.
- (2) **The Civil Law** guided civil life in the Old Testament Kingdom of Israel.
- (3) **The Ceremonial Law** regulated the offerings and worship at the Temple.

Generally, we teach that (1) The Moral Law applies to all mankind; (2) The Civil Law was only for God's people of the Old Testament; and (3) The Ceremonial Law teaches about and gives pictures of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.

- (1) The Moral Law is expressed in the 10 Commandments; as well as in many other parts of the Old Testament; and in much of the preaching of the prophets.
- (2) The Law taught the people of Israel how to treat each other and how to care for each other.
- (3) Here are some examples of the Ceremonial Law:

In the Passover (Exodus 12), the blood of the Lamb was to be placed on the lintel and the doorposts of the Israelite homes – making the sign of the cross. Jesus is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

In the sacrifice for the one cleansed from leprosy (Leviticus 14), one bird is slain (symbolic of Jesus). A second bird (symbolic of us) is dipped into the blood of the first and allowed to fly free. So we are cleansed of our sins by the blood of Jesus and set free.

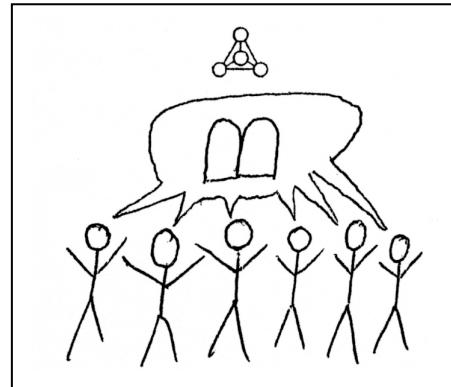
There are many more.

.4 Judges and Prophets

Through the rest of the Old Testament God continued to give His law through judges and prophets. There is a very long record of God speaking through His prophets to say what is right and wrong, and to tell of God's promise to send His Son.

The prophets condemned injustice (read Amos), unfaithfulness to God (Hosea), and immorality. Isaiah preached against Idolatry, and Ezekiel demanded that God's people have a new heart.

John the Baptist completed the preaching of the Prophets. He came, preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matthew 3:2) and, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

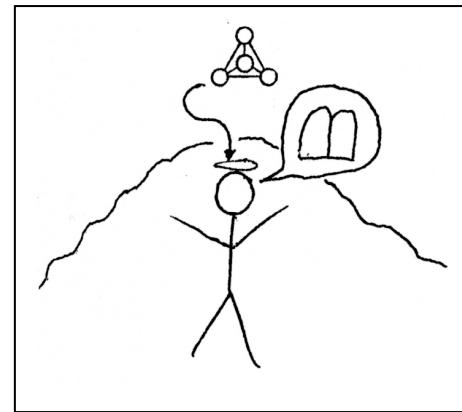


.5 Jesus' Teaching And Life (Active Obedience)

His Teaching:

In the **Sermon on the Mount** Jesus taught what is the full meaning of the Law and of the 10 Commandments.

About the 5th Commandment, "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, . . . ' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. . . . But anyone who says 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell." (Matthew 5:21-22 NIV)



About the 6th Commandment, "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28 NIV)

About the 8th Commandment, "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." (Matthew 5:37 NIV)

About all the Commandments, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

His Life:

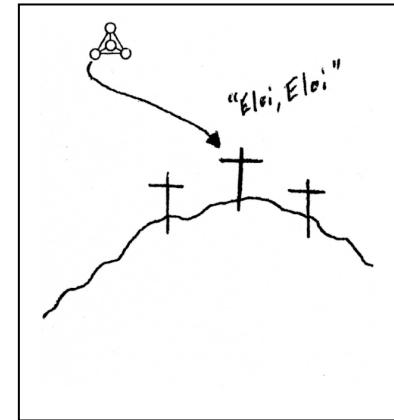
Jesus fulfilled the Law completely. **He obeyed the Commandments perfectly** and with perfect love for His Father and for his neighbor. Jesus faced 40 days of temptation in the wilderness, and spent that time in prayer. He then healed the sick, cured lepers, the blind, the deaf, the paralyzed, and others, raised the dead, cast out demons, and taught about forgiveness and the love of God. Jesus' life of perfect obedience reached a climax **in the Garden of Gethsemane** as He prayed, "Father . . . Your will be done." (Matthew 26:42) So the Law first given and disobeyed in a garden is fulfilled and obeyed in a garden. The Active Obedience is (generally speaking) completed in the Garden of Gethsemane.



.6 Jesus' Suffering and Death (Passive Obedience)

Jesus suffered **the penalty** that the Law demanded for every sin of every human being who has ever lived (or who will ever live). "[God] made Him who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf . . ." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Law has a **purpose and an end**. It is not complete in itself. It cannot give salvation, forgiveness of sins or eternal life. The purpose of the Law is to teach us about our sins and our need for a Savior; and then God reveals to us how Jesus Christ is our Savior.



In one sense the Law comes to an end, ceases and is set aside. The 6th word from the cross is where Jesus said, "**It is finished.**" The Greek word for "It is finished" (tetelestai) can also be translated, "Paid in full." It is what was written on the bill of the person being released from Debtor's Prison to show that he was free to go.

In another sense the Law is **fulfilled in Jesus.** He said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17-18)

The Law is fulfilled, done and paid for by Jesus. Paul says, "[God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB)

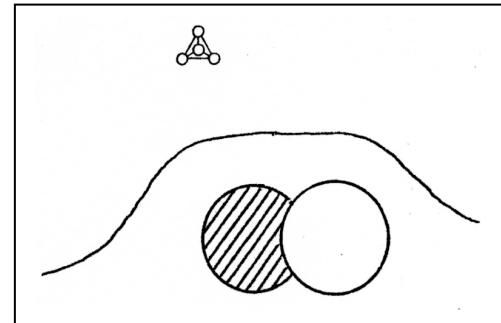
So the Law that is given by God to Moses on a mountain and written on stone is fulfilled by Jesus on a mountain and with the rolling away of a stone.

There is "now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)
(What follows after is completely different.)

.7 Easter

It is a part of the preaching of the Law that the righteous shall live. On Easter Jesus is declared to be the righteous Son of God. Paul says He, "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead". (Romans 1:4)

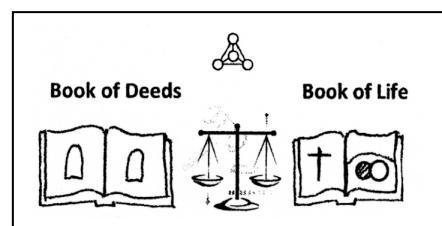
The Law of God acknowledges Him as the Holy one of God.



.8 The Final Judgment

On Judgment Day the whole world will be gathered before the throne of God.

The dead will be judged by (1) whether their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, or (2) by their deeds. Those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. God reckons (KJV) or accounts (newer translations) the holiness of Jesus to us; and because of Jesus we are counted worthy to have eternal life.



(1) Genesis 2:17 | (2) Genesis 42:21 | (3) Exodus 20:1-17 | (4) Isaiah 1 | (5) Matthew 5-7 | (6) 2 Corinthians 5:21 | (7) Habakkuk 2:4 | (8) Revelation 20:11-12
Romans 5:12 | Romans 2:14-15 | Matthew 26:39



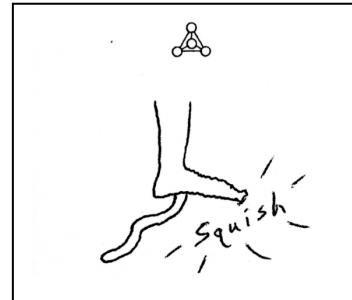
(Part C – The History of the Gospel)

23. THE HISTORY OF THE GOSPEL

Side by side with each part of the history of the Law is the history of the Gospel. (Some of this material is going to be shortened because we will be covering it in more detail later.)

.1 In the Garden of Eden

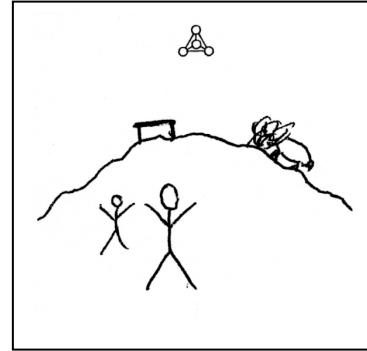
After Adam & Eve sinned God spoke and gave them the first preaching of the Gospel. It's also the first prophecy about Jesus. In **Genesis 3:15** (as God was speaking to the serpent, the devil) He said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and hers. He will crush your head and you will strike His heel." (composite translation)



This verse tells about **(1) the virgin birth** (Jesus is "the seed of the woman"), **(2) the suffering on the cross** ("you will strike His heel"), and **(3) Jesus' victory over the devil** ("He will crush your head").

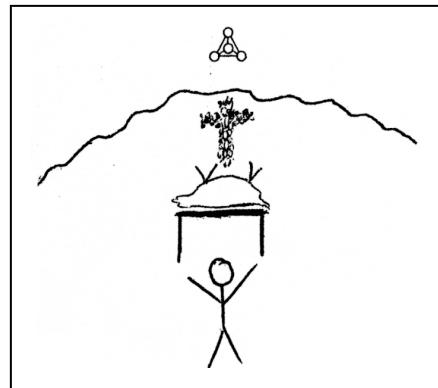
.2 In the time of the Patriarchs

Through the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob God acted through them to teach about the coming of Jesus to be the Savior. In **Genesis 22** God tells Abraham to "take your son, your only son . . . whom you love" and go to **Mount Moriah** (later known as Zion or Calvary) and sacrifice him there. Abraham and Isaac arrive at the mountain on **the 3rd day**. Abraham puts **the wood** on Isaac and they go up the mountain. When Isaac asks **"where is the lamb?"**, Abraham answers that "God will provide the lamb." Abraham puts Isaac on the altar. But God commands him to stop. **There is only one father who will sacrifice his son on that mountain**, and that will be God the Father giving His Son Jesus for the life of the world. The words of Abraham, "God Himself will provide the Lamb" are a huge arrow pointing to Jesus. Centuries later, **John the Baptist** stood by the Jordan River pointing to Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."



Read through Genesis 22:1-18 and see how many more connections with Jesus there are in those verses.

Another picture of Christ is the story of Joseph, sold as a slave by his brothers, who then saved his whole family.



.3 With Moses at Mount Sinai

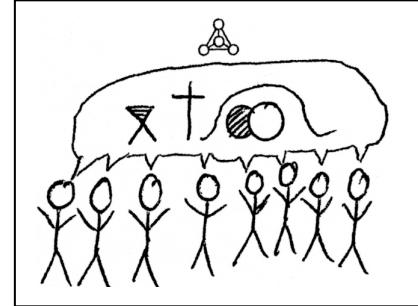
As God gave the 10 Commandments He also gave to the people of Israel **the pattern of worship and sacrifice**. Review the examples of the Ceremonial

Law above – The Passover and the sacrifice for the one cleansed of leprosy.

In addition to those there were Burnt Offerings, Grain Offerings, Peace Offerings, Sin Offerings, Guilt Offerings, Fellowship Offerings, morning and evening sacrifices and more. Each of these pointed to the One Sacrifice – Jesus. Hebrews 9:12 says, “He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.”

.4 Through the Prophets

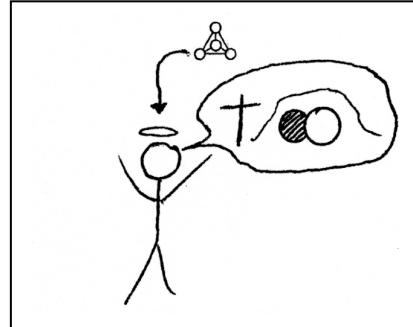
Through the rest of the Old Testament **the prophets told about the Savior** who was to come. Micah would tell where He would be born and that He would shepherd all the nations and be their peace. Isaiah said that all our sins would be laid on Him and by His stripes we would be healed. David would write, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”



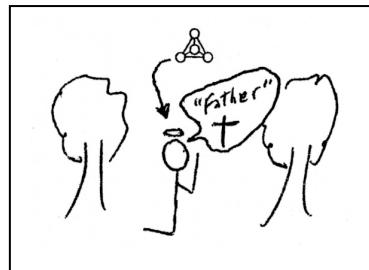
.5 Jesus' Teaching and Life

So Jesus was born and the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.” Jesus invited, “Come to Me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) He told the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven and then healed him.

He healed the man born blind and then called him to believe.



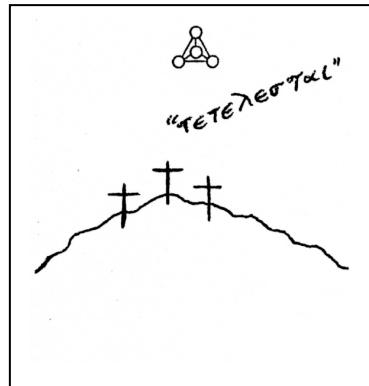
Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying about the suffering He was going to face and said, “Father . . . Your will be done.” So He willingly went to purchase our salvation.



.6 Jesus' Suffering and Death

How can this be a part of the Gospel? In fact this is the heart of the Gospel. **When the Law is fulfilled at the cross and the punishment for sin is taken off of us and carried by Jesus** that is the Gospel!

That's part of what is so important about the 6th word from the Cross. The Greek word is “*Tetelestai*.” It means **“It is finished.”** All the penalty for sin is paid; all the suffering under the wrath of God is done; and all the demands of the Law are fulfilled. But they are paid and done and fulfilled by Jesus – not by you or me having to do them. We are set free. And being set free is the other use of the word “*tetelestai*.” It was written on the papers of the man being released from debtor's prison. It means “paid in full.” Somebody has paid his debt and he is free to go.

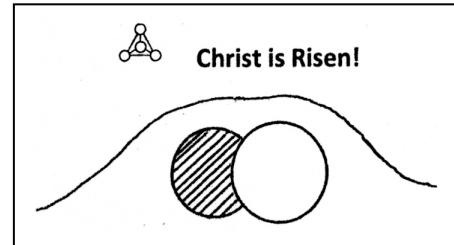


When Isaiah 53 talks about, ***"The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"*** and says ***"He offered His soul as a guilt offering"*** that is how we are set free.

.7 Easter

On the third day . . . (this is **both the doing and the telling**).

Easter morning dawned and Jesus rose. The power of death is broken. But there has to be the proclaiming. The Good News has to be spread.



Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene. When Jesus meets Mary Magdalene on Easter morning and reveals Himself to her, she knows the full truth of Life, the Resurrection, Forgiveness, the Love of God, and that Jesus is the living Lord and Savior.

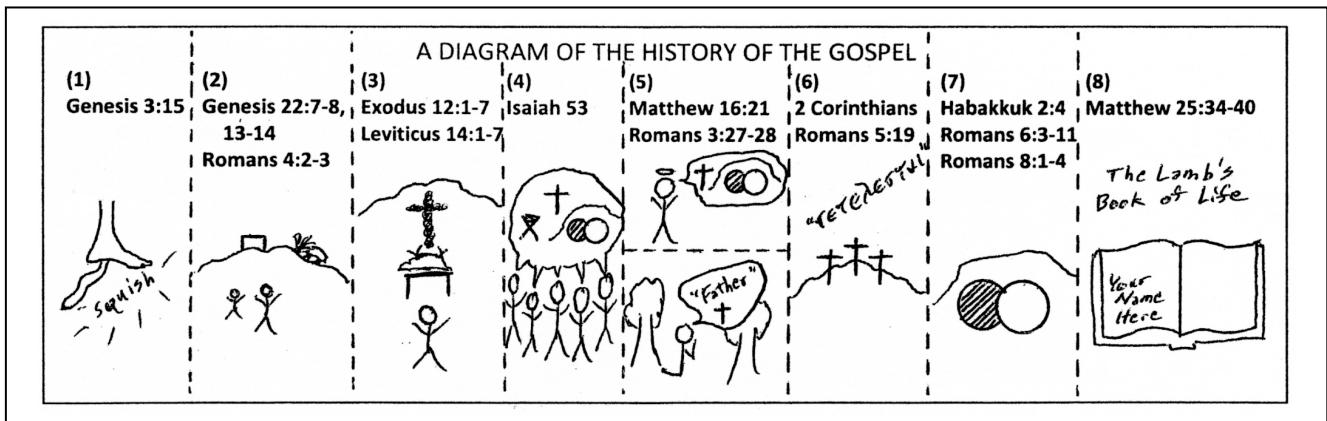
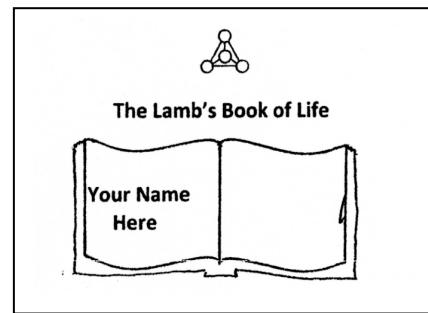
Then He sent her to tell the disciples. As she brings the news from Jesus; this is how the Gospel bursts on the scene. It has not stopped since and will not stop until every nation and people of every language hear and come to faith in Jesus.

Easter is Gospel (Good News) because it teaches us about our future, about the resurrection of our bodies, and about eternal life.

.8 Judgment Day

Revelation 20 talks about the Lamb's Book of Life.

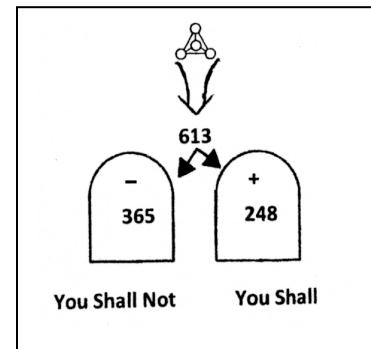
When Jesus returns He will say in front of the whole world that we belong to Him, that we have been forgiven and made right with God and that we are to live forever. He will proclaim this to the whole world and will say to us, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34)



(Part D – The Absolute Demands of the Law)

24. THE COMMANDMENTS

According to Jewish numbering there are a total of 613 Commandments in the Old Testament – 613 times that God said to Moses and through Moses, "You shall" or "You shall not." They range all the way from weighty moral issues, to directions for sacrifices, to requirements that scales and weights used in business should be accurate, to directions for which foods not to eat.



They are divided into 365 Negative and 248 Positive Commandments. The Positive said, "You shall . . ." the Negative "You shall not . . ." (This helps in understanding Luther's explanations to the commandments.)

What is the First Commandment given in the Bible? The Second?

Actually, the first Commandment God gave to mankind is in Genesis 1:28, "And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, . . .'" The second commandment God gave mankind is in Genesis 2:17 "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

24.1 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

God gathers the teaching about His Commandments together in the 10 Commandments. There are **three numberings** of the 10 Commandments, (1) the Ancient Jewish Numbering, (2) the one Lutherans and Roman Catholics use, and (3) the one the Eastern Orthodox Churches and Protestants use. (The first one has some interesting advantages for us as Lutherans.)

The differences between (2) Lutheran and (3) Protestant numbering is this: The Protestant second commandment is "You shall not make for yourself any graven image . . ." Lutherans understand this as a part of the first commandment. And while we separate # 9 & 10, the Protestant numbering combines them. We will use the Lutheran / Roman Catholic numbering throughout our study.

But it is important to notice that **the 10 Commandments actually begin with God telling us who He is and what He has done for us.** He is the Lord our God who has brought us out of slavery. In the Old Testament He brought the People of Israel out of Egypt, through the waters of the Red Sea, to be His own people. In the New Testament Jesus has brought us out of sin (through His cross and through the water in our baptism) to be His own people. This is **the pattern of the Christian life** and it **begins with GRACE, God's Riches At Christ's Expense (or God's Righteousness At Christ's Expense).** It fits into the same pattern as all the rest of the Bible. God does the doing first. He does the work of salvation. Then He calls us to be His people and calls us to respond in faith.

Here are the three different numberings:

Jewish	Lutheran / Roman Catholic	Eastern Orthodox / Protestant
1. Exodus 20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."		
2. You shall have no other gods before Me. →	1. You shall have no other gods before Me.	1. You shall have no other ← gods before Me.
-----	-----	2. You shall not make for yourselves any graven images . . .
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. →	2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.	3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your ← God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, by keeping it holy. →	3. Remember the Sabbath day, by keeping it holy.	4. Remember the Sabbath ← day, by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother, that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. →	4. Honor your father and your mother, that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.	5. Honor your father and your mother, that it may be well with you and you may live long on the ← earth.
6. You shall not murder. →	5. You shall not murder.	6. You shall not murder. ←
7. You shall not commit adultery. →	6. You shall not commit adultery.	7. You shall not commit ← adultery.
8. You shall not steal. →	7. You shall not steal.	8. You shall not steal. ←
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. →	8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	9. You shall not bear false witness against your ← neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or his maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.	9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or his maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.	10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or his maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

24.2 COMMANDMENTS AND THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

((Small Catechism Questions # 15-18; 41-47))

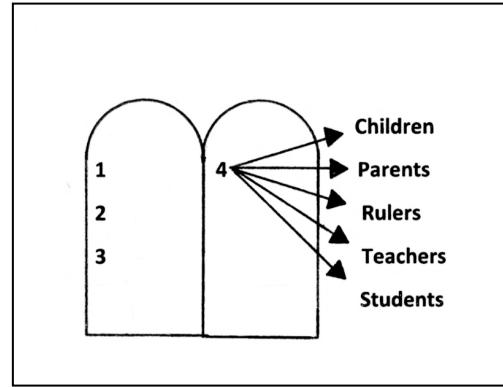
Gathering Teachings

It is a part of a long tradition **to gather all the teachings** on a general subject around each of the 10 Commandments.

For example: Around the **4th Commandment** ("Honor your father and your mother . . .") they would gather all the teachings about **the relationship between parents and children**.

This isn't just about **duties of children** toward their parents. It includes **duties of parents**

toward their children, such as Deuteronomy 6:7, where God commands parents to teach their children about Him. So when Paul writes about the duties of children he will also talk about parents' duties. All parts of the relationship are brought together.



The Great Commandment (*The Head of the Commandments*)

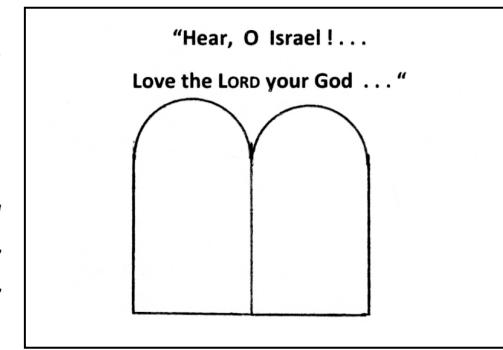
How do the commandments fit together? The teachers of the Law talked about this a lot. They asked each other and they asked Jesus, **"Which is The Great Commandment?"**

Jesus answered using Deuteronomy 6:4-5, **"Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."** (Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30)

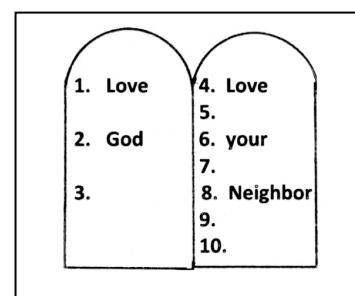
And then Jesus quoted a second one like it, **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** (Leviticus 19:18) "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

These two Commandments are also the summary of the Two Tables of the Law:

"Love the Lord your God . . ." – Commandments 1-3; and "Love your neighbor . . ." – Commandments 4-10.



By the way – read through the 10 Commandments as they are given in Exodus 20 and you will notice that the first three commandments are actually much longer than the other seven. (There is more than what we quote or memorize.) That is because they have to do with our relationship with God -- and that relationship is so very important.



Luther says:

The First Commandment holds within it all other commandments. When the heart is right then everything else is right; when the heart is wrong everything else is wrong.

Here is a quote from **Luther's Large Catechism**:

"What does it mean to have a god? What is God? My answer is: A god is whatever a person looks to for all good things and runs to for help in trouble."

24.3 THE PROPER USE OF THE LAW

THE THREE USES ((Small Catechism Question # 77))

This is a Lutheran term. It helps us to sort out what God is doing by His Law.

(*In Question # 77 the Small Catechism talks about "The Purposes of the Law." We also say "The Three Uses of the Law."*)

(1) The First Use of the Law has traditionally been described as a **CURB**.

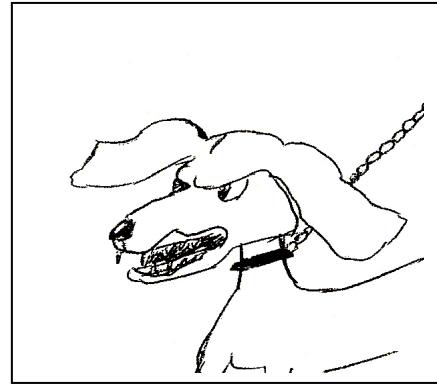
It helps to restrain those who would do worse if they were not afraid of the consequences. Someone may be thinking about murder, adultery or stealing but (s)he may be turned back because (s)he was afraid of what would happen if (s)he were caught. Others are turned back from doing wrong because they remember that God will judge us and they do not want to have to stand in front of God and be ashamed. So the 10 Commandments help to restrain evil acts.

I also like another word for this.

It's like a **LEASH**!

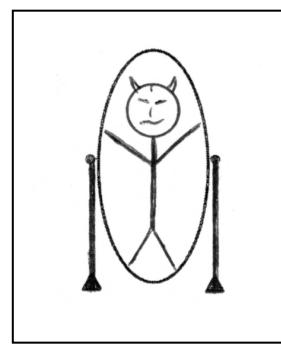
Think of the angry dog in the yard that you walk past. He comes snarling and barking and racing toward you. You know exactly what he wants to do. But then he reaches the end of his leash and it stops him pretty fast!

That is the way it is with our old sinful nature, the old Adam. The old sinful nature within us wants to sin, races toward sin, and doesn't care who gets hurt as long as it isn't him. But the Law tells him there will be consequences. There may be suffering in this life; and after this life there is Judgment Day when he will have to stand before God and answer for what he has done. Even if someone is not a Christian this may stop him from some of the worst things. And even if he doesn't believe in God at all there are still the police and others who could find him out and punish him. God put the government and other authorities in place to reward or to punish people for their behavior. So . . . "put a leash on your Old Adam!" Use the Law of God and give him a really hard yank. (We will hear more about this in the chapter on Baptism.)



2) The Second Use of the Law is as a **MIRROR**.

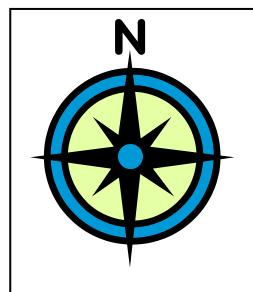
When we look in God's perfect Law and understand His demand that we must be righteous, then we see ourselves for what we really are, sinners. So God's Law, including the 10 Commandments, accuses us. This is the main use of the Law and we will focus on this in the pages that follow.



3) The Third Use of the Law is as a **GUIDE**.

It helps us to sort out right and wrong when we are unsure about God's will. As we study them the 10 Commandments help us to know what God really wants us to do. God's loving will is always God's loving will.

But while the Law can guide us in sorting out right and wrong it cannot give us the power to do what is right. We will remain



sinful as long as we are in this world and in this life. (1) We need the Savior Jesus Christ to fulfill the Law in our place. (2) We need the Holy Spirit to work in us and give us new life in Jesus. (3) For the rest of this life we need God to guide us away from sin and into doing what is good and right. (4) Finally we wait for the end of the world. On the day Jesus returns we will be raised to live with God in full and complete holiness.

24.4 THE IMPROPER USE OF THE LAW

There is also an improper use of the Law. It is very popular as people all over the world try to be right in God's eyes, or simply in their own eyes.

The Improper Use of the Law comes in at least three varieties:

- (1) If I try to gain God's favor by fulfilling the Commandments;
- (2) If I compare myself to others and say I'm OK with God because I'm not as bad as they are; and
- (3) If I say that God demands too much so I won't bother, and instead ignore Him.

The Old Adam loves the Law because he loves to think that he can earn eternal life. One of our basic sins is pride and we love to pride ourselves in our own goodness. As human beings we are very good at rationalizing. That happens when I keep on explaining my actions in more and more different ways until I can find one that makes me look right.

So the Old Adam **loves all that talk of earning and deserving**. He is in his favorite place and can make himself believe that he is completely right and others are wrong.

Then he figures he deserves heaven, and eternal life; and God really should congratulate him on being so good.

He will continue thinking that way **until the Law of God touches his own pet sin**. Then you should hear him howl and rage! He supposedly loved religion, but now it turns to hatred and disrespect. Give him the choice between God's Word and his own opinion about himself, the Old Adam will choose himself. He will somehow believe that he has to show how God's Word is wrong. He calls it "old fashioned," primitive, superstitious, mistaken, unimportant, foolish and irrelevant. (Yes, I have heard all of those and more.)



24.5 SIN

Since we are talking about the Old Sinful Nature this is a good time to take a closer look at sin.

SIN: First, there is a difference between Sin and sins. Sin (capital 'S') is that thing within our nature that leads us to do sins. Even if you could go for a whole day without doing any sins you would still be a sinner. No matter what else happens, we are sinners, wrong in our nature and will end up chasing after exactly the things that will destroy us.

ORIGINAL SIN: It goes back to Adam and that is why we call it Original Sin. It is passed down from parents to children. That's why so many things go wrong in our lives, in our families, and in our country; because no matter how hard we try we still come back to being sinners.

ACTUAL SINS: In addition to Sin or Original Sin there are also Actual Sins. These are the sins that our lives are full of. They also separate us from God and call for His judgment.

SINS OF COMMISSION & OMISSION: Sins of Commission are things we do that we should not have done. Sins of Omission are the things we should do but we don't.

SINS OF THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED: We don't only sin through what we do. We also sin in what we say, and in what we think.

Other types of sins are:

SECRET SINS – are sins not known to anybody else than the sinner and God.

UNKNOWN SINS – are things you don't even know are sins – because you don't completely understand sin or how you are a sinner.

NATIONAL SINS – in the Old Testament there were things that the whole nation was guilty of. They happened either because the people followed an evil ruler or because the whole nation was neglecting God's Word.

There are a number of words for sin in the Old Testament. They give us different parts of the picture of what sin is:

A-sham – guilt, fault

'a-won – perversity, evil

Khat-ta – offend against, transgress

Sha-ga – go astray, mistake, transgress

Pe-shah – revolt, rebellion

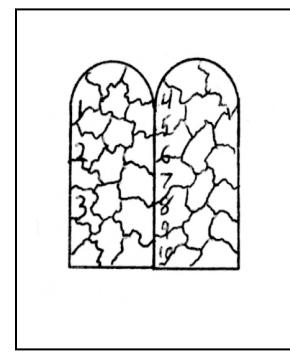
When you put them all together they describe what Paul says, *"you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following . . . the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, . . . and were by nature children of wrath".* (Ephesians 2:1-3)

That's bad enough, but Paul says even worse in Romans 3:10-18. Read it!

24.6 EXAMINING OURSELVES THROUGH THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

This is a good time to read through the 10 Commandments carefully, thinking about how we have broken each one of them.

- # 1. Have you loved God perfectly? More than anything else in life? More than yourself? Have you trusted Him with everything in life? How about when you had to admit doing something wrong?
- # 2. Have you used God's name as a cuss-word? Have you remembered to pray every day, in every need? Have you remembered to thank Him for your blessings? For each of them? Has your attitude always brought praise to God?

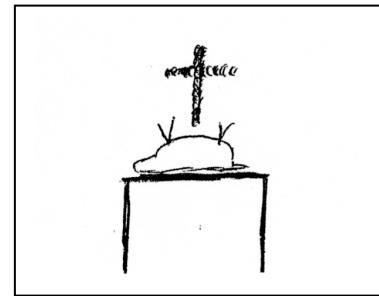


- # 3. Have you always been eager to worship God? To read your Bible? Do you sing with joy in Church? Do you tell others about Jesus Christ? Have you ever been ashamed of being a Christian?
- # 4. Have you cared for and respected your parents? Teachers? The elderly? Have you taught your children about God? About how to pray? About how to worship? Have you brought them to Church? Have you faithfully and always set a good example?
- # 5. Have you cared for your neighbor and helped him in times of need? Have you prayed for your neighbor?
- # 6. Have you kept yourself pure for marriage? In your marriage? Have you avoided dirty movies, web-sites, jokes, and thoughts? Do you truly and completely love your husband / wife?
- # 7. Have you been completely honest and hardworking? All the time?
- # 8. Have you always been truthful? Have you always spoken the best you can about your neighbor? Have you avoided listening to and sharing gossip? Have you defended your neighbor against gossip? Have you found good things to say and compliment your fellow students? Your brother or sister? Your parents?
- # 9-10. Have you coveted and desired what belongs to someone else? Have you been content with how God has made you and what He has given you?

24.7 **SACRIFICES:**

Because the Commandments teach us so much about our sins, God's people in the Old Testament were very aware of their sins. For that reason there is also a **huge variety of sacrifices in the Old Testament**. Just from the first 6 chapters of Leviticus there are:

Burnt Offerings
Grain Offerings
Fellowship Offerings
Sin Offerings, and
Guilt Offerings.



There were the **daily sacrifices**, the sacrifice of the Lamb at **Passover** (see Exodus 12), the **Scapegoat** (on whom the sins of the nation were placed and who then was driven out of the camp – so the Bible says Jesus had to go outside the city to be crucified), and many more.

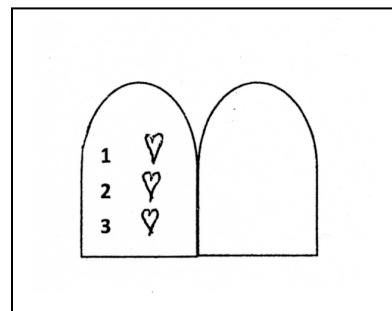
All these sacrifices point to Jesus. They tell us how Jesus Christ has taken every kind of our sins on Himself and died in our place.

24.8 **MORE THAN DOING AND NOT DOING**

((Small Catechism Questions # 74-83))

How bad can it get?

Notice please that only "doing" or "not doing" does not fulfill the Commandments. The 10 Commandments are part of the Moral Law. They deal with matters of the heart.



(1) **For Example:** Suppose I was driving up to St. Louis one day. Passing through "that town where they watch your speed really closely," I wasn't watching my speed, and got pulled over. I could say to the policeman, "But I intended to watch my speed! I really wanted to!" Would that get me out of a speeding ticket? I don't think so either.

So after I have finished my business in St. Louis I am driving home. I get near "that town where they watch your speed really closely" and start to get mad. I could be gritting my teeth, and muttering under my breath and thinking about going 120 mph through that town! And as I pass the policeman I am actually snarling quietly. But I am going the speed limit. Will he pull me over and give me a ticket because I wanted to be speeding? I don't think so either. The reason why is because he doesn't care what I am thinking as long as I am obeying the law.

God's Law is not like that. **Sins within the soul** are just as much sins. God has the right to look within our souls and judge our thoughts, emotions, and feelings. That's why Jesus' teaching of the Commandments convicts us so completely, "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment," (Matthew 5:22 NIV)

How can we ever stand before God who sees all things?

(2) **God's Law is one piece.** You can't break one part and say you have kept the whole thing. James 2:10 says "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point, he has become guilty of all." (NIV)

It's like the windshield of a car. If a rock flies up and chips it, it's only a matter of time until the whole thing breaks and falls apart. You may not see it at first. When you do you may say, "It's only a little thing. I don't have to worry about it." But leave it alone and just wait. The chip becomes a crack and the crack starts spreading. And then it's all over the windshield. With a windshield it's not just one little part. It's the whole thing.

God's law is one because the will of God is one. You can't break a part of it and say, "But I kept all the rest." If it's broken, it's broken.

If you have ever broken any part of God's commands or God's will, **you have broken it all.** And God's Law comes along and accuses you. "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point, he has become guilty of all."

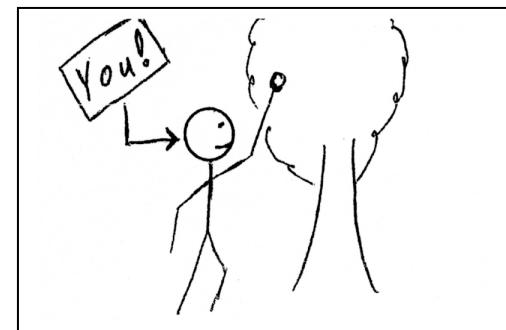
What does that look like?

Let's start off with **when you ate that fruit** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Yes, that was you! You had a part of it, because You were a part of Adam and Eve back then.

And then (according to James 2:10) we could talk about **you** being a thief and a murderer and an adulterer. You protest, "But I didn't do those things! I only . . ." James answers: **Did you break any part** of God's Law or His Will? Well then, you are guilty of all.

There's no way out. Of course the Law accuses me in the same way too. We stand guilty before God.

How do we ever expect to be righteous?



(3) (This part comes from the pastor who confirmed me.) **Any sin earns an eternity of suffering** and being separated from God. Imagine – how many eternities of suffering have you earned today? Multiple eternities? Hundreds of eternities?

If you could endure those hundreds of eternities of suffering you would have only begun to pay back to God a portion of what you owe. And still, if you had any sinful thought (even one) during those eternities then you would have earned even more eternities of suffering.

And if you were able to go through all the eternities of suffering without having an impure or angry thought toward God at all during any of them, **you would still only have dealt with the sin part.**

What you owe to God in addition to full payment for each sin is a life of perfect obedience, love and holiness – **a complete life of perfect obedience, love and holiness.** If you have already sinned once in your life, then the possibility of that holy life is already gone. It cannot be gotten back.

How then can we hope to be saved?

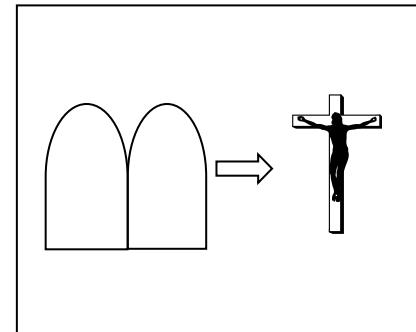
24.9 WHERE THE LAW ENDS . . .

The Law can never bring us to salvation – because we can never be perfect. It leaves off with condemning sin and sinners.

At the end of the 10 Commandments, after naming the more obvious sins, **the 9th and 10th Commandments** come along and talk about **“coveting.”** Coveting is a sinful desire of the heart and these 2 Commandments catch us all.

Remember what James 2:10 says, "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point, he has become guilty of all." (NIV) We know there is no way we can earn or deserve eternal life.

The purpose and goal of the Law is to teach us about our need for a Savior and drive us to the Savior.



(Part E – The Absolute Grace and Freedom of the Gospel)

25. GRACE

G R A C E is **God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.**

It is undeserved favor. It is the free gift of life. It is being set free from our sins because somebody else, the Son of God, paid the price. It is everything we have in Jesus.

There are several ways to describe this that have been passed along for generations.

25.1 THE GREAT EXCHANGE

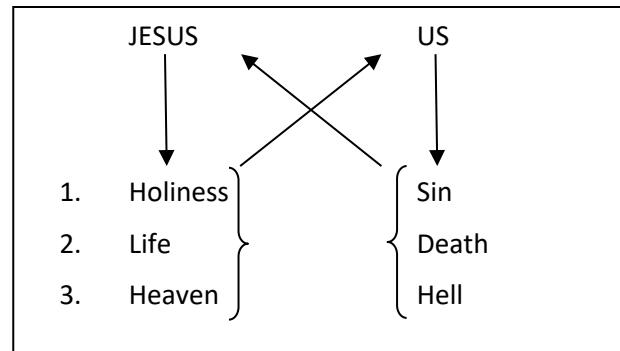
Paul said, “[God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Jesus is holy. He is the sinless Son of God who lived with perfect faith, perfect love and perfect obedience. **There was no sin in Him.** He deserves heaven and eternal life. But on the cross He took our sins on Himself – and with those sins **He accepted the death**

we deserve; and suffered the separation from His Father that we deserve. That separation from God is the experience of hell.

Martin Luther looked at the prayer that Jesus prayed from the cross and said: What is He doing? That is the prayer I should be praying. That is the separation from God and those are the pains of hell that I deserve. How is it that the sinless Son of God should pray such a thing?

The answer Luther found in the Bible: Exactly!! **He is there in my place.** The fiery wrath of God is poured out on Jesus for me. He takes it all (drinks the cup of the Father's wrath completely – see Mark 14:36). And as He does that I am set free!



He takes what I deserve and in exchange gives me what is rightfully His. **He gives me** His holiness, His eternal life, and His heaven. **I get to be** clothed with the righteousness of Christ and be known by His name (I am a Christian). **I get to be** called a son of God and I get to pray "Our father . . ." And **I didn't do a thing to deserve it.** It is a gift from Jesus Christ. There are numerous verses in the Bible that speak this way.

Who are the two parties involved in the Great Exchange?

Jesus and Us

What three pairs of things are traded in the Great Exchange?

Holiness for sin;
Life for death;
Heaven for hell.

That is the Great Exchange. We teach it. We believe it. And we sing about it. Among many other hymns two verses of the hymn "Let All Together Praise Our God" (LSB # 389) put this very well:

He undertakes a great exchange, Puts on our human frame,
And in return gives us His realm, His glory, and His name, . . .
He is a servant, I a lord: How great a mystery!
How strong the tender Christ Child's love! No truer friend than He, . . .

25.2 ALIEN RIGHTEOUSNESS

(1) **Righteousness** – Upright, virtuous, morally right. Acceptable to God.
"Righteousness" is sinlessness or holiness.

(2) **Alien**

1. Foreign. One born in, or belonging to another country.
2. A hypothetical being from outer space. "ET" or "Mr. Spock" for example.
3. Strange; not natural.
4. "Someone else's . . ." This is the definition we use.

Alien Righteousness means – **We are given someone else's holiness, namely the holiness of Jesus.** We will always live by the righteousness of Christ, for all eternity, and not ever have a righteousness of our own.

Imagine going back to the Garden of Eden and meeting Adam and Eve before the fall into sin. You could ask them, "How do you like your new bodies?" And they could answer in two ways:

- (1) We like them very much, thank you. Or
- (2) You know they really aren't ours. They belong to God, he made them, He owns them and He is letting us use them. But they will always be His.

Now imagine going into the future 10,000 years after Jesus returns and meeting future you. You could ask, "Hey future me. Now that it's been 10,000 years after Jesus came back, how do you like your righteousness?" Future you could answer in the same two ways.

- (1) I like it very much, thank you. Or
- (2) You know it really isn't mine. It belongs to Jesus, He owns it, He lived it, and He is letting me use it forever. But it will always be His.

So: "**Alien Righteousness**" means that for all eternity I will always live by Jesus' righteousness, never by my own.

BONUS QUESTION:

Why is it Jesus' holiness that must clothe us?

Why not the holiness of the Holy Spirit? Or the holiness of God the Father?

Answer: Because the holiness of Jesus is a human holiness. It fits us. God the Father did not become a human being. The Holy Spirit was never born for us. Jesus became one of us, "born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5) It's like shoes. You have to have a pair that fit. The holiness of Jesus involves living by faith, a life of prayer, etc. Those are human things. His holiness is perfectly tailored to fit us. So Isaiah (61:10) says "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; . . . for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness." And the New Testament uses the same picture many times.

25.3 **VICARIOUS SATISFACTION**

There are two parts to this idea:

(1) **Satisfaction**

Jesus said "I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." And, "unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

James 2:10 says, "whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

The demands of the Law will and must be satisfied. The Law demands that only the perfectly holy inherit eternal life. Anyone who has sinned is condemned as guilty and sentenced to suffer eternal separation from God, which is hell.

That is why it is so important that Jesus said “**tetelestai**” (τετελεσται) – “It is finished” from the cross. The demands of the Law have been paid in full. But how?

(2) **Vicarious**

“Vicarious” – has a root word “Vicar.” It means one who stands in the place of another. Some examples:

1. Our congregation has had Vicars. They are student pastors. When a vicar stood in the pulpit he was standing in my place – technically he is my vicar.
2. The French had an official that was called the “Viceroy.” Since the French word for king is “*roy*” the “Viceroy” was one who stood in the place of the king. He represented the king.
3. The Pope calls himself the Vicar of Christ. We disagree, but it’s a good illustration. With that title he is claiming to be Jesus’ visible representative on earth.
4. **Hollywood** has an example that does not use the word “vicar.” When you are shooting a movie and have a dangerous looking stunt that the star of the movie is supposed to do . . . well, you do not want him to risk a broken leg and have to stop filming so you get another person who looks a bit like him and have him do the stunt instead. **The Stunt Double!** (This leads to all sorts of irresponsible thoughts about my relationship with the vicars here!)

Now to apply this.

Remember Genesis 22 where Abraham and Isaac are heading up the mountain. The place of sacrifice is at the top, and **Isaac says, “Father . . . where’s the lamb** for the burnt offering?” Abraham answers, “God Himself will provide the lamb.” On that day a ram was the substitute – the vicar. But centuries later **John the Baptist** stands by the Jordan, and points, and says, **“Behold the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Jesus became our “Vicar” stepping into our place. What we could not do, He did instead. We could not live the perfectly holy life (we had already sinned). And we could not suffer to earn our way into eternal life (suffering for our own sins would destroy us for all eternity). He became our Vicar, our stunt double so to speak. He lived the perfectly holy life. He suffered for our sins. And He conquered death and hell and rose from the dead. For us.

25.4 **PUTTING THE THREE TERMS TOGETHER**

Notice that when you combine “Alien Righteousness” and “Vicarious Satisfaction” they make up the two parts of the “Great Exchange.”

A.R. + V.S. = G.E.

25.5 IN SUMMARY

The Law shows us that we are sinners and need a Savior. Then the Gospel tells us who our Savior is and what He has done for us.

The Law is a temporary "taskmaster" that serves to point and push us toward Jesus the Savior. We use the Law wrongly when we try to be right with God by what we do. But we use the Law rightly when we allow it to drive us to let go of our pride or our hope in ourselves; and instead put all our hopes in Jesus.

We have learned to say it this way over the past several years:

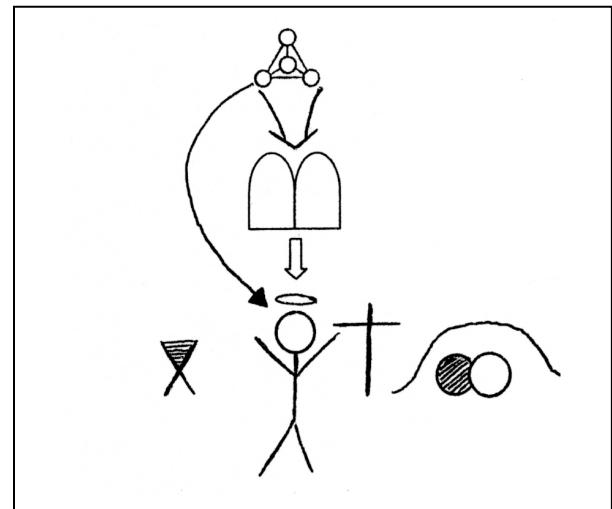
We renounce all other hope of forgiveness or righteousness except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

We renounce all other hope of heaven or eternal life except Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

25.6 JESUS AND THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

This is a good time to read through the 10 Commandments once again, this time thinking about Jesus and how He has fulfilled each Commandment for us.

- # 1. He loved His Father perfectly, trusting Him for everything (Matthew 8:23-26). Jesus had perfect faith and could call the Father "My God" even while He was suffering on the cross.
- # 2. Jesus lived a life of prayer, sometimes spending whole nights in prayer; other times getting up early for prayer. (Mark 1:35, Isaiah 50:4-7) He called upon His Father in His times of need and He gave thanks for His blessings. (John 6:11; Luke 22:19) He always brought credit to His Father through His words, teaching and life.
- # 3. Jesus observed the Sabbath: by treasuring the Word of God; and by doing good and healing people. (Mark 3:1-5) The Sabbath is a day of rest, and Jesus is the One who gives rest. (Matthew 11:28-30)
- # 4. Jesus was obedient to Mary and Joseph. (Luke 2:51) He said to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. He cared for His mother when He was on the cross and commended her into the care of John.
- # 5. Jesus helped many in their time of need: healing the sick; and raising Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, and the son of the widow at Nain. He also rescued the woman caught in adultery. (John 8:2-11)
- # 6. Jesus blessed the couple married at Cana, changing water into wine. (John 2:1-10) He also taught us to honor marriage, treated each person with the respect proper for those created in the image of God, and called them into His kingdom as Children of God. (John 4)
- # 7. Jesus was a hardworking carpenter. He also fed the 5,000, and honored the work of the fishermen.



8. Jesus' answers to His enemies were always truthful. More than that, He was seeking their best by what He said to them and seeking to give them the blessings of forgiveness and eternal life.

9-10. Jesus had everything in heaven. But He did not hold on to it. He was content to let it go and instead be born for us, and do everything so that we could share heaven, glory and eternal life.

25.7 JESUS AND THE FIRST COMMANDMENT – THE AUTHOR OF FAITH (!)

Hebrews 12:2 calls Jesus "the author and perfecter of faith, . . . "

He is the one who leads the way. He is the one who believes the words and promises of God in the face of every doubt or question, even suffering and death. Faith means to believe a thing is absolutely true no matter what. For Jesus the "no matter what" included being condemned and going to the cross. There on the cross He endured the scorn of the world. But the worst part was that on the cross Jesus was forsaken by His Father. He had the sin of the whole world on Him and His holy Father had to turn away from Him. The 4th word from the cross is "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" Notice this, that as Jesus says, "Why have You forsaken?" He still says, "My God." Jesus had absolutely perfect faith. He believed the words and promises of God perfectly.

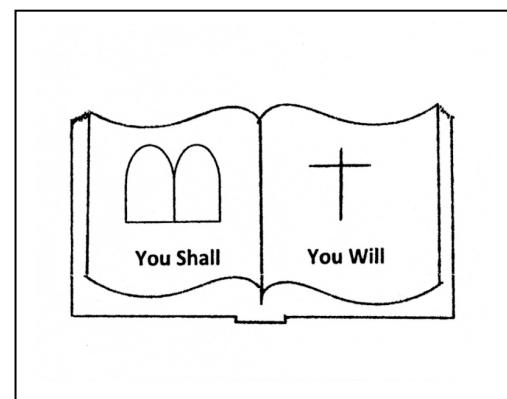
Jesus is the "author" of faith. He invented it. He developed it. He perfected it. If you want to know what faith is read about the life of Jesus. Jesus then teaches us about this faith. He taught Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, Paul; and He teaches every Christian. What He teaches us is to believe the words and promises of God no matter what might happen.

When we are in the middle of problems or when we face temptation – Jesus knows what it is like to have to walk by faith. Hebrews 4:15-16 says, "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

25.8 "YOU SHALL . . ." – TWO PARTS

Some have pointed out that when God says "you shall" the words "you shall" can mean two different things both in English and in Hebrew.

First, the normal way we read them is that **we should** do these things; and if we don't there will be judgment.



The second meaning comes when we translate "you shall" as "you will." **There will come a time** when we will have no other gods; when we will use the Lord's name properly; when we will remember the Sabbath day;

and when we will love our neighbor perfectly according to the 4th - 10th commandments.

Of course **we can't do this**. We are sinners and can't make ourselves holy. But God has sent Jesus Christ who fulfilled the Law of God for us; who gives us His own holiness, to clothe us in the righteousness of our Savior forever. It is only through Jesus Christ that we are saved. This can only happen through God's work in Jesus on the cross.

We will see it **when God has finished His work in us** – after this life is over. But that time is coming and it is a promise. So we look at God's Moral Law with the hope of the Gospel. What the Law could not do God has done and is doing through Jesus Christ. This is another very different way of reading the Commandments. But all these things will happen in us at the end. God is doing this. It is a part of our hope.

(Part F – How Shall We Live?)

26. MARTIN LUTHER ON THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

Martin Luther wrote a long study of the 10 Commandments (Luther's "Treatise on Good Works"). There he outlined 5 basic themes of the 10 commandments:

(1) GRACE	(2) Faith	(3) Prayer
(4) Rest	(5) Love	

Here's how the Commandments fit into those themes:

1. God's grace to us in Jesus Christ – Exodus 20:2
2. Faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior – 1st Commandment
3. Prayer -- We are invited to talk with God – 2nd Commandment
4. Rest in God's Love – 3rd Commandment
5. Love for our neighbors – 4th - 10th Commandments

Not only is this the pattern of the Commandments. It is the pattern of the Christian life and we will find the pattern repeated several times later on.

26.1 THROUGH LIFE

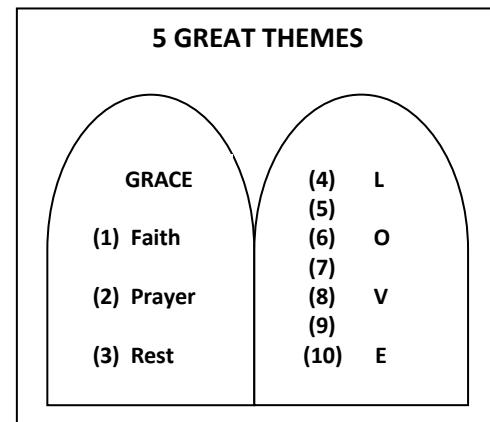
The Second Table seems to be arranged by our path through life. From one time in our life to another we struggle with one commandment after another.

The first one we struggle with is the **4th Commandment** - to honor our Father & Mother.

While we may continue to struggle with this commandment it is at an early age that it is the focus of our life.

Next is the **5th Commandment** - more violence happens during the teen years and early 20's than any other time of our lives.

Then the **6th Commandment** - lust & adultery in our later teens through middle age.



Then the **7th** - the desire for riches begins in early adulthood and runs through to retirement.

Then the **8th** - gossip becomes an increasing problem as the years go by and we age.

The **9th** Commandment has to do with inheritance.

And the **10th** catches any sinful desire we didn't notice as the other commandments did their work.

As we get one problem area somewhat under control (or don't get it under control) the next one is ready to start up.

26.2 FOR THE CHRISTIAN

The Teachers of the Law divided the Commandments into 248 Positive and 365 Negative Commandments. The Positive said, "You shall . . ." the Negative "You shall not . . ."

Is the 5th Commandment Positive or Negative?

The 4th?

The 1st?

Genesis 1:28?

Genesis 2:17?

Exodus 20:2?

26.3 THE EXPLANATIONS (What does this mean?)

What Luther has done in the Explanations is to bring together the teachings that connect with each of the commandments in a quick summary. And he has managed to state them in terms of the Negative and Positive.

The explanations are divided into Negative and Positive parts, separated by the word "but."

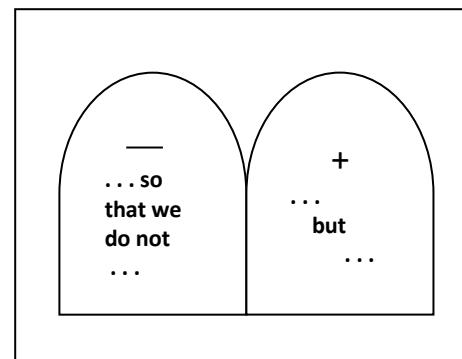
"We should fear and love God that we may not . . . [negative parts], but . . . [positive parts]."

(The two exceptions are the 1st and 6th commandments, where the explanations are completely positive.)

26.4 AFTER THE BUT . . .

For us as Christians, this is a beautiful way of reading the Commandments. Read through the explanations of each of the Commandments. Note especially the part after ", but . . . ". What comes **before the "but"** is the things we should not do. We should avoid and struggle against these things.

These are things you can spend a lot of time in your life not practicing. (Or; you do not spend a lot of time practicing the things you should not do.) In fact you are not supposed to spend any time on them. There is a sharp limit on how far we can go in "not doing."



The part **after the but** is different. You could take just one Commandment and spend your whole life practicing the things that God wants you to do. They are the answers for the question "what does God truly want?" For example: in the 8th Commandment

telling lies about your neighbor should not take any time in your life. But defending him, speaking well of him and explaining his actions in the kindest way -- you could spend whole decades learning and practicing that! This is true of each of the Commandments.

We do not earn heaven by following the Law. But we do want to know what is God's will and we want to respond in love to God who has first loved us. We seek to be strengthened by God's Word to fight against our sinful nature as we resist and turn away from those sins named in the first part. And God's Word strengthens us so that we may grow in the Christian faith and in those good things named in the second part.

There is no way we can be fully free of the old sinful nature in this life. But it is good to remember the promise that **one day "You shall" live according to God's will**. When God brings us to heaven or when Jesus returns we will see His will perfectly fulfilled in our lives.

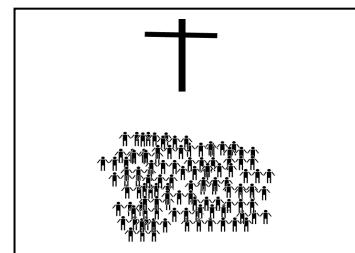
THE COMMANDMENTS FOR CHRISTIANS

(Note: This section can also be studies as "Section 64.7"

27.0 WHO GOD IS AND WHO YOU ARE – Exodus 20:2

God introduces Himself at the beginning of the 10 Commandments,

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Exodus 20:2)



That's **who God is**, the one who brings out of slavery. In the Old Testament it was "out of Egypt." In the New Testament it is out of sin and death and out of the devil's kingdom.

In Exodus, God brought them out of Egypt by the death of **the Passover Lamb** (pointing to Jesus), through **the Red Sea** (pointing to baptism) and brought them to **Mount Sinai**. There they were at the mountain of God; and there God would tell them who He is.

He also told them **who they were**. They were made new and now their identity came from their relationship with God. He said, "**you will be My treasured inheritance**" and "**you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**" (Exodus 19:4-6)

This is also **your identity**. This is **who you are through Jesus**, and it's something pretty special. God calls you His treasured inheritance. You are a child of God. You have a place in the kingdom of God; and it is a place of honor. Your place in the universe and your destiny is to live forever through Jesus Christ. Peter said, "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people . . ." (1 Peter 2:9-10)

What does it mean to be a child of God? **What does it mean to have our identity come from our relationship with God?** That is what we have in Jesus. It means to be called apart by God; to be called to a special place and destiny – called by God to go walking with Him and live forever. And it means to have a very specific meaning to your life.

Our identity as children of God teaches us **what is right and wrong.** It is different from simply being obedient. It means that we seek to do those things that are the will of God. We can talk about the values of God. What does God desire? What does God prize and value? What is the work of God, and how does He do His work through us?

God sets free, so we are sent into the world with words that free people's souls. God cares for and protects. So we are called to care and protect in the name of Jesus. As we go through the Commandments in this way we ask the question:
What are the works of God that we are invited to share in.

27.1 WHO YOU ARE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD – The 1st Commandment

"You shall have no other gods before Me."

What does this mean?

We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

God calls us into relationship with Him; and in that relationship we learn who we are. What are the works of God that He shares with us and does in our lives?

At the center of our relationship with God is **His Word and our faith.** Faith is to believe **the Words & Promises of God.** Remember that it's through the Word that God created the universe. And through His Word He calls you to know Him.

Faith is not something you came up with on your own. You didn't even cooperate in making faith. It is by GRACE (God's Riches At Christ's Expense). Paul says this over and over. "For by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV)

WHAT IS FAITH? (a formula)

$$\text{FAITH} = \begin{matrix} (1) \text{ Knowledge} \\ + \\ (2) \text{ Attitude} \end{matrix} \rightarrow (3) \text{ Acts of Love}$$

27.11 KNOWLEDGE

Faith includes (1) Knowing about God through the words of the Bible. Without God revealing Himself we could not know Him or believe Him. It is "What we believe."

Faith means to believe the words and promises of God.

Paul (actually Moses in Genesis) says, "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:3) Notice it does not say "Abraham believed in God"

although Abraham certainly did. What is the difference between "Abraham believed God" and "Abraham believed in God"?

The second phrase, "Abraham believed in God" means that Abraham believed that God is and that God blesses those who trust in Him. The first phrase, "Abraham believed God" means simply that **Abraham believed what God had told him**. God told Abraham that Abraham would have a son and Abraham believed what God told him. Then God told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations and Abraham believed God. And, most importantly, God told Abraham about the Savior, the Christ, the Seed of Abraham who was going to save the world and Abraham believed God.

Every part of faith is focused on the person of Jesus.

Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah see the ram caught by its horns, and learn about the lamb of God that was going to be sacrificed on that mountain (Calvary).

Moses and the people of Israel learn about the lamb of God – as they mark their doors with the blood of the Passover Lamb.

Adam and Eve learned about the "seed of the woman" who would crush the head of the serpent, and be wounded in that battle.

There are many more examples, but they always point to Jesus.

27.12 ATTITUDE

Faith also includes (2) The attitude of faith – to fear, love and trust in God; to be glad that He is our God and look to Him for everything good; to worship.

Read through Luther's description of what faith is in the Large Catechism
"What does it mean to have a god? What is God? My answer is: A god is whatever a person looks to for all good things and runs to for help in trouble."

Through the centuries people have looked for other gods than God. In the ancient world they named them Baal, Asherah, Zeus, Thor, etc. They thought they were supernatural beings that were forces of nature. And they tried to bargain and get things from them.

In the modern world, people put their trust in things like: Money, Fame, Health, Medicine, Sex, Cars, Sports, etc.

We are called to set aside everything else that we could trust in and put our trust only in God.

FEAR, LOVE AND TRUST

Love God. That's easy to understand. He is the giver of every good thing. And He has loved us in Jesus. We love because He first loved us.

Trust God. That means to believe His promises in difficult times. And it means to trust God for things we do not understand.

Fear God. What does that mean? Two things.

For the Christian (the New Man who believes in Jesus) it means to honor, respect and be in awe of God.

For the unbeliever (and for our own Old Sinful Nature, the Old Adam in us) it means to be afraid. God will judge sin, and the sinner will perish. God also intends to crush and destroy the Old Sinful Nature. We want our Old Adam to perish, and God is going to make that happen. So the Old Adam should be afraid.

WALKING BY FAITH

Walking by faith is not always easy. All kinds of things can happen to make us doubt or make us afraid.

The disciples were **out on the lake** in the boat in the middle of the storm and it was about to sink. They were afraid and went to Jesus saying, "Lord save us, we're going to drown." (And by the way Jesus answered and calmed the storm.)

The people of Israel were standing **in front of the Red Sea** with water on their left, water on their right, water in front of them and Egyptians behind. They were afraid and called out to God. (And by the way God answered and they were delivered.)

When **Gideon** was called by God to battle the Mideonites he asked for a sign. (And by the way God gave a sign and a victory.)

God told Abraham to take his son and go to a mountain that God would show him and sacrifice him there. Abraham had to deal with the doubt, sorrow, and uncertainty for three days. He had to answer the question, "Father, where's the lamb?" But there on **the top of Mount Moriah** (later known as Zion and Calvary) God did provide the lamb.

As we walk in faith we learn to trust God's words and promises in the different situations in our lives. **Faith means to believe the words and promises of God and to learn to trust those words and promises for each day.**

Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." An alternate translation says He is "a well proven help in trouble." The more experience we have walking with God through the problems in life the more we learn to trust Him for the problems that will happen later on.

JOB

Job learned this. In the Old Testament, **Job lost everything** in one day; his house, his belongings, his children, all his wealth. And then on another day he lost his health. **His friends** came by and said it was all his fault: Job, you must secretly be an incredibly terrible sinner! **His wife** said, "Are you still holding on . . .? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9) With all that happening what did Job have to rely on? **Only the words and promises of God!** Listen to 2 things that Job said. (One of them is familiar and has become part of an Easter song.)

Job 13:15 ***"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him"***

Job 19:25-27 ***"I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."***

So:

Faith means to believe the words and promises of God and to learn to trust only in those words and promises for each day.

THE PURPOSE FOR SUFFERINGS

What did suffering produce in the life of Job? Understanding this may help us when we are going through hard times. Suffering serves these 3 purposes:

- 1) **To exercise faith** so that we are stronger in relying on the words and promises of God.
- 2) **To purify our faith** so that we are more focused on the words and promises of God. Enjoy the benefits of faith. But focus your trust simply on God's words and promises.
- 3) **So that our faith may be a witness** to the world.

FAITH VS. UNBELIEF

Is it possible for faith and unbelief to exist **at the same time in the same heart?**

Certainly there is a struggle. We are in this world surrounded by temptations. We are sinful. There is a devil who wants to pull us away from God. But can there be both belief and unbelief at the same time in the same soul? It sounds like an odd idea. But read Mark 9:24

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

How do we explain this? There is a Lutheran teaching that we will study more later. It goes by the name "**Sinner / Saint.**" We are at the same time both sinful and holy in God's eyes. **There is an Old Sinful Nature within us and a New Nature that God has created in us through Jesus.**

So the father of that child in Mark 9 had a battle going on inside him. The Old Nature refused to believe. The New Nature heard Jesus' words and treasured them.

In the middle of that battle he cried out to Jesus asking for help; and Jesus did. His faith was strengthened. His "old sinful" unbelief was weakened. And Jesus answered his prayer.

27.13 ACTS OF LOVE

Faith also results in (3) Acts of Love that come out of our relationship with God.

Faith cannot be faith without living itself out in acts of love. It is an essential expression of our relationship with God. Again, "We love because He first loved us." Watch how this plays out in the rest of the commandments.

27.2 YOU CARRY THE NAME OF GOD – The 2nd Commandment

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

How do you pronounce this word?

“G-d”

It's the word “God” without the vowel.

So how is it pronounced?

The Pharisees in Jesus day (and today the Hasidic Jews, very strict, and many Orthodox Jews) were extremely careful about how they treated the name of God. They did not want to dishonor God's name in any way. So, they would not write the name of God on anything that might later become waste.

They did not want to speak the name of God if they thought they might say a bad word later on because how could you have God's name and bad words on the same lips.

But how do you know if you might say something wrong later on? How do you know if the thing you write God's name on is later going to get muddy or treated badly. So to be safe they wouldn't speak or write the name of God at all. Where the Bible used the name of God, they substituted the word “lord.” It all turned into training in how to not speak or even think the name of God at all.

(The word G-d is pronounced “The Name” in English or in Hebrew “HaShem.”)

Is this how God wants His name to be used?

As a Christian **you carry the name of God. In fact you have the name of God joined to your name.** It happened in your baptism. How, then, do you use the name of God?

If you were to take all the verses in the Bible that talk about the name of God, write them out on cards and stack them up in two piles

- (1) verses that say how not to use God's name and**
- (2) verses that invite us to use God's name and tell us how.**

Which group would be more? Would they even be close?

In fact God has given His name to us. **He named his name over us in Baptism.** He names His name over us at the beginning of our worship. He says, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” and calls you His own. He calls us over and over again to use His name.

You are given the name of God to carry with you in your mind and soul, and on your lips. Use it **when you are in need – Pray!**

Use it **when fantastic things happen – Give Thanks!**

Use it to **sing about how good it is to be a Christian – Worship!**

Use it **to bless others:**

Pray for them!

Tell them about God's love in Jesus Christ!

Share things you learn from the Bible with each other!

((Read also “The God with the Bulging Biceps,” by H Armin Moellering in the Lutheran Witness, September 1995, pp. 6-8))

27.3 YOUR TIME & GOD'S TIME; YOUR WORDS & GOD'S WORD – The 3rd Commandment

Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

The Sabbath connects the pattern of your life to God. Read the rest of the 3rd Commandment, "Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, ... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. ..." (Exodus 20:8-11)

The simple reason **why we are called to rest is because God rested.** It goes back to being created in **the image of God** and being called to have fellowship with God. Adam & Eve were supposed to **share with God in the goodness of God's love and God's world.** That's why God came walking in the garden in the cool of the day, to spend time with them. (Genesis 3:8)

Fellowship means to share things. For the Sabbath God invites us to share the pattern of His work and His rest. But that doesn't only mean setting aside 1 day a week. It means **sharing in eternity and eternal life.**



RIDDLES

1. If you set aside one day for rest, how many days are dedicated to God?
2. If you set aside a tithe (1/10) of your earnings, how much of your earnings are dedicated to God?

Answers:

1. Seven. All are dedicated to God with the pattern of six days for work and one for rest.
2. 100%. 90% is devoted for your material needs and for the needs of your family in service to God; 10% to be set aside and given to God.

How are we to receive these things from God. It's the same answer as always – through His Word. It is the Word (Law & Gospel), to know that our sins are forgiven through Jesus and we are invited to live with God forever. **Through His Word we receive the relationship with God that He gives us in Jesus.** When we study, hear, speak and sing His Word we are claiming those blessings as our own. When we share God's Word with each other we are sharing the things of eternal life.

This is part of **who we are:** We are His people, set apart to be with God and live with God forever. And we are His people, called to share the Word of life that gives

forgiveness and rest for the soul. Our lives are marked by working and resting in the pattern and rhythm of God, creating and making things for His glory, setting aside time to spend in the Word and living into eternity.

But if we turn away from the Word, from time with God, and from worship what are we doing? We would be rejecting God's sharing of His time, His eternity and His blessings.

27.4 YOUR RELATIONSHIPS & CARING FOR EACH OTHER – The 4th Commandment

Honor your father and your mother, (that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth).

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

You get to share in God's work with your family and others!

The 4th – 10th Commandments are commandments that guide us in our relationships. So they are two sided. With the 4th Commandment parents and children are **given to each other to care for each other**. We are cared for when we are little (Luke 2:7), care for others when we have grown and are strong, and are cared for again in our old age. God gives us to each other so we may give and receive. To care for others is to do the work of the Lord. God really does invite us to work with Him in caring for the needs of others.

This is **not only about things and possessions**. This is also about sharing values, teaching right and wrong, caring about each other, listening, giving emotional support and doing things together.

More than anything else **we are to teach, learn and share the Word of God**. **Parents** are to teach their children and "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Bring them to Church, worship with them, read the Bible with them and pray for them and with them. **Children** realize that your parents need your prayers too. And when they are very old may need for you to pray with them and remind them about God's love. So we care for each other.

THE PROPER WAY TO DISOBEY

There are times a Christian has to disobey those in authority. But this is not because we don't like what we have been told to do. It is only out of our obedience to God. This means we "obey God rather than men" when there is a clear Word of God that someone has clearly commanded to violate. When we must disobey we are to:

1. Do so respectfully – honoring their authority over us.
2. Be ready and seek to explain why we are disobeying; what word of God we must follow instead; and how that Word of God is important for their welfare as well. When you speak the Word of God in this way do so boldly and trusting in God.
3. Be ready to accept the consequences of our actions – again acknowledging their authority.
4. Pray for them, for repentance, faith and spiritual blessings in their relationship with God; and for their daily and material blessings as well.

There are **other authorities** in our life. They are teachers, police, the leaders of our nation, firemen, and so on. God puts us into relationships with them so **that we may receive His blessings through them**. So He provides for our safety, health and welfare.

There is a promise connected to this commandment. It has to do with receiving the blessings of God through people He has put in our lives. So we see God at work through them, give thanks to God for them, and we pray for them.

On the other hand you may one day be in one of those positions of authority. When you are remember that God has called you to care for His people. Pray for His help that you may serve God by doing what He wants you to do.

27.5 HELP AND BEFRIEND IN EVERY NEED –

The 5th Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every physical need.

God gives us to each other, to care for and protect each other, and so to join in His work of providing for His children.

The 5th Commandment includes an **almost endless variation of details** that have to do with breaking or keeping the commandment, with harming or helping our neighbor. They sort into things of (a) thought, (b) word and (c) deed. So here are some of the issues.

THE HEART /&/ THE EDGE OR BORDER 5TH – 8TH Commandments

These commandments talk about things so far away from God (murder, adultery, theft and false testimony in court) that they are at the edge of human behavior. No society can allow them to be done freely without consequences and still survive.

But these things are not at the heart of what God desires.

So we can talk about what is at the edge, and what is at the heart of each commandment.

BREAKING	KEEPING
Deeds (the coarse sins): Murder, suicide, euthanasia, manslaughter (accidental killing), careless or drunk driving; Physical violence, unhealthy living; Failing to help someone in need; and more,	Deeds: Rescuing from death; The person who dies while rescuing another; Working as a firefighter, policeman, doctor or nurse; Helping a stranded driver; Giving blood; Helping an old lady across the street; Feeding the hungry; all other acts of mercy; and more.
Words (finer sins): Hateful speech, slander, destroying another's reputation, cursing & voicing a wish that bad things would happen to someone; Failing to defend someone with our words.	Words: Warning someone of danger; Speaking the kind and encouraging things that will make someone's life better; Sharing the Gospel.
Thoughts (the finest sins): Desiring that something bad would happen to someone; Failing to desire good for another person.	Thoughts: Desiring good things for others; Praying for your enemy; planning how to do good.

There are **some specific questions** that are a part of the 5th Commandment:

1. If you are a policeman and have to kill someone in order to protect another person, have you kept or broken the commandment?
2. Can you be a Christian and serve as a soldier? What is the Just War Theory?
3. Do the results of irresponsible sex break the 5th Commandment?

And now there are **special complications for our times**:

1. How do we care for the helpless the disabled and the elderly. What are the issues you have to face when a doctor says a loved one is (a) brain dead, or (b) minimally conscious?
2. What are the 5th Commandment issues related to Stem Cells; In Vitro Fertilization; Cloning; Human-Animal Hybrid Body Parts; Prenatal Testing for Birth Defects; Selective Reduction of Multiple Fetuses; Pregnancy as a Result of Rape?
3. What about being an organ donor? Should a Christian receive embryonic stem cells to cure a disease, if it really did work?

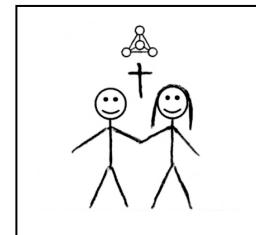
While you ask and discuss those questions remember that you live **in relationship with God who truly loves life. What is at the heart of what God desires?** The value we are talking about is the value of mercy, to care for our neighbor as God has cared for us.

27.6 THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY – The 6th Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may lead a sexually pure and decent life in word and deed and husband and wife love and honor each other.



Through marriage God invites us to join with Him in His work of bringing new life into the world. That's why God blessed Adam & Eve and told them to "be fruitful and multiply."

Adam said of Eve, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". (Genesis 2:23) So God says that in marriage husband and wife are no longer 2 but 1. Along with that oneness comes an intimacy, both physical and emotional.

The Bible says, "**Adam knew Eve his wife ...**" The Hebrew words capture a deep reality. Love, marriage and sex is a matter of knowing and being known. Even before marriage couples learn that their relationship is a matter of knowing and being known. They often find themselves finishing each other's sentences, or knowing what the other is thinking.

This really does fit the pattern of **how God puts the world together** – He creates by speaking. God reveals Himself through words, we know Him through words, and we know each other through words. In fact **words are the stuff of the soul**. We cannot

reveal what is deep inside of us without them. So we set apart special words for special occasions. We call the promises of marriage “vows” and this is the heart of marriage.

So the heart of marriage is in the vows that a couple speaks to each other. The reason why this is true is because we are more than physical bodies. We are not like the animals. We are living souls. We are spiritual beings. So we join ourselves together through the stuff of the soul – words.

Mary and Joseph were betrothed (almost the opposite of what happens in our day). Mary & Joseph were not “married or unmarried” by virtue of physical acts of intimacy. They had spoken their vows to each other and were legally married, but had not come together yet. Betrothal teaches us what marriage actually is. It is in the vows, words and promises spoken before God, and words spoken in the name of God to bless a couple.

The relationship of husband and wife really is to know each other. This is how the foundation of a marriage is formed. That’s why it is important before marriage to spend time not being physical; but rather to focus on the things of the soul. This is true **no matter if the rest of the world does the opposite.**

So God honors and blesses sex, when we keep it **within God’s will**. When we take it **outside of His will** it becomes a thing without blessing and ends up bringing pain and sorrow into our lives.

God’s plan is (1) To give man & woman to each other.

This means one man & one woman for their whole life.

It means we ask for God’s help and guidance in finding a husband or wife who will share in the Lord’s Work together with us.

The giving is by vows and promises that they will be and remain husband & wife for all their life.

The problem is not that there is too much sex, but that there is too little. (Pope John Paul II) Good point. How God created sex is as a part of marriage, the joining together of one man and one woman for their whole life, to share their lives together, to have children and raise them to know God.

There is nothing sweeter than to know and be known by your husband or wife so intimately that you know you can trust each other with every part of who you are. That does not get built in a few weeks or months but takes a lifetime of commitment, of being together and of learning to know each other. **If you want to really know what love is watch older couples** who have been there for each other through all kinds of difficulties and joys. Don’t throw away the chance of having this.

God’s plan is (2) That husband and wife devote themselves to each other.

Paul quoted the verse **from Genesis**, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh,” and then he said, “This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the

church." **Husband & wife loving, devoting themselves to each other and sacrificing for each other is a part of the preaching of Jesus' birth and His Cross.** (Read Philippians 2:3-11 and read the 1st verse of "The Church's One Foundation")

In addition, from the roots of human beginnings – **the Love, Devotion, and Faithfulness within marriage is part of how God shows His image in us.** Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." The love and devotion of husband & wife to each other teaches us something of the relationships within the Trinity.

God's plan is (3) That marriage should create a place of safety for bringing children into the world and caring for them as they grow up.

The greatest duty of parents is not to provide material blessings, food & shelter, but to raise their children **to know God, and to live their lives before God in faith, prayer, worship, love and mercy.** **Moses said**, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NIV) **Paul said** that we are to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:5)

The reason for these things is **because of who we are; that we are created in the image of God.** There is a value here. It's called modesty. It is the understanding that we live our moral life, our inner life, and our love life in the presence of God. All these things are part of God's call to you to walk with Him in eternal life.

27.7 **YOUR WORK & GOD'S WORK; AND WHO IT ALL BELONGS TO – The 7th Commandment** **You shall not steal.**

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

A man's work is his worship of God. (An old Jewish saying)

Adam and Eve were given work to do (gardening) **before the fall into sin.**

The 7th Commandment is **not only about things.** It's about honesty, and about everything that belongs to your neighbor and is not yours. If you copy an answer on a test you have broken the Commandment. If you download a term-paper and turn it in as your own work you have broken the commandment. If you allow the boss at work to believe the great new idea was yours when it was not, you have broken the commandment. It used to be in **Tennis** that if the referee missed a call in your favor, that you would go and correct him and have him change the call to favor your opponent. Because of that honesty Tennis was known and the gentleman's game. This is what is known as "sportsmanship." (I'm sure you could give other examples from daily.)

The 7th Commandment is not only about not stealing. That's at the edge of the commandment. What is **at the heart** is that **we do our work, our labor and our creativity to the glory of God**. We do these things to our best ability; whether they are great and impressive things, or whether they are the simplest and most humble acts of service. We want to do **an honest day's work that we can offer to God as our service and worship to Him**.

That means we want for our work:

- (1) **To meet our own daily needs.**
- (2) **To support and care for those in our families.** We have a duty to care for them and provide for them as God has cared for us.
- (3) **To allow us to help our neighbor in his time of need.** This is a part of the image of God; and a part of "The Work of the Lord." (This is a matter of you individually and voluntarily caring for your neighbor – not a matter of someone else taking taxes that you didn't want to give, to give your money instead of his own, to a neighbor who doesn't want to work, and using that money for immoral things. It is a matter of you stepping up and caring for your neighbor when you see that he is in a time of need.)

Notice the motivation in what Paul said, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, **so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.**" (Ephesians 4:28) The goal is that we may join in doing the Work of the Lord.

27.8 DOING THE LORD'S WORK THROUGH YOUR WORDS – The 8th Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or ruin his good name, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

In between thoughts and deeds are the words we speak. **We are called to live for God through our words.** Paul says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (Ephesians 4:29 NIV)

In:
THOUGHTS
WORDS
& DEEDS

The story has been told many times of "Bill" the town **gossip**. After he had ruined another friend's reputation, this time he started to regret it. He went to Pastor Schmidt and asked how he could fix things. Pastor Schmidt told him to go get a feather pillow and come back. Then they went up the church bell tower together and Pastor Schmidt told him to cut open the pillow and scatter the feathers. Well Bill said he didn't know how this would fix anything but OK he would do it. The feathers tumbled out, were caught by the wind and scattered all over town. Bill was still trying to figure

out how this would help when Pastor Schmidt told him the next part, "Go gather all the feathers and bring them back." "But that's impossible!" Bill said. "It would take my whole life and I still couldn't find them all!" "Now" said Pastor Schmidt, "Now do you understand?"

The tongue is a powerful thing. James says that with his tongue a man can set "on fire the entire course of [his] life". (James 3:6)

And yet the tongue can be a powerful force for good. **Isaiah talks about the "instructed tongue"** (NIV) **"that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary."** (Isaiah 50:4)

Through your tongue you can do amazing things. You can speak words of hope, of comfort, of peace, of joy. **The instructed tongue comes when you hear and learn the Word of God;** when God's Word is there in your soul and in your mind. **Then you use the Word of God in your prayers, in worship and when you talk to others.** As you are used to having the Word of God on your tongue, **then it's ready** for the time when a friend, a neighbor or a loved one needs to hear God's Word for strength, or comfort, or encouragement.

Use your tongue

to pray for each other,
to speak words of kindness to each other,
and words of kindness about each other
and to speak words of life (through God's love in Jesus Christ) to each other.

27.9 MATTERS OF THE HEART – The 9th & 10th Commandments **You shall not covet . . .**

What this commandment forbids is **coveting, a desire for what belongs to others**, not a desire to earn good things like your neighbor's, but to have the things that belong to your neighbor. **This isn't only about things.** It also includes jealousy of his relationships, reputation, or his "lot in life."

In:

THOUGHTS

WORDS
& DEEDS

At the heart of these commandments is "contentment." What exactly is that?

Contentment means to say that with all your blessings, difficulties, joys, problems, strengths, weaknesses; and with all the friends, family, adversaries and "frienemies" in your life; and with every experience and coincidence in your life . . .

That you say with David,

"The LORD is my ... portion and my cup; You hold my lot.

**The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance."** (Psalm 16:5-6)

(It would be good to review here the worst parts of David's life.)

No matter what happens in life, **my life is joined with God.** It is unique and it is my walk with God. **I would not trade my life with anyone because it is how God has chosen to walk with me.** All the **blessings** are from God, who personally cares for me. **And God is with me through all the problems.** He hears every prayer, and nothing can “separate [me] from the love of God in Christ Jesus [my] Lord.” (Romans 8:37-39)

Notice that **contentment** does not mean that everything is going well. It **means that you have heard the words and promises of God, and you believe Him.** Jesus said, “behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20) Paul said, “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:11-13) The letter to the **Hebrews** says, “be content with what you have, for He has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not fear; what can man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5-6)

28.0 WITH GOD OR WITHOUT GOD? – The Close of the Commandments

What does God say of all these commandments?

He says this:

**I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children
to the third and fourth generation
of those who hate Me;
but showing steadfast love
to thousands
of those who love Me and keep My commandments.**

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who break these Commandments.

**Therefore, we should fear His wrath
and not do anything against them.**

But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these Commandments.

**Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him
and gladly do what He commands.**

28.01 WHO IS SHEMI?

The story starts out with David. After he was settled in Jerusalem as king for a while **David fell into temptation.** First came his sin with **Bathsheba (6th Commandment).** Then to cover it up he arranged for **Uriah** the Hittite to be killed (**5th Commandment**). Nathan rebuked him and said, “the sword will never depart from your house,” (2 Samuel 12:10 NIV) David repented and his sin was taken away, but Nathan said, “because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt” (2 Samuel 12:14 NIV) there would be **consequences**.

David's sin was revisited by his children. (2 Samuel 13) His son Amnon raped David's daughter Tamar. David let it go. His son Absalom killed Amnon. David let it go.

Then Absalom rebelled and seized Jerusalem. David had to flee. So we come to 2 Samuel 16 where David and his soldiers were riding along. **Shimei** went up on the hill next to the road. He went along cursing David and **throwing stones, dirt and filth at David** and the soldiers.

One of the soldiers offered to “go over and take off his head.” **David answered, “Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to.”** (2 Samuel 16:11)

This is not just about how **sins seem to come back generation after generation**. **Because they do we are to fight against sin** so our children and grandchildren will not have our sins visit them. That is one lesson.

This is also about **life without consequences**, which seems to be what so many want. David committed just about the perfect crime. He was rebuked, but didn’t lose his throne. He didn’t fight against the sins of his children. And life went on. He seemed to have passed right by the consequences.

But **can we live in a world without consequences?** Even if we could get away with something would that be good? Finally it all came back to David. But what if it hadn’t?

If there are no consequences, then your actions don’t matter – they make no lasting difference. Life just goes on. The world continues. But you have lost something.

If your actions don’t matter, then you don’t either. Then you would have no value, and there would be no purpose or reason to your existence. Can you endure living in such a world? (The book “Crime & Punishment” by Dostoyevski, and the movie “Gameshow” talk about this.)

David found that it was unendurable. A world without consequences would be a world without God. Those who believe we live in a world without consequences believe that there is nothing after this life, no heaven, no hell and no soul. A world without God could only end in death, darkness and nothing. To act as if there were no consequences, as if there is no God to see and look at the rightness or wrongness of our lives, is to take into our soul the idea that we are meaningless. That idea is poison to us. It would destroy us.

Given the choice, David finally has to welcome the abuse he was getting from Shimei. He must have his actions matter. Even if it means being pelted with filth. For him and for us the alternative is unthinkable. It is a perilous thing for a Christian to ignore the Commandments and live as if they do not matter any more. They are the Word of God and we have no connection with God except through His Word.

Because God does live, a life without God is a life without faith and that life can end only in being separated from God. David had looked at that world (Psalm 51); and it was horrible – unendurable. Because God does exist, a life of faith is a life of meaning and purpose.

28.02 LOOKING FORWARD

The second part of the Close of the Commandments has to do with Grace and Mercy. God promises blessings. But how do they become ours?

Is Christianity a “Get Out of Jail Free” card, where we give a nod to faith in Jesus, and then go on our way sinning without consequences, and ignoring God for the rest of our lives? (μη γενοιτο)

Or is Christianity a call by God to know Him through Jesus, and then follow Jesus in faith and worship, in acts of love and mercy, and as we follow love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands?

We hear the answer once again as we continue by studying the Creed.

FOR FURTHER READING

Luther's Treatise on Good Works

Fyodor Dostoyevski “crime and Punishment”

H. Armin Moellering Articles in the Lutheran Witness

BETWEEN CHAPTERS

The challenge is to read through Genesis 1-5

29.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 2 – Law & Gospel

The Law (2) The righteous demands of God. The Law condemns us all as sinners.

The Gospel The Message that God has given us salvation in Jesus Christ.

Commandment A command or order given by God.

Forbid To command someone not to do something.

Original Sin Adam's sin of rebellion against God that results in a sinful nature. Adam was then unable to not sin. The sinful nature is inherited so we also are unable to not sin.

Sins of the Fathers Children inherit the sins of the fathers and so are by nature both guilty of sin and sinful by nature.

Conscience The inner knowledge or feeling of right and wrong.

Civil Law Old Testament regulations governing civil life and behavior.

Moral Law Old Testament regulations concerning right and wrong.

Ceremonial Law Old Testament rules about worship.

Gentile All non-Jewish people

Statute An established rule or law. (W)

Positive Commandment A Commandment that says what to do (You shall . . .)

Negative Commandment A Commandment that says what not to do (You shall not ...)

Curb The First Use of the Law, to restrict or restrain evil impulses.

Mirror The Second Use of the Law, to show us our sinful condition in the light of God's Law.

Guide The Third Use of the Law, to guide Christians in knowing what is right and wrong.

Sinner One who sins, and so is a wrongdoer and an enemy of God.

Sins of Commission Things that we think, do, or say that break God's Commands and go against His will.

Sins of Omission Things we fail to do that we should have done because they are good and right.

SIN vs. sins SIN is the principle of sinfulness; sins are the individual things we do that are sinful. We do sins because we have SIN or are sinful.

Iniquity Unrighteousness, sin. Not properly aligned with what is right.

Trespass (1) To cross a boundary of what is right and moral. To do what you should not do and so offend against God.

Transgress To go beyond a limit and so break a command. (W)

Temporal Death The death of the body, which is physical and limited; as opposed to Eternal Death where both body and soul are condemned to hell forever.

Five Great Themes "GRACE, Faith, Prayer, Rest, and Love." Luther's pattern summarizing the 10 Commandments, and the first part of the Lord's Prayer.

Fear (1) For the Christian and the "New Man" to honor and be in awe of God.
(2) For the non-Christian and the "Old Adam" or old sinful nature to be afraid of God and His judgment.

Love (1) God's mercy and concern for mankind;
 (2) Man's proper devotion to God; (3) Care for your fellow human being.

G R A C E God's Riches At Christ's Expense. Grace is the free undeserved gift of forgiveness and salvation.

Faith To believe the Words and Promises of God. Faith is to believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior.

"After the But" In most of the Explanations of the Commandments the "but" marks the division between the negative, the things we should avoid; and the positive, the things we should do.

Idol Any false god, or thing that we worship and trust instead of the true God.

Idolatry To worship or trust in something else the way we should trust in God.

Righteous Upright, virtuous, morally right. (W) Acceptable to God.

Curse To wish for, or call for bad things to happen to someone or something.

Swear To take an oath that you are telling the truth and call on someone or something to be your witness.

Witchcraft Using ritual or sympathetic magic to steer the future. It can involve so-called mystical objects, or rituals to prompt natural forces or spirits to act.

Medium One who claims to be able to talk to the dead. It is strictly forbidden by God.

Satanic Involving the devil or powers of evil.

Supernatural Anything involving forces or beings that are not physical or natural. There are both good and evil things in this category.

Deceive To lead another to believe something that is false by your words or acts, or by not saying what you should.

Praise To say good things about God (or about another human being).

Sabbath A day of rest. We rest because God rested.

Despise To hold a thing in disrespect.

Sacred Holy, set apart for God.

Discipline To correct and train in a pattern of life; in thinking, speaking and doing.

Disciple (1) A follower, who learns from the teacher certain ways of thinking, speaking and acting.
 (2) One of the early followers of Jesus.

Submit (1) To put your needs or desires after the needs of another.
 (2) To recognize the care, protection, guidance and love that another is showing you and receive it with trust.

Embitter To make bitter or unpleasant.

Suicide To end one's own life deliberately.

Euthanasia To end the life of another person because you, or they, do not think their life is worth living.

Adultery To have sex with a person you are not married to.

Immoral Contrary to what is moral, right and good.

Perversion Morally turned or twisted; not properly proportioned; out of balance.

Impure Unclean. A thought or deed can either be unclean in itself, or it can be well intended but mixed with what is unclean.

Inheritance To receive something (usually) when someone else dies.

Covet To desire something that God has given to another person.

Contentment To be satisfied with what God has given you.

Scheme To plot or plan to do something wrong.

Entice To lead someone on with the hope of a reward. (W)

Jealous Demanding exclusive loyalty; carefully protective. (W)

Wrath Great anger; indignation; fury. (W)

CATECHISM & MEMORY VERSES – (3) The Creed (First Article)**30-a THE APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
 And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified,
 died and was buried.

 He descended into hell.
 The third day he rose again from the dead.
 He ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
 From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy Christian Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. Amen. (111)

30-b THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God,
 the Father Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth
 and of all things visible and invisible. (20)

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
 the only-begotten Son of God,
 begotten of His Father before all worlds,
 God of God, Light of Light,
 very God of very God,
 begotten, not made,
 being of one substance with the Father,
 by whom all things were made;
 who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
 and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
 and was made man;
 and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate.
 He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
 and ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of the Father.
 And He will come again with glory
 to judge both the living and the dead,
 whose kingdom will have no end. (130)

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Lord and Giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
 who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
 who spoke by the prophets.
 And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
 I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
 and I look for the resurrection of the dead
 and the life of the world to come. Amen. (75)

30-c **THE ATHANASIAN CREED**

1. Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the Christian* faith.
2. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally.
3. And the Christian* faith is this,
4. that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity,
 neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.
5. For the Father is one person,
 the Son is another,
 and the Holy Spirit is another.
6. But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one:
 the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. (# 3-6 64)
7. Such as the Father is,
 such is the Son,
 and such is the Holy Spirit:
8. the Father uncreated,
 the Son uncreated,
 the Holy Spirit uncreated;
9. the Father infinite,
 the Son infinite,
 the Holy Spirit infinite;
10. the Father eternal,
 the Son eternal,
 the Holy Spirit eternal.
11. And yet there are not three Eternals but one Eternal,
12. just as there are not three Uncreated nor three Infinites,
 but one Uncreated and one Infinite.
13. In the same way the Father is almighty,
 the Son almighty,
 the Holy Spirit almighty;
14. and yet they are not three AlUITIES but one Almighty.
15. So the Father is God,
 the Son is God,
 the Holy Spirit is God;
16. and yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

17. So the Father is Lord,
the Son is Lord,
the Holy Spirit is Lord;
18. and yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.
19. Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord,
so also are we prohibited by the Christian* religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords.
20. The Father is not made nor created nor begotten by anyone.
21. The Son is neither made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone.
22. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.
23. Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers;
one Son, not three Sons;
one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.
24. And in this Trinity
none is before or after another;
none is greater or less than another;
25. but the whole three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal,
so that in all things, as has been stated above,
the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.
(# 24-25 51)
26. Therefore, whoever desires to be saved must think thus about the Trinity.

27. But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation
that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
28. Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man;
29. He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages;
and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age:
30. perfect God and perfect man,
composed of a rational soul and human flesh;
31. equal to the Father with respect to His divinity,
less than the Father with respect to His humanity. (# 29-31 58)
32. Although He is God and man, He is not two but one Christ:
33. one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh,
but by the assumption of the humanity into God; (# 32-33 33)
34. one altogether, not by confusion of substance but by unity of person.
35. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man,
so God and man is one Christ;
36. who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day
from the dead,
37. ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty,
from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

38. At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.
39. And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into everlasting fire.
40. This is the Christian* faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

* [catholic] The ancient Text reads "the catholic faith," i.e. (that is) "the common faith" of all Christians.

30-d THE TE DEUM (A Sung Creed)

1. We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord.
All the earth now worships You, the Father everlasting.
To You all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the pow'rs therein.
To You cherubim and seraphim continually do cry;
2. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of *Sabaoth*
heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Your glory.
The glorious company of the apostles praise You.
The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise You.
3. The noble army of martyrs praise You.
The holy church throughout all the world does acknowledge You;
The Father of an infinite majesty; Your adorable, true, and only Son;
also the Holy Ghost, the comforter.
4. You are the king of glory, O Christ;
You are the everlasting Son of the Father.
5. When You took upon Yourself to deliver man,
You humbled Yourself to be born of a virgin.
When You had overcome the sharpness of death,
You opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
6. You sit at the right hand of God
in the glory of the Father.
We believe that You will come
to be our judge.
7. We therefore pray You to help Your servants,
whom You have redeemed with Your precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with Your saints
in glory everlasting.
8. O Lord save Your people and bless You heritage.
Govern them and lift them up forever.
Day by day we magnify You.
And we worship Your name forever and ever.
9. Grant, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let Your mercy be upon us, as our trust is in You.
O Lord, in You have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

THE CREED**30-e THE FIRST ARTICLE: CREATION**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still (takes care of / preserves) them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life;

He defends me against all danger, and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does (only / purely) out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me.

For all of this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true. (144)

30-f **Genesis 1:26-28, 31** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

So God created man in His own image,
in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.

And God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. . . ."

God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.
(104)

30-g **1 John 3:1-3** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (NIV) (93)

30-h **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (25)

30-i **Matthew 6:24-34** 24. "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Money. (35)

25. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more important than clothing? 26. Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27. And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? (89)

28. "And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29. yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his splendor was not arrayed like one of these. 30. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (71)

31. Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32. For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (57)

34. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (22)

CHAPTER 3 – CREATION (The First Article)

Small Catechism, Questions # 86 - 113

30. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

You have been created in God's image. That means you were made to walk with God, to know Him as a friend, and to live forever.

31. THE PURPOSE OF A CREED ((Small Catechism Questions # 86-92))

A Creed is a statement of belief. In Church history and practice it serves a number of functions:

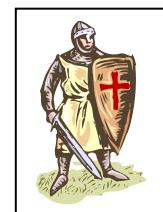
1) **Like a flag** on a battlefield it calls us together so we can strengthen each other. Christians in America, Africa and China say "I believe" and they tell the world they believe the same thing. Christians in 400 A.D., and Christians now, and Christians not yet born join in believing the same thing.



2) **As a pattern for teaching** it serves by bringing together in one place what we believe.



3) **As a shield** it serves by helping us sort out what really is Biblical and Christian and what is not. So it defends against errors.



4) **It helps us witness** to our faith. For example: Alan, a deaf man was in the "Deaf Bass Angler's Association" in Indianapolis. At their Christmas Banquet others were standing up to tell stories. He got up and signed "This is the Feast." They asked him to sign something else, so he signed the Nicene Creed. Some of the deaf people there asked him to do a Bible study in their area. One thing led to another and now there are 11 Bible studies that have continued and he went through the Deaf Institute of Theology and became a pastor.



31.1 THE THREE GENERAL CREEDS

There are three Creeds that are generally accepted by denominations around the world:

1) **The Apostles' Creed** is probably the earliest – used by the early Church at baptisms and when receiving new believers into membership.

2) **The Nicene Creed** was written beginning in 315 AD at the Council of Nicea; in response to a group called the Arians who questioned whether Jesus truly is God. It was completed in 378 AD answering another group who questioned whether the Holy Spirit truly is God.

3) **The Athanasian Creed** was written later on, answering questions about the Trinity and about how to describe that Jesus is both God and Man.

4) In addition, **the "Te Deum"** (TLH pp. 35-37; LW Hymn # 8; LSB pp. 223-225) is sometimes called the 4th Creed or the Sung Creed.

32. THE FIRST ARTICLE ((Small Catechism Questions # 97 – 98))

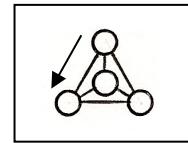
We begin with the beginning of the Apostles' Creed:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

32.1 THE NAME "FATHER" ((Small Catechism Question # 96))

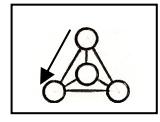
God the Father is Father in three ways:

1. **Within the Trinity** – He is the Father of Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God.
2. In His relationship to all mankind and **all creation** – He created all mankind; and all look to Him for their daily needs.
3. In His relationship to me and all Christians – He is **my Father through Jesus Christ**. (Jesus said to her, " . . . go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.'" (John 20:17))

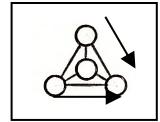


IN SOME MORE DETAIL:

1) God the Father is **the "Fountainhead" of the Trinity**. God the Son, Jesus Christ, is begotten of the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from Father and Son.



There never was a time when the Father was alone. Jesus Christ, God the Son, is eternally begotten; and the Holy Spirit is eternally proceeding.



2) Please notice: there is **tremendous joy within God as He creates and brings forth life!** (*This is the part of this unit that I want to impress on you most of all.*) **God loves life! and rejoices in giving life!**

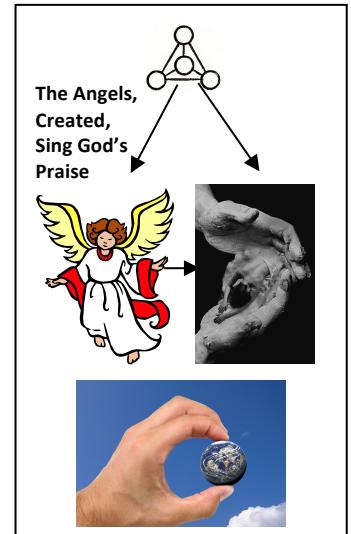
It is part of the character of God the Father – this rejoicing in bringing forth life. There is **celebration within the Trinity**. Proverbs 8:22-31 talks about Wisdom sharing in the work of creation. Wisdom in this passage is very likely a word for the Second Person of the Trinity, **God the Son**. In vv. 30-31 Wisdom says, "*then I was beside Him, like a master workman, and I was daily filled with delight, rejoicing before Him always, rejoicing in His inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.*" By the way, the Hebrew word for "rejoicing" is also used for celebrating, playing, gamboling (what lambs do when they jump and run around the pasture), and dancing. There is a song titled "Lord of the Dance," that starts out, "I danced in the morning when the world was begun . . ." and then goes on to tell the story of salvation.

The angels were created; and once they are created they also join in the celebration! In Job 38:4-7 God asks Job, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the world? . . . when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Read more about the Father's relationship with all creation in:

Psalm 147:9

Psalm 104:(1-26)27-30.



Read more about the Father's relationship with all mankind in:

Malachi 2:10

Acts 17:26

Ephesians 3:14-15

As our heavenly Father He hears the prayers of the needy, of widows and orphans:

Psalm 10:16-18

Psalm 68:5-6

Psalm 146:8-9

When God answers our prayers in times of need He gives "**First Article**" **blessings**. But He is calling us into a deeper relationship – to know Him in Jesus Christ and live forever. All too often people will stop with an answer to prayer in their time of need, say that they have all they need from God, and ignore that He is calling them to know Him through Jesus Christ, the Savior.

3) **Through Jesus' death and resurrection** God brings us into His family. We have a relationship that can only come through Jesus. **We are adopted** (John 20:17). Jesus invites us to pray "Father . . ." Paul calls all Christians "sons of God" (patterned after who Jesus is) no matter whether we are men or women, boys or girls. (See Romans 8:14-17, 19-21, 29 and Galatians 4:4-7)

In the **Parable of the Prodigal Son**, Jesus gives us a picture of just how much is involved, "And [the father] said to [the older brother], 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.'" These are amazing things and we will explore them more when we get to the Lord's Prayer where we say "Our Father who art in heaven . . ."

32.2 THE CHARACTERISTICS OR ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

((Small Catechism Questions # 93 – 95))

Our Small Catechism describes God in the following ways (Question # 93). God is:

- A. **Spirit** (a personal being without a body)
- B. **Eternal** (without beginning and without end)
- C. **Unchangeable**
- D. **Almighty**, all-powerful (omnipotent)
- E. **All-knowing** (omniscient)
- F. **Present everywhere** (omnipresent)
- G. **Holy** (sinless and hating sin)

- H. **Just** (fair and impartial)
- I. **Faithful** (keeping His promises)
- J. **Good** (kind, desiring our welfare)
- K. **Merciful** (full of pity)
- L. **Gracious** (showing undeserved kindness, forgiving)
- M. **Love**

33. THE ACTS OF GOD

CREATION ((Small Catechism Questions # 97 – 98))

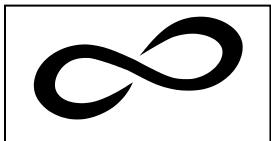
We believe that God is the Creator.

**He has (a) made the universe
(b) out of nothing,
(c) simply by His word.**



The universe **began** at God's command. In fact theologians talk about God beginning **time**. (You might hear one of them explain: *"There was no 'before' before the world began. God is not a being within time. He created the very thing we call time."*)

We actually included that idea in a prayer: *"Blessed are you, Maker of all that exists. Blessed are you, who have given us space and time to live in."* (Worship Supplement, CPH, 1969, p. 65)



God is not bound to time. We wonder about the future. The Bible says the angels wonder about the future too (1 Peter 1:10-12 talks about, ". . . things into which angels long to look.") God does not wonder about or hope for the future. He sees it, present tense, right now.

Note: Thinking and talking about creation will almost always involve talking about "good and evil". It works well to do this while we are talking about angels. Human beings are a mixture – Christians do sin, and unbelievers do acts of "civil righteousness." But the angels are either purely good (the heavenly angels) or purely evil (the fallen angels). They are created beings like us, so studying them can help us to understand what good and evil are for us.

33.1 GOD CREATED THE ANGELS ((Read through: Small Catechism Questions # 99 – 100))

There are a multitude of **good angels**. They are created beings, who are powerful as God gives them power to defend us and fight against evil.

They love to **worship** God (Isaiah 6:1-3) and they **sang God's praises** as God created the world. They were involved in **celebrating Jesus' birth** (Luke 2:8-14); and **strengthened Jesus** after His forty days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness (Mark 1:13). An angel ministered to Jesus in **Gethsemane** where He prayed before He was arrested (Luke 22:43). They were there **on Easter, announcing His resurrection** to the women; and appeared to the Disciples **after Jesus ascended** into heaven.



When Jesus returns **an angel will sound a trumpet to announce his coming** and then the angels **will gather Christians** from all over the world (Matthew 24:31). Their song of praise in heaven includes celebrating our salvation (Revelation 5:8-13). In Luke 15:3-10 Jesus talked about the joy among the angels over a sinner who repents.



The angels gladly serve both God and His Christians. So they **watch over us**. An angel **prepared food for Elijah** (1 Kings 19:4-8); another **freed Peter** from prison (Acts 12:6-11); and angels regularly **help and defend Christians** without us being aware of them. There is a special honor given the angels who are **watching over little children** (Matthew 18:10). And Jesus talks about angels **carrying the souls of the faithful to heaven**. (Luke 16:22)

The word angel in both Greek and Hebrew means **messenger**, so the angels serve a whole lot as messengers, bringing God's word to His people.

There are different **orders of angels**, namely:

1. **Angels**

2. **Archangels** (chief angels) – we know the names of two of them:

Michael is mentioned in Daniel 10, 12, Jude 9, and Revelation 20 most of the time talking about the end of the world.

Gabriel in Daniel 8 & 9 showed him the future and in Luke 1 was sent to Zechariah and Mary to announce the births of John the Baptist and Jesus.

(There is also the fallen archangel Lucifer or **Satan**.)

3. **Cherubim** are angels who have special duties around God's throne, and other special assignments.

4. **Seraphim** – the root word "*Saraph*" means fiery or blazing, so "Seraphim" in Hebrew looks like "fiery angels" or "blazing angels".

33.2 THE DEVIL & DEMONS

The devil is also **created**. That means he is **limited**. He started out good but **turned away through pride and rebelled against God**. Revelation 12:7-9 talks about the devil's war of rebellion and how he was thrown down. We find out more details in Ezekiel 28:12-19. In the middle of prophecies against the city of Tyre and its king, the language shifts to talking about someone who **was in Eden**. We are told of one who **was full of wisdom and beauty**, in Eden, walking among the stones of fire, and anointed as a **guardian Cherub**. But he was **filled with pride**; proud because of his own wisdom and splendor. In v. 2 God says, "your heart is proud, and you have said, 'I am a god.'"



Contrast the devil's pride with Hebrews 1:14, where it says that the angels are "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation"; and even with **Jesus' attitude**, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28, Mark 10:42-45); or **Jesus' actions** on Maundy Thursday (John 13:3, 12 – 14).



The words, acts and attitudes of Jesus are offensive **to those who love their own glory**, because they believe they are better than others and should be served. But God chose that Jesus would come to serve and to save us. And God chose to do this before the world was created. In 1 Corinthians 2:7 Paul talks about "a secret and hidden **wisdom of God**, which God decreed **before the ages** for our glory."

So the devil rebelled and has been thrown down. On Judgment day the one who walked among the fiery stones will be destroyed in fire. Ezekiel 28:18 has an ironic twist to the language as God talks about judging the devil, "so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you." Such is the end of all the devil's pride and grabbing for glory.

Who would you rather spend eternity with? Obviously with **Jesus** who said, "But I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22:27) We will study more about this theme of serving when we get to the Lord's Prayer, Second Petition, "Thy Kingdom come."

(Those angels who joined the devil are called **demons**. Since they are created beings their power is **limited**. They do not know the future. They are not able to be everywhere. And they know they are doomed. As God gives power to the angels, they overcome the demons. As God watches over us we can trust in His power and not worry about the demons; simply walk with God.)

33.3 GOD CREATED YOU

((Small Catechism Questions # 108-113))

(First Article & Explanation – Paragraph 1)

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still ((takes care of / preserves)) them.



This is a personal thing. God knew you before the world was created. He formed you within your mother and made you as you are (body and soul, eyes, ears, and everything else). And he has done well making you.

Part of the First Article is to know that **God has made you as you are**. You are a work of art, made well by the greatest artist and craftsman ever. Yes, you have weaknesses and sin but God chose to create you and give you life. That you are created as a boy or a girl, if you have big feet a small nose, brown or blue eyes, and so on is a part of God's plan. The same is true of your mind: how you learn and think, what things you are naturally good at and what you have to work hard to do. This is all part of how God decided to fill His world and His family with unique, one of a kind people.

Even our weaknesses are given to us for a purpose. They are there so we can endure them, and grow in Christian patience and faith. In this life God uses them to show our faith to the world. On Judgment Day He will open up the mystery of how all of that worked together to do good things through us and for others.

God has given you a soul and **you are designed to know God**. He has made you so you know that there is a God, so you can talk to Him in prayer, and so you can know right and wrong.

Note: Sections 33.4 & 33.6 deal with ideas that contradict Christian teaching. It is important for us to know what we are facing in this world.

33.4 There are a number of ideas and teachings that deny that you are personally and amazingly made by God. **BE WARNED!**

(1) **Some teach that life is an accident** so they say that you are an accident of nature with no meaning or purpose for your life; and the only thing that matters is worldly pleasure.

(2) **Some believe that** life is simply full of problems and **there is no reason for joy or happiness.**



(3) **Some believe that** being male or female is not a gift given by God so you should feel free to be romantic with whichever gender you want and maybe even change your gender.



(4) **Some believe that** life is an accident so you should **feel free to get rid of an unborn baby** if it is defective or inconvenient, or use the extra embryos for experiments.

→ Each of these ideas deny the First Article of the Creed. Because they deny that you are made by God they disconnect you from God, and from knowing that there is a meaning and purpose to your life.

33.5 **SOME OTHER DETAILS ABOUT CREATION**

Because we are committed to accept the Bible as it is written the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod teaches that the world was created as Genesis 1-2 describes. That means:

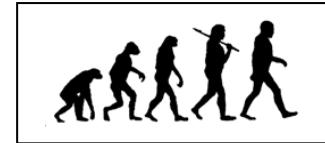
(1) God did all that work in 6 days

- (2) Living things reproduce within their kinds. Yes, viruses and bacteria do mutate (constantly); and yes farmers and scientists are able to manipulate the genetic code. But still, living things reproduce within their kinds.
- (3) Adam was formed out of the dust of the ground, and Eve formed out of the rib God took from Adam. Adam & Eve were not the end result of a long process of mutation and natural selection.

33.6 EVOLUTION

There is a difference between Evolution as a Scientific Theory and Evolution as a “World View” or “Philosophy”.

They need to be handled in very different ways.



- (A) **EVOLUTION AS A SCIENTIFIC THEORY** has to stand or fall on the basis of the evidence.

- (1) There are a lot of **problems with the evidence** that was supposed to conclusively support evolution. The Fossil Record does not show all of the transitional in-between fossils there were supposed to be. There have been frauds such as the Piltdown man. And there was a famous study of moths in Britain. As pollution increased, we were told, the moths took on a darker coloring so they would blend in



better as they settled on the trunks of trees. But those particular moths are nocturnal. They do not come out during the day, only at night. Second, they do not settle on tree trunks. Their habits are completely different. They had to be pinned in place to get the pictures. But the pictures keep being published in textbooks as part of the proof of evolution. There is certainly reason for asking questions.

PILTDOWN MAN

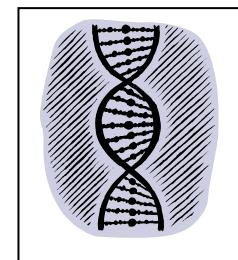


Human Skull
+ Ape Jawbone
+ File Down to Fit
= “Proof of Evolution”

- (2) Rent and watch **the movie "Expelled"** by Ben Stein (or buy the book) to get an idea of how welcome questions about evolution are in schools and colleges. Also the video “The Triumph of Design and the Demise of Darwin” is an excellent summary of the current state of the debate. (available at Cashill.com)

- (3) I recommend for you to read, **"Darwin's Black Box" by Michael Behe**. It's a detailed analysis of the difficulties of evolutionary theory **at the cellular level** and the problems associated with the development of organs and various systems within the body, like vision or blood clotting.

Behe talks about **"Intelligent Design Theory."** This idea has been badly misunderstood both by those who argue for evolution and by those who argue against it. Intelligent Design Theory does not say that a complex object with many parts is proof of an intelligent maker simply by being complex. There are many complex things that have come about naturally.



Instead the idea is to look at complex structures and analyze them. How **many parts had to be put into place simultaneously** (at the same time) for the thing to work. Michael Behe suggests thinking it through backwards, like this. How many parts could be removed from a thing until it would no longer function? You can think that through with a watch. You could take away the watchband, the cover over the hands, and a number of little parts inside. But you will get to a place where, if you take away one more part it will stop working. That is it's "point of irreducible complexity."

You could think the same way about the human body. You could take away the appendix, the tonsils, and a number of other parts. But again you will get to its "point of irreducible complexity."

The point of irreducible complexity tells a lot, because all the parts had to come together at once. The more complex that point is, the more likely there is an intelligence behind its design. The less complex that point is, the less likely there is an intelligence behind it.

But proofs are difficult things. Scientific theories come and go. They change from year to year. Evidence gets interpreted in different ways. Still, Evolution is a theory and as a Scientific Theory it will eventually be sorted out.

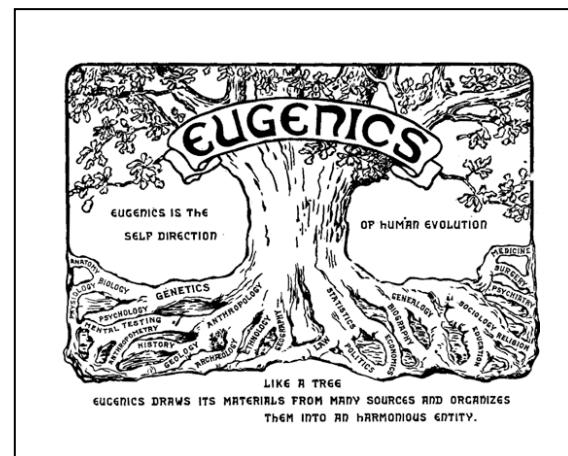
((Read through: Small Catechism Questions # 104 – 105))

(B) **EVOLUTION THE PHILOSOPHY**

While Evolution the Scientific Theory is the subject of arguments . . . ;

Evolution the Philosophy is right now leading to terrible consequences. When Charles Darwin published his theory Karl Marx hailed it as the scientific justification for what he wanted to do. Soon “Eugenics Societies” formed, including the American Eugenics Society. They wanted to encourage the “right” people to have children and prevent the “wrong ones” from passing on their “bad genes.” They targeted the poor, the darker races, the deaf, and other disabled people.

One of their posters is printed here. Another one reads "ONLY HEALTHY SEED MUST BE SOWN! Check the Seeds of Hereditary Disease and Unfitness by Eugenics."



Eugenics has been part of the horrors of Nazi Germany, and of Communism. The American Eugenics Society was involved in the forming of Planned Parenthood. Groups that seek to fight birth defects through abortion are following the Eugenics idea.

(Look up “Eugenics” and find out what it is.)

The **World View of Evolution** is “the survival of the fittest.” It means to look at yourself and others as simply accidents of nature. Some are stronger and better, some are weaker and less worthy. That thinking says the stronger should survive – in order to improve the species – and the weak should die off – also to improve the species.

So here’s the **question**: Who determines who is stronger and better; or who is weak and unworthy? (**Answer**): Why the strong, of course.

Then, **those who believe they are the better and more worthy** believe that they have a right to use or get rid of the others. This is an evil idea but it is seductive to many. Surely, it couldn’t catch on!

Actually, **the World View of Evolution has worked its way into our culture**. You can see in the way people act toward each other:

- (1) If all life came about by chance – there is **no meaning** at all to your existence, except to be strong and survive – at the expense of others if you need to. So we have seen a cheapening of life; and an increase of despair; suicides; and murders among our young people.
- (2) If being the strongest is the most important thing; and since you improve the species by weeding out the weak – go ahead and **be cruel** to those who are weaker (it would be best if they did not survive anyway).
Many talk about a coarsening of our culture. We have seen an increase in cruelty, and more rude and self-centered behavior. Do parents teach children to do what is right or to stand up for themselves? To be polite or to talk back?
- (3) If anything prevents you from being strong and surviving it is a weakness. So **ignore morality** of almost any kind and forget about being kind except when you get something out of it. And why would you care for people of other nations or "races"?

Among **the groups that have taught "Evolution the Philosophy"** are: the Nazis; Communists; and the Eugenics movement. The Eugenicists were scientists, politicians and others who believed it was right for a country to sterilize the less intelligent or weaker. (And of course they, the Eugenicists, got to decide who those were).

Can the Scientific Theory of Evolution be kept separate from the World View of Evolution? Not always, and maybe not ever. Many people do try to believe the Theory and avoid the Philosophy. But when the World View gains control it brings cruelty and suffering, sometimes on an astonishing scale.

This has become one of the great challenges to the Christian faith.
How do we respond?

As Christians we teach something completely different. We teach about mercy and kindness.

We teach that every human being is **created by God** and is **treasured by God**. Part of the reason we are to treat others with kindness is simply because that is how God looks at them. Mercy is part of the character of God, and we are created in the image of God. So we seek to learn mercy and kindness. We want to grow in those things and that is a part of our worship of God.



Jesus said, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father . . ." (Matthew 18:10) On Judgment Day He will say, "as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40, and v. 45) Through Isaiah God uses the example of a



mother and her child to give us a picture of mercy "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?" (Isaiah 49:15) One of the strongest examples of mercy is the care of a mother for the baby within her womb. But even this example falls far short of the mercy of God. "Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold I have engraved you on the palms of My hands . . ." (Isaiah 49:15-16)

Mercy means to care for the young, the old, the weak and the helpless. Again, this is **what God does**. The greatest and highest goal we can strive for is to be (as Jesus says) "sons of your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:45) Read Matthew 5:43-48.

A life spent in caring for those who are weaker is worthwhile. With the idea of mercy everything changes. Think through the following situations and ask how different they look – seeing them through the idea of "Survival of the Fittest" or through the idea of "Mercy":

1. A husband who spends most of his time caring for a wife with Alzheimer's who no longer remembers him.
2. A mother who is told that her child will be developmentally disabled, and she will have to care for him the rest of her life.
3. A fireman who has several very young children risking his life to save an elderly person who will probably die in a few months or years.
4. A young person who has plans to go on a very special date but something happens and her mother says, "I'm sorry but I need you to sit with your grandma tonight."
5. Instead of having a job that earns a lot more money, choosing instead to work in a nursing home.

Each of these examples confront us with the idea that mercy is something so important that the opportunity to **show mercy may be the most important thing that we can possibly do with our lives**. Seen through the perspective of "survival of the fittest," the things that Christians do in showing mercy make no sense at all. But if we believe that Mercy is a character deep within the nature of God, then the whole world looks different, and they all make sense – **because of who God is**. This is the witness we hold up before the world. It is something that touches deep within the soul. And finally the

idea of **Mercy points us to Jesus and to the cross** as the place of mercy for all mankind and the one place where everything begins to make sense.

Sometime in the next few years you will face a decision whether to turn away from somebody or to show mercy. **What I want for you is:** when that happens I want for this idea of mercy to be there in your mind; and for you to be thinking "**this matters. In fact it might be the most important thing I can do** with my life this whole year."

35. **PRESERVATION**

God "Preserves" us. **Every breath, every heartbeat, and every nerve impulse in your brain** is sustained by God.

Jesus said: ". . . **The very hairs of your head are all numbered.**" In the Middle Ages Christian theologians made a great deal of this. They talked about God being able to pay individual attention to every part of His creation. In our words God sustains every atom individually. We can look at the words of Jesus and say: God doesn't only know how many hairs you have on your head; He also sustains each one of them, individually cares for each one, and knows the future of each one. He cares so thorough for every part of His creation that we can find amazing comfort in His love.



Psalm 139 says: "Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, You know it altogether." (Ps. 139:4) God doesn't only know what you say, think and feel. He knows parts of our souls that are too deep for us to even realize ourselves. By the way He knows what you will be thinking and feeling next Tuesday evening at 7:17 and 33 seconds. The attention He focuses on us is so detailed that it would be terrifying if He was not also our loving God.

A Basic Truth: Without God constantly preserving and sustaining us we would not continue to live, not even for an instant.

35.1 **BLESSINGS -- PART 1**

(First Article Explanation - Paragraph 2)

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life;



DIRECT AND MEDIATED BLESSINGS

This is a helpful idea. Some of our blessings come from the hand of God with no other human being involved in bringing them to us. Other blessings are mediated, given through our fellow man. We are to realize that we receive blessings from God, but also from God through others, and appreciate what they do to help us.

DIRECT BLESSINGS

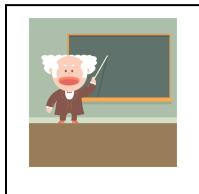
Examples of direct blessings are: Sun and rain (Matthew 5:45); life and breath (Job 12:10). They are fairly easy to focus on and to thank God for them.



MEDIATED BLESSINGS

The idea of mediated blessings leads to some fascinating thoughts. Let's follow just one.

The blessing of school is given by:



- Teachers,
- Parents (who pay fees and help with homework),
- The principal,
- Textbook publishers,
- Lumber companies (paper for the books),
- The custodian (who keeps things clean),
- Cafeteria workers (along with farmers, seed corn companies, John Deere factory workers, grocery stores, river barge workers),
- City street workers (who go out in the middle of winter when there is a water leak and stand in freezing water digging and fixing the pipes),



And the list goes on almost without end.

How many do we fail to appreciate as they work together with God to bring us our blessings?

35.2 BLESSINGS -- PART 2

TURNING BLESSINGS INTO CURSES AND CURSES INTO BLESSINGS

It's a simple idea. All of life is filled with blessings and difficulties. They are measured out by God. He balances them so we will grow in faith.



But we **misuse blessings**. **Adam and Eve** used the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the wrong way and turned it into a curse. It didn't have to be that way. But we all suffer the consequences. **David** misused the kingship, using it to sin with Bathsheba. The consequences harmed his family for generations. Turning blessings into curses is a thing we want to avoid.

The other side is **learning how to turn curses into blessings**. Trouble, suffering or temptations come along. If we use them as a reason to go to God in prayer, read our Bible, and worship so that we grow in faith; then we have turned a curse into a blessing. In the same way, if we use trouble, suffering or temptation as an opportunity to tell about Jesus, show our faith and help others then we have turned a curse into a blessing. For example: **Joseph's brothers** sold him into slavery (definitely a curse). He remained faithful, learned some humility, was eventually appointed 2nd in command in Egypt, and saved his whole family.



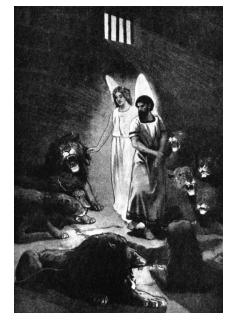
((Review and discuss the story of Joseph and his brothers for specific examples of turning blessings to curses and curses to blessings.))

36. PROTECTION FROM EVIL

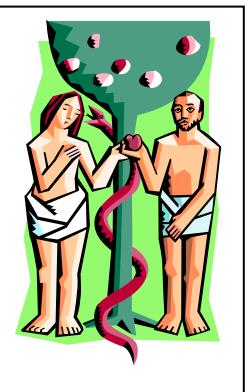
(First Article Explanation – Paragraph 3)

He defends me against all danger, and guards and protects me from all evil.

In the Large Catechism Luther asks, "what is the devil? Nothing else than what the Scripture calls him, a liar and a murderer. He is a liar who seduces the heart away from God's Word and blinds it, so that you become insensitive to your need and unable to come to Christ. He is a murderer who begrudges you every hour of your life. If you could see how many of his knives, spears, and arrows are aimed at you every moment, you would be glad to come to the Sacrament as often as you can. The one reason why we go about so heedlessly in our false sense of security is that we do not admit or believe that we are living in the flesh, in this world, and in the devil's domain." (Luther's Large Catechism; A contemporary Translation with Study Questions, F. Samuel Janzow, Copyright (c) 1978 Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, pp. 120-1)



What benefit would the devil get from you suffering in hell? None at all. So why would he want that? Simply for the pleasure of having you suffer and be separated from God forever. While he tempts and pretends to offer good things, this is the real nature of evil. Understand this and be on your guard. Luther is right, he is a murderer.

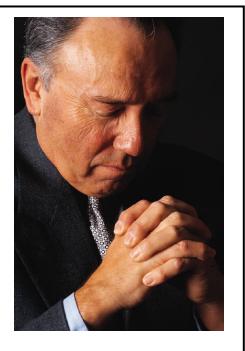


Along with the devil we have a couple of **other enemies**.

The world around us continues to rebel against God. It brings the consequences of rebellion into our lives. **Our own sinful nature** fights against us having faith.

So what do we do?

God invites us to come to Him in prayer and faith. We call out to God in our troubles and He answers. Psalm 50:15 (NIV) says, "call on Me in the day of trouble; I will rescue you and you will praise Me." But God watches over us even when we do not know it. He defends us against dangers we never see. And He does this simply because He is our Father, not because we deserve it, or have earned it, or have asked in the right way. He even "makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45)



What do we make of all this?

Because there will be trouble in this life stay close to God. He is the one who is strong enough to protect you and has promised that He cares. Don't wait until you are in the middle of trouble. And when you face trouble, temptation or evil focus on the things of God.

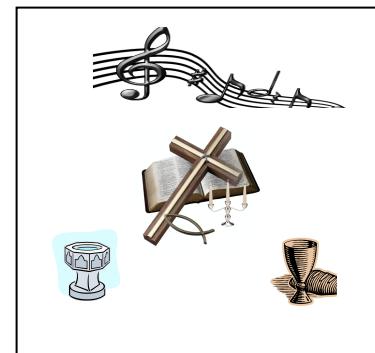
There are **practical sayings** that have been passed down for centuries. They tell us over and over again to stay close to the things of God.

(1) ***Idle hands are the devil's workshop.*** When you face temptation get busy doing the things God has given you to do.



(2) ***The best cure for depression is being with people or doing things for other people.*** God has created us to be with others (that's why we are born into families) and to care for each other.

(3) More than anything else, ***when you are troubled by sin, doubts, temptations and the devil stay close to the things of God.*** Remember, we have a "Means of Grace" theology. God promises to meet us and come to us through certain "means." Use those things. Fill your heart and soul with God's Word. Read, speak and pray the Word of God. Come to Church and sing the Word of God. It will do its work. Sing a good Christian song (*with Scripture in it*) at the devil. Joy and gladness come from God so songs of worship are especially terrifying to the devil. Remember your Baptism. After you are confirmed do not forget to come to the Lord's Supper. God will do His work through His "Means of Grace."



37. FOR ALL THESE BLESSINGS

((Small Catechism Questions # 101 – 103))

(First Article Explanation - Paragraphs 4-6)

All this He does ((only / purely)) out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me.

For all of this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

Read Genesis 1:26-28, 31. (In fact read all of Genesis 1.) Read also Genesis 2:7.

How is the creation of mankind different from the creation of the plants and animals?

Two ways:

- 1) God **created** Adam **directly**; with the plants and animals God said, "Let the earth bring forth . . . "
- 2) Adam & Eve were created, "**In the image of God.**"

38. **THE IMAGE OF GOD** ((Small Catechism Questions # 106 – 107))

*So God created man in His own image,
In the image of God He created him;
Male and female He created them.* (Genesis 1:27)

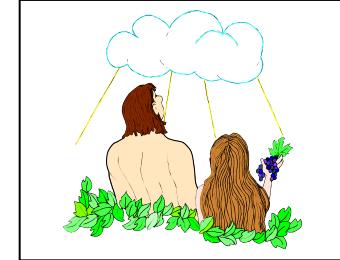
Adam & Eve were created in the Image of God.

The Small Catechism, Question # 106 says:

What was the image of God?

"The image of God was this:

- A. Adam and Eve truly knew God as He wishes to be known and were perfectly happy in Him.**
- B. They were righteous and holy, doing God's will.**



Remember these two points. We will talk about others but these are the basic 2.

Being created in the image of God was **not only being sinless** but **also** a matter of their **relationship with God**.

38.1 **ADDITIONAL IDEAS THAT ARE PART OF THE “IMAGE OF GOD”**

The image of God also includes:

(1) **Language** – Animals do not have language. What communication they do have is of basic needs and desires. Your dog does not talk with you about the injustice of ignoring him when he has to go out; instead he might whine, walk around in circles and scratch at the door. Concepts such as justice, injustice, ethics, morality, etc. are not part of his created pattern.



(2) **Creativity** – Human beings create in numerous ways: music, literature (whole worlds out of an author's imagination); crafts; buildings of steel, masonry, & wood; inventions; etc.

(3) **Work** – Were Adam and Eve first given work to do before or after they fell into sin? Read Genesis 2:15, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to _____ it and _____ it." For us to work is part of the image of God and actually is a part of God's blessings to us.



(4) **Worship** – The Sabbath day was created so that we could pattern our lives according to our relationship with God.

(5) **Stewardship for the world** – God gave mankind dominion over the earth. We are to be stewards of the creation; to manage things wisely and to worship God through our stewardship of His creation.



(6) **Relationships** – We were created to be within families and societies. The very fact that we are created to be within relationships mirrors the Triune Nature of God. Our fellow men have also been created by God and He cares for them.

Part of the image of God is to care for one another in the relationships God has given us; parents & children; husbands and wives; neighbors; those in need; and even those who have done wrong.



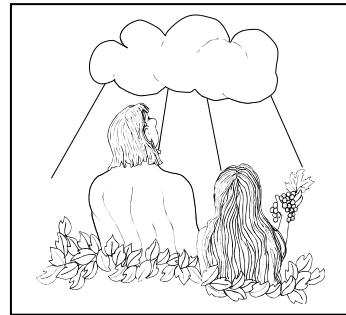
(7) **Morality** – We talk about right and wrong. The constant refrain of children, and also of hardened criminals is "it's not fair." Children show us that the idea of morality, of right and wrong is within us from our birth. Hardened criminals illustrate that no matter how we try to get away from the idea of morality, it is still within us and will be until we die.

(8) There are many, many more aspects to this.

I recommend to you the book "**Ten Philosophical Mistakes**" by **Mortimer Adler**. He analyzes how much of our contemporary language about animals blurs some very profound differences between animals and human beings. That blurring leads to the impression that animals think and reason much the same as we do, and that we are just really smart animals. "Not so!" says Mortimer Adler.

38.2 THE IMAGE OF GOD – A FAR REACHING IDEA

Each person around you carries within them the image of God, because they are created "in the image of God." We are to honor the image of God within each other, and treat each other with an awareness of that image. What does that mean?



James 3:8-10 says, "But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, who are made in the likeness of God. . . . My brothers, these things ought not to be so."

I teach my children that when they call each other names, then they are **calling names** of someone who is in the image of God. So even if they are unaware of it they are calling God those names.

When we **treat each other poorly** we are doing these things to the image of God within each other. (Jesus said whatever we do to the least of His brothers we do to Him. Matthew 25:40, 45)

This is also part of the reason **the prophets** in the Old Testament were offended by **social injustice** in their days. Because how we treat those who have been made in the image of God is part of our respect or lack of respect for God. It cannot be separated from our worship life.

With that awareness, **how should a young man treat a young lady** when they are out on a date? Should he try to take advantage of her or pressure her into immorality?



How should husbands and wives treat each other?

How should we treat **our enemies?** criminals? terrorists? Very often the punishment for evil remains the same. But it is carried out with an understanding of a deep tragedy. Someone created in the image of God has done evil and so have defiled the image of God within themselves. They have made themselves what God does not want them to be and are in danger of being separated from Him forever.

They need the Savior, Jesus Christ!

BETWEEN CHAPTERS: The challenge is to read through the Gospel of John

39.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 3 – Creation

Creed A statement of belief that is shared by many or all Christians.

Confess (1) To publicly speak what you believe.

Nicene Creed The confession of the Council at Nicea in 325 AD, that confessed that Jesus Christ is truly God. The Third Article of the Nicene Creed, completed at the council of Constantinople in 378 AD, confessed that the Holy Spirit is truly God.

Athanasian Creed Named for Athanasius who was prominent during and after the Council at Nicea, the Athanasian Creed explains in more detail the teachings about the Trinity and how Jesus is both God and Man.

Te Deum Latin for "[We praise] You, O God." Ancient Hymn of Praise sung in Matins. (SC) It is sometimes called the Sung Creed.

Creator God as the Creator made the world out of nothing.

Creation (1) The act of making something out of nothing, as only God can do.
(2) Everything that has been made, in both earth and heaven.
(3) Human craftsmanship, to make things that exist into something new.

All Creatures All living things that have been created by God – this includes the angels, who are not physical but spiritual creatures.

All Things Visible and Invisible Visible things are everything in this world. Invisible things are the things in heaven.

Heaven The Bible uses "heaven" in 4 senses:

- (1) The Sky – the birds fly through the heavens;
- (2) Space, where the sun, moon and stars are – the stars of the heavens;
- (3) Heaven, where the angels are and where Christians go when the die;
- (4) The dwelling place of God, the heaven above the heavens where no angel can approach (1 Kings 8:27 "Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You ...")

Attribute A property or characteristic that can be used to describe God.

Eternal Without beginning or end, always existing.

Omnipotent All-powerful.

Omniscient All-knowing.

Omnipresent Present everywhere.

Holy Without sin.

Faithful Keeping promises.

Merciful Compassionate, not wanting to punish.

Soul (1) The immortal or spiritual part of a person.
(2) The rational part of a man.

Evolution The belief that different kinds of plants and animals slowly and naturally came from other, simpler forms of life; and then that human beings slowly emerged from simpler animals.

Angel A spirit or spiritual being sent by God to do His will, or bring a message to a human being, or guard and protect His people. Angels are usually invisible.

Heavenly Host The complete multitude of angels. God is called "Lord God of *Sabaoth*." *Sabaoth* is often translated "hosts." It could just as easily be translated "Angel armies."

Demon An evil spirit, a fallen angel who turned away from God and rebelled.

Devil Sometimes another word for demon. The devil is Satan, the leader of the demons' rebellion against God.

Image of God Adam and Eve were created in the image of God. It means that they were like God in certain ways -- reasoning, moral and good.

Preserve To protect and keep from harm.

Preservation God's work of protecting and keeping us, sustaining our lives and our souls.

Direct Blessings Blessings that come from God without other human beings being involved.

Mediated Blessings Blessings that come to us from God but through other human beings.

CATECHISM & MEMORY VERSES – (4) The Creed (Second Article)

40-a THE SECOND ARTICLE: REDEMPTION

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified,
 died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. (71)

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity,
 and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord,

Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and
 won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not
 with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His
 innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him
 in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true. (113)

40-b Genesis 3:14-15 God said to the serpent, ". . . I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and hers; He will crush your head*, and you will strike His heel." (31)

* (from the Hebrew)

40-c John 1:1-5,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it. . .

.
 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His
 glory, glory as of the only begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and
 truth. (95)

40-d **Galatians 4:4-5** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (36)

40-e **John 15:13-14** "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. You are My friends . . ." (20)

40-f **Acts 4:12** "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (24)

40-g **John 8:58** "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am!" (11)

40-h **John 5:39** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me". (23)

40-i **John 5:21,26-27** "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. . . . For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. And He has given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man." (57)

40-j **John 14:6** "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (19)

40-k **Romans 5:8, 10** God shows His love to us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. . . . while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, . . . (32)

40-l **Matthew 18:20** "Where two or three are gathered in My name there am I among them." (14)

40-m **Hebrews 4:15-16** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (57)

40-n **Matthew 24:14** "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (25)

40-o **Philippians 2:5-11**

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus:

Who, though he was in the form of God,
 did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
 but made Himself nothing,
 taking the form of a servant,
 being born in the likeness of men.
 And being found in human form,
 He humbled Himself
 by becoming obedient to the point of death,
 even death on a cross.

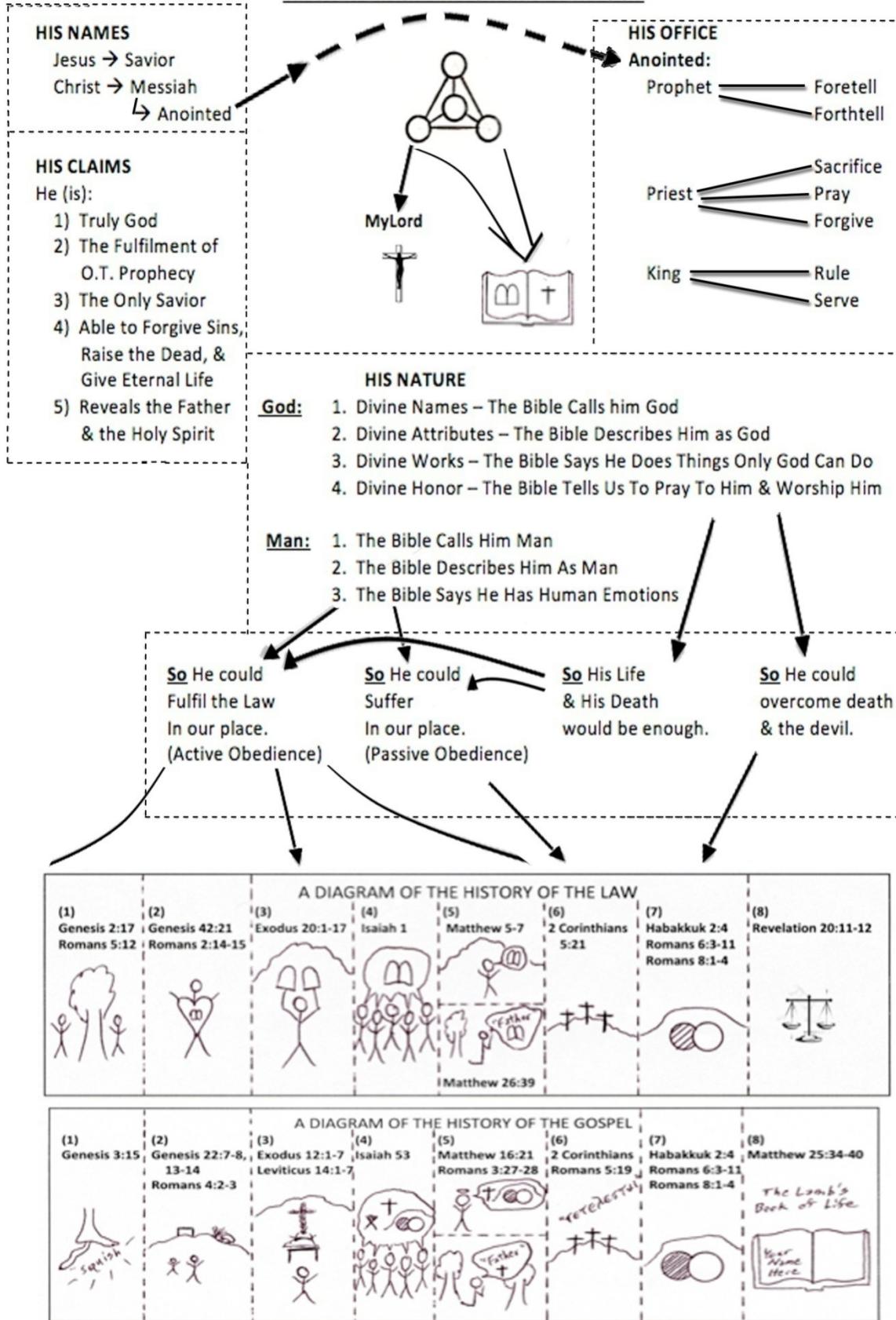
Therefore God has highly exalted Him
 and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name,
 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord
 to the glory of God the Father. (123)

40-p **Romans 8:31-39** What, then, shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He Who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, Who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written:

"For Your sake we are being killed all the day long;
 we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (197)

MASTER DIAGRAM FOR CHAPTER FOUR



CHAPTER 4 – THE SAVIOR (The Second Article)

Small Catechism, Questions # 114 – 152

40. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

Jesus is the Savior, the only way to know God and be right with God. He is truly God, the Second Person of the Trinity. He was born for me, died for me, rose from the dead for me, and will return for me. He is the fulfillment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament and all the hopes of mankind. He is my Savior.

41. JESUS – WHERE OUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GOD BEGINS

*And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified,
died and was buried.*

*He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

((Small Catechism Question # 114))

Our knowledge about God begins with Jesus Christ, the Savior. **There is a simple reason for this**, namely, He is the one who was “**Incarnate**” for us. Incarnate means that He entered our world by taking human flesh. He was born for us. He lived among us. So we are able to know Him as one of us. That is important. Instead of asking us to “raise ourselves or lift our thoughts and minds to heaven,” **God comes walking among us**, in a world of hunger, confusion and such simple things as smelly feet (see John 13!). We begin to know God by looking at Jesus.

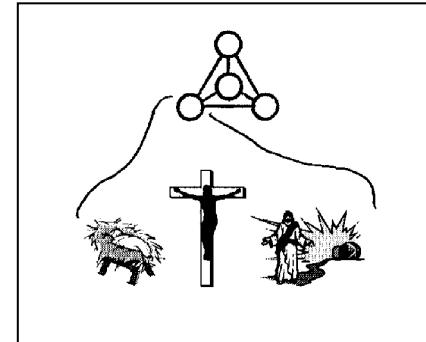
It is a part of the pattern of Lutheran teaching that we believe **every part of Christian teaching and doctrine comes together in Jesus**. When we study Jesus’ life and teachings we learn about and grow in every part of our faith. So, “*let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” (Hebrews 12:2 NASB)

42. HIS NAMES ((Small Catechism Questions # 115 – 117))

The name Jesus has an Old Testament (OT) word behind it. In Hebrew “Jesus” is “Yeshua,” and His name means “salvation.” (Matthew 1:21) Jesus’ very name means “salvation.”

The word “Christ” is actually not a name but a title. It means “anointed” and has an Old Testament word behind it “Messiah.” It talks about what Jesus came to do. We will come back to this word later on in the section on “His Offices.”

There are many other names for Jesus: The Lamb of God, Son of



ΙΧΘΥΣ Ιησούς Χριστός Θεού Υιός Σωτῆρ  Jesus Christ God's Son Savior
--

God, Son of Man, ITHYS, etc. Look at how many names for Jesus are included in the song, "Jesus, Name Above All Names" ("All God's People Sing" # 145)

THE HIDDEN NAME

According to Rabbinic tradition the name of the Messiah was **concealed from eternity**, to be revealed only when the time was right. So the revealing of the name was tremendously important. A lot of details about Jesus are already told in the Old Testament – where He would be born, when He would be born, which tribe of Israel He would be from, etc. – but not His name.

The name Jesus was **independently revealed to both Mary and Joseph**. If you read through Isaiah 7:14 you would expect His name to be Immanuel. But . . . first the angel appeared to Mary and told her she would bear the Savior of the world and told her to call Him Jesus. Then Joseph found out that she was pregnant and did not believe her. Only then did an angel appear to him in a dream and tell him to call the baby Jesus.

The name "Jesus" was revealed to both Mary and Joseph, to each one of them independently. This is one example of God's Word being corroborated by matching dreams, visions, or revelations. (See also Paul & Ananias in Acts 9 and Peter & Cornelius in Acts 10.) This is important in confirming Mary's truthfulness and that the dream Joseph had really was from God.

43. HIS CLAIMS

- (1) **He is God.** – In John 8:58 Jesus said to those who did not believe in Him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am!" (There is much more that we will cover later.)
- (2) He is **the Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy.** – Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me." (John 5:39) On Easter Day Jesus walked with 2 of his followers and "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27
Survey the Gospel of Matthew noting the verses that are quotes of Old Testament verses. Matthew is claiming that God arranged for all those Old Testament verses to be talking about Jesus; and they have all been fulfilled in Him.
- (3) He is **the only Savior.** – Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)
Jesus makes exclusive claims that He is the only way of salvation. There is no other way. After Easter the disciples believed this and they said it. Peter said it boldly in Acts 4:12 "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

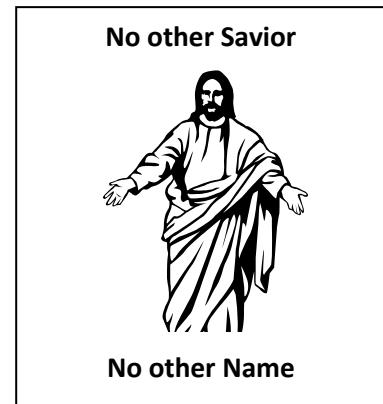
(5) **He is able to forgive sins, raise the dead, and give eternal life.** – Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “My son, your sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2:5) When Jesus taught about His relationship with His Father He said, “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. . . . For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. And He has given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man.” (John 5:21,26-27)

(6) **He reveals the Father and the Holy Spirit.** – Jesus said “No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6) What Jesus taught **about His Father** includes John 3:16-17, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only[begotten] Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.” And in John 16:27 He said, “The Father Himself loves you.” It is an interesting exercise to put together all the verses where Jesus talks about the Father. What Jesus taught **about the Holy Spirit** includes John 3:5-8, “. . . unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. . . .” In John 16:13, Jesus said, “When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth, . . .”

43.1 **THE ONLY SAVIOR; THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION**

To be the Savior is **to earn forgiveness of sins through His suffering and death; and by His resurrection to bring us into eternal life.** There is **no other way of salvation** – as Peter says. (“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12) He is our Savior.

He is the only Savior. No human being anywhere in the world can come to God any other way than through Jesus. This is an exclusive claim. There is no one else – no other gods, no other spiritual path, and no good works that we can do to earn salvation. Jesus calls us to believe in Him, trust only in Him for salvation, and **to say so in front of the whole world.**



So we have learned to say:

We renounce all other hope of forgiveness or righteousness except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

We renounce all other hope of heaven or eternal life except Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

This is specifically the spot where we disagree with “the Lodge;” Eastern Religions; Mormons; and Jehovah’s Witnesses. In various ways each of them contradict the statements above.

Eastern Religions call on other gods – and they are numerous. In addition they call on the believer to do various kinds of good works in order to earn salvation.

The Lodge has the names of other gods in various rituals – and we are called on to renounce any hope in any other god. In addition many of the lodge's practices (such as the white apron) put hope in good works to gain merit before God.

Mormons use the names of God from the Bible. – But they describe the Mormon god as, once a man on a planet much like ours who was obedient to his god and so earned the right to be made a god. By this (1) they call on and place hopes in other gods; (2) they place hope in good works to gain the right to be made gods; and (3) they hope to become gods themselves.

Jehovah's Witnesses use the names and the language of the Bible. – But (1) they deny that Jesus is truly God in the full sense of the word, and (2) they put their hopes in their good works to actually gain “what Jesus’ suffering and death gave them the right to earn.”

This is not just a statement of theology or doctrine. This is a personal statement of our relationship with our Savior:

We renounce all other hope of forgiveness or righteousness except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

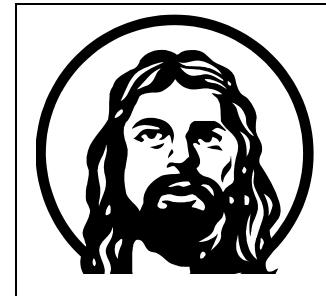
We renounce all other hope of heaven or eternal life except Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

43.2 JESUS' CLAIMS AND YOU – THE CONFRONTING JESUS

John the Apostle tells us, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which **we have seen with our eyes**, which we looked upon and **have touched with our hands**, concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest, and **we have seen it . . .** that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us . . . ” (1 John 1:1-3)

What was it like to see Jesus, to hear Him, to walk with Him and watch Him do miracles. But there is something even more intimate that John is telling us about. You see it when you read **through the Gospel of John**. One after another person encountered Jesus. He talked to them one on one. It is as if you can see Him looking them right in the eye and talking straight to their soul. Nicodemus comes to Him and Jesus says, “You must be born again.” (John 3:7) He promises living water to the woman at the well and she tells her whole town about “a man who told me all that I ever did.” (John 4:10, 29) He tells the man born blind that He is the promised Son of Man. (John 9:35-38) He washed the disciples’ feet (John 13:3-12), greeted Mary Magdalene outside the tomb (John 20:15-16) and told Thomas to reach out and touch His hands and feet. (John 20:27-28). Mary responded “*Rabboni!*” (“Teacher!”), and Thomas confessed “My Lord and My God!”

In all of these examples Jesus’ words are the “**look you in the eye and talk straight to your soul**” kind of words. He spoke



right to the worries, issues and concerns they had. Jesus confronts in a different way. Rather than assert authority or demand obedience; He talked to them about their needs and their relationship with God. He told them what God is really like and called them into forgiveness, grace and life. As He did this it was a “one soul to another” type of encounter; not an impersonal demand to follow rules and laws. This is not what the Pharisees and Rabbis of His day expected, but Jesus confronts – He showed God to them in a way they could not avoid.

He does the same with us. Jesus still confronts. He reveals God in ways that surprise. As Jesus deals with you He does so one to one. You encounter Jesus. There are teachings and doctrines involved. But it is the teachings and doctrine of the living Jesus. This is a relationship with a living person, the risen Jesus, the shepherd of your soul who knows you intimately and acts in your life day after day. It is coming face to face with God who has all the power in the universe. Where you might expect Him to look down on you and scold or lecture you, instead He says, “I love you, and I want you to live with Me forever.” (John 15:13, 17:24)

That’s why the Bible is filled with relationship words. That’s why, first the disciples, and then down through the centuries for generation after generation, Christians have left everything behind to follow Jesus. That’s why Jesus is the most fascinating person you can ever know. And that’s why Christians want nothing more than for others to know Jesus too. (When we get to the section on Judgment Day, watch for the verse that comes from Zephaniah.)

44. HIS NATURE – THE PERSON OF CHRIST

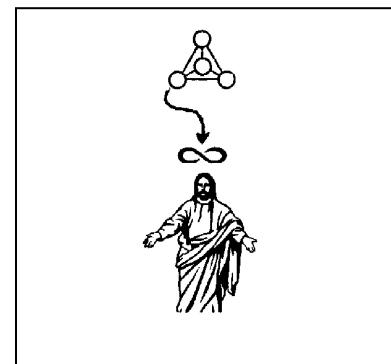
Second Article; Explanation; Paragraph 1

“I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.”

((Read through: Small Catechism Questions # 118 – 121))

Exactly **what is Jesus claiming** in the following verses?

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am!” {He claims the OT name of God, and claims to have been before Abraham. He says so not in past tense “I was” but present tense, “I am.”} So He is God and He is above time.



Matthew 18:20 “Where 2 or 3 are gathered in My name there am I among them.”

Matthew 7:24 “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

{There is a **children’s question**, “where is Jesus?” where even small children will be able to answer most of these answers: 1) He is in heaven; 2) He is everywhere; 3) He is here – we are gathered in his name; 4) He is with us wherever we go; 5) He is in my heart; 6) He is there in the Lord’s Supper.}

What is Stephen claiming about Jesus in the following verse?

Acts 7:59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

44.1 A QUICK SUMMARY – JESUS IS THE GOD – MAN

The early Church used the word “*Theanthropos*” from the Greek words *Theos* (God) and *Anthropos* (Man). Jesus is **the God-Man**. He brings together two natures in one Person.

A quick summary of our teaching is this:

How do we know that Jesus is **truly God**?

1. **Divine Names** – The Bible calls Him God.
2. **Divine Attributes** – The Bible describes Him as God.
3. **Divine Works** – The Bible says He does things only God can do.
4. **Divine Honor** – The Bible tells us to pray to Him and worship Him.

	
Jesus has the: Names,	Jesus is: Called human,
Attributes,	Described as human &
Works &	
Honor	has human Emotions.
of God	

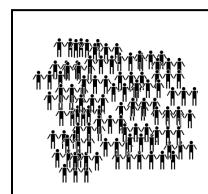
How do we know that Jesus is **truly human**?

1. The Bible **calls** Him **Man**.
2. The Bible **describes** Him as **Man**.
3. The Bible says **He has human emotions**.

44.2 A LITTLE MORE ABOUT JESUS' HUMAN NATURE

As a human being Jesus lived a **life of faith and prayer**. Both faith and prayer are essentially human things. To have faith is to believe in the words and promises of another. God does not need to turn to another. When you pray you turn to someone greater than yourself in your time of need or thank and praise Him for His goodness and blessings. God does not have another who is greater than Himself. So when Jesus practiced prayer or showed faith he was acting as our human brother.

Hebrews 2:14-18 says “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, Therefore He had to be made **like His brothers in every respect**, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.”



Hebrews 4:15-16 says, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”



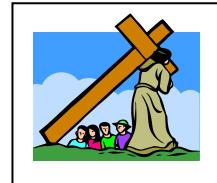
We see this most **vividly** in the Garden of Gethsemane and at Calvary. **In the Garden** Jesus prayed, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will but what You will.”

At Calvary, the first, middle and last words from the cross are prayers:

First – *“Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”* (NIV)

Middle – *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”*

Last – *“Father, into Your hand I commit My spirit.”*



44.3 JESUS CLAIMS DIVINE OWNERSHIP OVER US

C. S. Lewis makes the following point. **Jesus presumes the right to forgive sins that are committed against others.** Imagine I saw another driver pulled over for speeding and I decided to go up to the car where the officer was writing out the ticket; and I told the driver that his speeding was all forgiven and he was free to go. What would happen to me?

The problem is that I am not the one sinned against so I do not have that right. The Policeman represents the city that has been wronged, but I don't.

Jesus comes along and He speaks in that way. He forgives sins done against other human beings! The Pharisees noticed it; and they thought He was claiming something extraordinary. (Thank you to the Pharisees, because we often miss that part.)



In **Mark 2:2-12** four men brought a paralyzed friend to Jesus. Read verses 3-4 to see how they got their friend to Jesus. **What Jesus said first** to the paralyzed man was “My son, **your sins are forgiven.**” (A few moments later He healed him.) The scribes (teachers of the Law) react with “Why does he speak like that? . . . Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Good catch! They got the point! The reason why Jesus can speak that way is because of who He is. He has claims of ownership over us – **Divine Ownership** because He is God.

Even when we are the ones wronged, He has more of a claim than we do. He is the creator of both the sinner and the one sinned against. That is why in Matthew 25 He can say, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me.” (Matthew 25:40)

44.4 GOD / MAN CARDS

Distinguish how the following verses speak of Jesus as God, and of Jesus as Man.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

John 21:17 (Peter to Jesus), “Lord, You know everything.”

Matthew 28:18 (Jesus to His disciples), “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”

Matthew 9:6 (Jesus said), “The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

Acts 7:59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

Luke 23:46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.” And having said this He breathed His last.

Luke 22:42 (Jesus in prayer), “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours, be done.”

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those who were under the law, . . .

1 Timothy 2:5 There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Matthew 8:24-26 (NIV) Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke Him saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?”

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

John 11:43-44 [Jesus] cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The man who had died came out, . . .

Colossians 2:9 (NIV) For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, . . .

44.41 *Also read through and discuss:*

The Second Article of the Nicene Creed, and

The Athanasian Creed # 28 – 35

44.5 WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO BE BOTH GOD AND MAN?

((Read Small Catechism Questions # 122 – 123))

Here's a quick summary:

Jesus had to be truly human:

1. So He could fulfill the Law in our place (His Active Obedience)
2. So He could suffer and die in our place (His Passive Obedience)

Jesus had to be truly God:

1. So His life and His death would be enough.
2. So He could overcome death and the devil.

→ How do these four points match up with
 → the History of the Law and the Gospel Parallels? (See the “Master Diagram for Chapter Four,” at the beginning of this chapter.)

45. **HIS OFFICE – THE THREEFOLD OFFICE OF CHRIST** ((Small Catechism Question # 125))
Jesus was anointed. Both “**Christ**” (in the New Testament) and “**Messiah**” (in the Old Testament) mean “anointed.”

Anointing was done in the Old Testament using **oil that was poured over the head**, and not just a little dab. **“It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!** It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.” Psalm 133:2-3

Anointing was for those entering one of **three offices** in the Old Testament: Prophet, Priest, and King. It was always so that the person anointed could serve others.

A Symbolic Part: the oil used in anointing represents the Holy Spirit.

Oil was used for **light**. **Oil lamps** had a wick that would burn and give light like a candle. Think of the **tongues of fire** that appeared over the disciples’ heads on the day of **Pentecost**. In the Old Testament when the oil was poured over the head of one to be anointed **the Spirit** also was poured out so that person could serve God’s people. **Prophets, priests and kings** each served in specific ways. **Jesus** was anointed without measure, to serve as our Prophet, Priest and King. See the diagram below:

ANOINTING				
The Symbolism: Anointing → Oil → Fire → The Holy Spirit				
	Office	OT Example	Purpose & Tasks	Jesus' Purpose & Tasks
(1)	Prophet	Elisha	1. To Foretell (the future) 2. To Forthtell (God's Word)	To Teach (about faith, salvation, God the Father, prayer, the future, heaven, etc.)
(2)	Priest	Aaron	1. To Sacrifice 2. To Pray 3. To Declare Forgiveness	1. To Sacrifice (Himself as the Lamb of God) 2. To Pray (for us continually) 3. To Earn & Give Forgiveness
(3)	King	David	1. To Rule _____ 2. To Serve	1. To Rule (shown through His miracles) _____ 2. To Serve (Matthew 20:28 and John 13:4-5)

45.1 THEN AND NOW – JESUS CONTINUING MINISTRY AS PROPHET, PRIEST & KING

After studying the above diagram, read through the Small Catechism, Question # 125. Note the verses that talk about how Jesus now continues His work as Prophet, Priest, or King.

THE OFFICES OF CHRIST THEN & NOW	
AS PROPHET	
Jesus (a) preached during His life on earth. He told the truths of God, was called Rabbi and (b) told what was to come	Jesus (a) continues to spread His Word through Pastors, Teachers, Missionaries, and every Christian who tells another person about the salvation we have in Jesus, and (b) the Bible tells us some of the future of the Church
AS PRIEST	
Jesus (a) fulfilled the Law perfectly for us (b) sacrificed Himself for our sins (c) prayed for others, and (d) forgave sins.	Jesus (c) continually prays for us, and (d) tells them of the forgiveness of sins (through Scripture & His church)
AS KING	
Jesus: (a-d) ruled with His almighty power and showed that power in His miracles, and (e) came not to be served but to serve, and showed that as He cared for others needs, and washed His disciples feet.	Jesus: (a) rules all things (b) governs and protects His Church (c) is extending His kingdom to all nations (d) will finally bring His Church home to glory in heaven, and (e) He continues to serve as He supplies our needs and answers our prayers.

45.2 PROPHET / PRIEST / KING CARDS

Distinguish whether the following verses speak of Jesus as Prophet, Priest, or King:

Luke 4:18 (Jesus said), “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because He has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives . . .
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Matthew 20:28 (Jesus said), “The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

1 John 1:7 If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only[-begotten] God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known.

Matthew 4:17 Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Romans 5:10 While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son . . .

Deuteronomy 18:15 (Moses said), “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen.”

2 Timothy 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and will bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom.

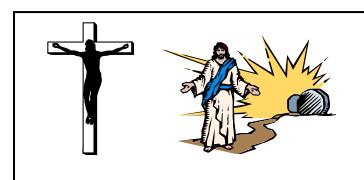
Matthew 28:18 (Jesus said), “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”

Ephesians 2:19-20 (NIV) You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people

46. HIS WORK OF SALVATION

Second Article; Explanation; Paragraph 2:

“Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, . . .”



46.1 DEFINING THE HUMILIATION & EXALTATION OF CHRIST

((Small Catechism Questions # 126 – 132; 141 – 149A))

Definitions:

In the Small Catechism, Questions # 127 & 141 tell us that:

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION *was that as man He did not always or fully use His divine powers.*

CHRIST'S EXALTATION *is that as man He now fully and always uses His divine powers.*

The most striking example is how Jesus answered when His disciples asked when the end of the world would be:

Mark 13:32 (**during the state of humiliation** when He did not always or fully use His divine powers Jesus said,) “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

Acts 1:7 (**during the state of exaltation** when He now fully and always uses His divine powers Jesus said,) “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority.”



46.2 JESUS' HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION

Study the following Diagram. Learn the steps of Humiliation and Exaltation.

The Steps of Humiliation		The Steps of Exaltation	
1. Was Conceived (by the Holy Spirit)		When will the end come?	6. To Judge (the living and the dead)
2. Born (of the virgin Mary)			5. Will Come
3. Suffered (under Pontius Pilate)			4. Sits (at the right hand of God the Father Almighty)
4. Was Crucified			3. Ascended (into heaven)
5. Died			2. Rose (again from the dead)
6. Was Buried			1. Descended (into hell)

46.3 THE STEPS OF HUMILIATION

((Read through: Small Catechism Questions # 128 – 132))

Some brief comments on each of the steps:

- # 1. **“Was Conceived” (by the Holy Spirit)** – For Jesus (the Son of God & God the Son) who is eternal, who created the universe, and who existed with glory that even the angels cannot fully see or understand – for Him to become human with flesh and blood and begin being human by being a one-celled embryo within Mary is an amazing “setting aside” of His power and glory.

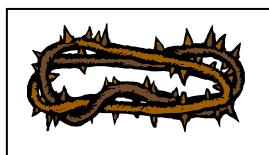


2 **“Born” (of the virgin Mary)** – Remember where Jesus was born, in a stable because there was no room for them in the inn;



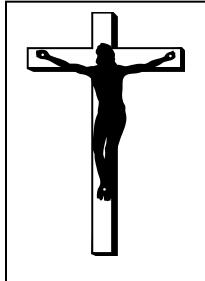
what His first bed was, a feeding trough for the animals; and how Joseph had to take Jesus and Mary and flee into Egypt, because King Herod was going to try to kill Him.

3 **“Suffered” (under Pontius Pilate)** – Jesus who is God Almighty set aside His power so that He could suffer for us.



Before He was crucified, His suffering included being slapped, spit on, beaten, whipped bloody, having the crown of thorns put on Him, and carrying His cross.

4 **“Was Crucified”** – Read Psalm 22 to learn what crucifixion feels like.



Realize that He could have left the cross at any time. The nails could not have held Him there if He did not choose to be there.

The Bible says “the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) Luther said that when

the devil saw Jesus hanging on the cross, he thought, “There’s the Son of God helpless and forsaken.” And so he leapt on Him and sunk His teeth into Jesus to devour Him. But the devil found out to his great surprise that Jesus is also the “Rock of Ages.” So when he bit into Jesus, he broke all his teeth out.

So here’s an image: “the devil prowls around like a toothless lion, looking for someone to gum to death.” What a ridiculous thing! He has been defeated. (“He’s judged, the deed is done; one little word can fell him.” – A Mighty Fortress) All the devil has left against the Christian is to keep on lying and try to fool us into thinking he has power.

THE SHEPHERDS & THE LAMB OF GOD

The Shepherds were out in the fields watching their flocks by night.

Read Genesis 35:19-20. It tells how Rachel died “and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)” and how Jacob went on and “pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.”

Then read Jeremiah 31:15-16. It tells about “Rachel weeping for her children”. It is at Ramah that the people of Judah were gathered, chained and roped together, and led off to exile in Babylon. But verse 16 says, “Keep your voice from weeping . . . they shall come back from the land of the enemy.”

Putting those two passages together (1) God gives hope for the mothers of Bethlehem whose children were killed by Herod -- “they shall come back.” But also (2) the Rabbis expected that the first announcement of the coming Messiah would be at “Migdol Eder;” the “tower of Eder.” Eder means flock (as in flock of sheep), so “Migdol Eder” means “Tower of the Flock.” Look up Luke 2:8-11 and see if they were right.

Why were the shepherds out in the fields at night? Most sheep are brought into the sheepfold where they are safer. But Bethlehem is close to Jerusalem. Sheep that were destined to be sacrificial sheep at the Temple had to be kept outside, in nature not in buildings all the time. Shepherds built towers to more easily watch their sheep.

So the angels went to shepherds watching over sacrificial sheep to tell them about the One Lamb, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is amazingly appropriate, isn’t it?

5 **“Died”** – Read John 10:17-18! Jesus could not have been killed if He did not allow Himself to die. Jesus said that He “has life in Himself.” (John 5:26) It is one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith that God the Son, Jesus Christ, could die. The theologians will say that (1) as God He could not; but (2) according to His human nature and as a human being that He died. (3) As God, Jesus shared in the experience of death that could only be done in His human nature. This we know, that Jesus died, and in dying He took my death on Him.

Look up Matthew 27:51-53. What things happened at the death of Jesus? Would it be fair to say that death was broken?



6 **“Was Buried”** – It is important to review the burial of Jesus. He was wrapped in burial cloths with **about 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes** (John 19:39). Then He was laid in the new, unused tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and a **large stone** rolled across the entrance (Matthew 27:59-60). Then the chief priests and Pharisees got permission from Pilate to post a **guard** and put **an official seal** on the tomb. All of these things were done because: the disciples never expected that Jesus would rise; and Jesus’ enemies wanted **to make sure there was no faked resurrection**.

IT'S BROKEN! IT DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE!

It is not usually nice when someone borrows something of yours and brings it back broken, but

Jesus had no death of His own, so He **had to borrow yours**. It is your death that he suffered. So Jesus entered into death, but He is Life and has life in Himself. Death could not hold Him.

When Jesus entered into death **He broke it** apart from the inside. **It doesn't work right anymore**.

The function of death is to separate soul from body and keep them apart. But it's broken. Jesus could not be kept from rising. When Jesus died on the cross some of the Old Testament saints rose from the dead. (Read Matthew 27:51-53)

When you die as a Christian death will not be able to keep you from rising – that will happen when Jesus returns.

Another function of death is to separate you from God. But Jesus broke it! When you die as a Christian, **your soul will go to heaven** and enjoy life with Jesus!

46.4 THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING – THE ACT OF REDEMPTION (*Read through: Small Catechism Questions # 133 – 140*)

Review thoroughly the following sections in Chapter 2 – Law & Gospel:

"25. WHERE THE LAW ENDS . . . ON TO THE GOSPEL; 25.1 THE GREAT EXCHANGE; 25.2 ALIEN RIGHTEOUSNESS; 25.3 VICARIOUS SATISFACTION; and sections 25.4 – 25.7.

46.41 PICTURES AND LANGUAGE OF SALVATION

Throughout the Bible there are a huge number of ways that God describes His saving work in Jesus. Here are some of those pictures, very briefly described.

To read a whole book about them, find the book, "Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel," by Jacob A. O. Preus (Concordia Publishing House.)

Adoption – Jesus invites us to pray "Father" when we pray. Paul says that the Father has adopted us as His sons / His children and has given us the full rights of sons (Romans 8; Galatians 4:4-5). So we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Jesus, and the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray "Abba! [the familiar term similar to our work 'daddy'] Father!" (Romans 8:15-16)

Bread of Life and Living Water – Jesus is the bread of heaven who feeds our souls. Believing in Jesus is called "spiritual eating." With Jesus in our souls we live forever. Jesus said "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh" (John 6:51)

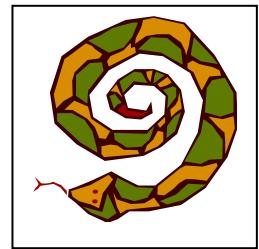


Jesus told the woman at the well that He could give her "living water." In John 4 and 8 He talked about living water for those who believe in Him that springs up within us and wells up to eternal life.

Cleansing – We have been unclean, covered with the dirt and filth of our sins (and there are some extreme illustrations that the prophets tell us). Jesus came to wash us and make us holy and spotless, to present us to Himself "as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish" (Ephesians 5:26-27 NIV).

Courtroom Language – The Law judges us as guilty and we are condemned before God. But Jesus stepped into our place and took the punishment on Himself.

Cure for Snakebite and Venom – Numbers 21 gives a picture of the people of Israel turning away from God and venomous snakes being sent in among them. But God said to put a bronze snake up on a pole and whoever looked at the snake on the pole would live. In John 3 Jesus said the picture was about Him on the cross. He took the poison of sin into Himself so we could live. See also Genesis 3:15.



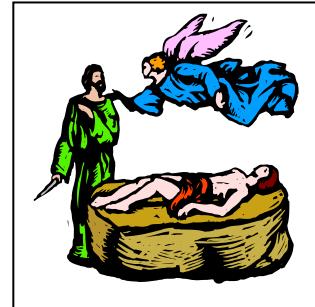
Death and Life – We were dead in sins (Ephesians 2:1ff) but God raised us up to new life. Jesus told Mary and Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies . . ." (John 11:25)

End of Warfare and Peace – "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins." (Isaiah 40:2) Jesus brings peace. First He brings peace with God, and then peace between Christians. He did this by



destroying “the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments . . . [reconciling] to God . . . and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.” (Ephesians 2:15-17)

Expiation, Propitiation and Atonement – Jesus is our Great High Priest. He offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins and by His blood we are forgiven. The blood of Jesus takes away our sin and makes us right with God. The Letter to the Hebrews talks about Him making atonement. “He entered once for all into the holy places . . . by means of His own blood, . . . securing an eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:12) Because of Jesus’ blood “we have confidence to enter” with our prayers and worship.



Forgiveness – God’s way of forgiving means to put away the sin completely and forever. “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah 31:34) That kind of forgiveness can only happen when it is earned – through Jesus and His cross. (Colossians 1:13-14)

Justification – “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Romans 4:3 NIV) We have earned punishment from God because of our sins. But Jesus came to live the perfect life and to take the sins of the world. On the cross God counted our sins as if they belonged to Jesus (Vicarious Satisfaction). And He takes the holiness of Jesus and counts it as ours. The other words used here are: Reckon (older translations of the Bible; and Counted (ESV)).

Liberation – We have been prisoners of our sin. Jesus came “to proclaim freedom for the captives.” (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18 NIV) Jesus said, “If you abide in My word . . . you will know the truth and the truth will set you free”, and “if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed.” (John 8:31-32, 36)



Light and Darkness – Jesus is “the light of the world” John 8:12 and when He comes into the world He shines the truth of God into our lives. His light changes our souls and gives us eternal life. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Lost and Found – We wandered off like the Prodigal Son or the lost sheep (Luke 15). But Jesus took our place and became forsaken by His Father so we could be found and be brought back home.

New Birth – . . . “He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3) Jesus said to Nicodemus, “you must be born again.” (John 3:7) And God promised a new beginning through a new heart in Ezekiel 36.

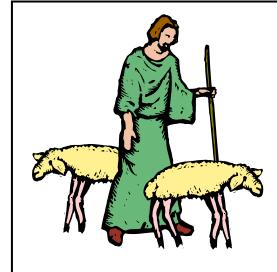
Ransom and Redeem – The most common way we use “ransom” is when a kidnapper demands money, or he will kill the victim. Jesus is our ransom. He came “to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8) and deliver us who “through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” (Hebrews 2:15) The price He paid was not gold or silver, but His own precious blood. (1 Peter 1:18)

“Redeem” means to buy back. Jesus “redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us.” (Galatians 3:13) God said to Adam and Eve that when they

ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would “surely die.” At the cross Jesus took that curse on Himself and so bought us back. Paul reminds us that we “were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:20)

Restoring The Unfaithful – We were unfaithful like Hosea’s wife, and like Israel running off after other gods. We have often given our heart to other things. But Jesus found us, and brought us back home. Like Hosea’s children we were once “not loved” but now we are “loved,” and we once were “not My people” but now we are “My people.”

The Sacrificial Lamb and the Good Shepherd – God brings together two related images. He tells us about Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29; Isaiah 53; Exodus 12; Genesis 22) (The favorite image of Jesus in the book of Revelation is of Him as the Lamb that was slain.) Then Jesus talks about Himself in John 10 as the Good Shepherd who “lays down His life for the sheep.”



Salvation – When the people of Israel were on the banks of the Red Sea and they saw the Egyptians coming they called out to God in fear. He opened the way for them through the water (a picture of baptism) and saved them from death. On the other shore after they were delivered they sang to God, “The LORD is my strength and my song, and He has become to me salvation.” The Hebrew word for “salvation” → is “Yasha” → and is later turned into a name “Yeshua” → which is translated into English as “Jesus.” He is our salvation.

There are many more!

46.42 A STORY

How does this story link with some of the pictures of salvation above?

My Grandfather's Coal Bin (A Confession)

When I was little (I think 2 or 3 years old) my grandparents used to heat with coal. The fascinating thing for me was **the little tin tags** that the coal company put in with their coal. They were about 1/2 inch by 1 inch, would not hurt the furnace and were shiny. The shiny part was important! I remember one time they got a load of coal and my older brother and I were allowed to dig through the coal for a few minutes and gather a little pile of them. It was fascinating! (For a 2 or 3 year old anyway.)

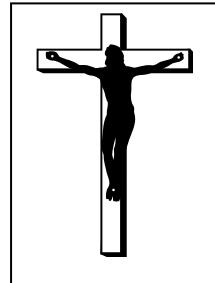


So there was that other time. Later, **one day I snuck down to the coalbin.** Wow! All that coal, and I could have all the little shiny tags I wanted. I dug through them and carefully piled up first one stack, and then another. I had one stack that must have been 3 or 4 inches tall and another one getting close. Finally it got boring, and my mom was calling. So I went upstairs. . . .

This part has some pieces missing from my memory. I remember looking up at my mom and her looking down at me, and then the next instant I was in the bathtub! I was probably covered in coal dust from head to foot, and probably was leaving coal dust footprints behind me!

So this is an illustration of Jesus on the cross.

What He did was to come into our world and to take all the sin of the whole world on Himself. Even though He was the sinless Son of God, He took our sins on Himself. **He was covered from head to foot with your sins and mine.** And then He went to the cross. There **He presented Himself to His Father, covered with our rebellion, uncleanness, hatred, moral filth, and selfishness.** What was His Father to do? Sin must be punished. **So all the wrath of God was poured out on Him** and the Father turned His back and forsook Jesus.



Yet, through all of this Jesus continued in faith, and continued to pray, "Father," and "My God . . ." In this way through suffering and through perfect faith He offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice.

46.5 THE STEPS OF EXALTATION

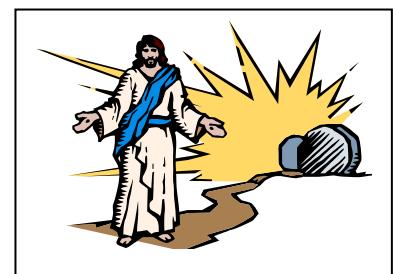
Second Article; Explanation; Paragraphs 3-5:

" . . . that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true."

((Read through: Small Catechism Questions # 141 – 149))

Make special note of Question # 145, Why is Christ's resurrection so important and comforting?



1 **"He Descended" (into hell)** – It sounds odd to say that the first step in the exaltation of Jesus is the descent into hell. But remember the definition. "Christ's exaltation is that as man He now fully and always uses His divine powers." According to the definition, it does not depend on where Jesus was but simply that "He fully and always uses His divine powers."

Peter says that Jesus "was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison." (1 Peter 3:18-19) (NIV)

So we teach that on Easter morning:

(1) Jesus was made alive in the tomb; His body transformed and glorious. Then

(2) Jesus went to declare His victory right there in hell – in the place where the devil thought he was ruling. Jesus went there not as a “soul without a body” but with body and soul reunited, and with His body showing the glory of heaven and the glory of Easter. This is what it means that He “preached to the spirits in prison.” After this

(3) Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene and the disciples.

Luther said that when Jesus descended into hell the devils were so afraid that one fell out the window and the others ran out the back door. This does not mean that there are doors and windows in hell, but you do understand what Luther means about the devils being afraid of Jesus.

Jesus declared His victory with His risen body in His glorified state and as our exalted Savior. This means that **part of the victory Jesus proclaimed is that He has won the victory for us and we will rise to be glorious like He is.** This is a huge defeat for the devil. We are freed from sin and death and the kingdom of Christ is going to include people from every nation. The devil’s doom is near.

2 **“He Rose” (again from the dead)** – Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then to the two on the way to Emmaus, then to Peter, then to the disciples in the upper room, then a week later to Thomas.



→ **Review “The Easter Pattern” in Parts # 5 – 5.2 ←**

This part of our faith makes all the difference in the world. Read through 1 Corinthians 15:13-26. There are 7 distinct things Paul says would be so “if Christ has not been raised.” What are they?

In verses 23-26 there are 4 steps that extend the Kingdom of Christ through the power of the Resurrection. What are they?

What 4 things does Jesus’ resurrection prove? (see Catechism Question # 145)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

In Jesus we see our future.

Paul says that God the Father has destined us "to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers." (Romans 8:29)

John says, "we know that when He appears we will be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2)

And again Paul says that Jesus "will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:21)

Looking at Jesus on Easter we see what our future is and can ask and answer a number of questions.

(1) **Will we rise with these bodies or different ones?** Definitely these bodies – that's how Jesus rose, with the same body.

(2) **Will we be able to recognize each other?** Definitely – when the disciples were not prevented from recognizing Jesus, they knew without question it was Him.

(3) **Will our bodies be exactly the same?** Definitely not – Jesus' body was glorified, so I won't need glasses, and none of us will have any defects or injuries.

(4) **Will we be able to eat; or have a more spiritual way of staying alive?** We will definitely be able to eat – Jesus ate in front of His disciples to show that He really was risen. Besides this the bible talks about feasting in the kingdom of God.

3 **"He Ascended" (into heaven)** – Jesus spent **40 days** with His disciples between Easter and ascending into heaven. During that time He appeared repeatedly, taught the disciples, and He prepared them for Pentecost. Read about the Ascension in **Acts 1:6-11**.

What did the disciples see? They saw Jesus rising up into the sky, then being hidden by a cloud. They could not see into heaven because heaven is invisible. So 2 angels were sent to explain what they had seen, "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." So there is a mystery explained to them and a mystery to explore.



Where did Jesus ascend to? We say "into heaven." But look at the definition of heaven in Section 39.99 and the four uses of the word "heaven." Is it # 3 "where the angels are and where Christians go when they die" or # 4 "the heaven above the heavens where no angel can approach."

Paul tells us something amazing. He says that Jesus “ascended **far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.**” (Ephesians 4:10) Paul is not talking about Jesus “going back to being God” (as if He stopped being God – He did not, He is always God). And Paul is not talking about Jesus setting aside His human nature. He is both God and Man forever! He has not and will never set aside His body. (He is your brother forever.)

The Athanasian Creed talks about Jesus and says, “He is not two but one Christ: one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God . . .” (30-c The Athanasian Creed # 32-33) Everything that belongs to Jesus as God is shared with His human nature. So we can say “This man is God,” and “God is our brother” when we are talking about Him.

Where is Jesus? He is everywhere. He fills all things. He is wherever two or three of us are gathered in His name. And later when we talk about Jesus’ body and blood in the Lord’s Supper remember how Paul said that Jesus “ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.”

4 “Sits” (at the right hand of God the Father Almighty) – We need to sort out some ideas.

God the Father is spirit. He does not have a body. So God the Father cannot be contained within space or be limited to any particular place. We are not to think that Jesus being seated at the right hand of the Father means that there is a chair in a certain place where Jesus is sitting.



Again God the Father is spirit. He does not have a right hand like we would think of a right hand. **The right hand of God** is God using His power to rule. The place where God’s right hand is – that’s **wherever God exercises His power.**

So **Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.** This is what Paul said. (Ephesians 4:10) And it is what David talked about, “If I ascend to heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.” (Psalm 139:8-10)

The prophet **Jonah** might just give us the example of **the most extreme location** for calling out to God – underwater, in the middle of the sea, in the belly of the fish. But in Jonah 2 he prays, thinks about the temple (where the sacrifices pictured Jesus) and finishes by saying “Salvation (“yeshuathah” the name “Yeshua” plus an ending) belongs to the LORD!”

Jesus is with us anywhere and everywhere, just like He promised.

5 **“He Will Come” – JESUS’ RETURN – THE SECOND COMING**
 ((Small Catechism Questions # 149 – 152))

When will Jesus return? Read these passages one at a time and tell what each one tells us about when Jesus will return.

Acts 1:7-8 “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Matthew 28:18-20 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, . . .”

Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain, and by Your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

(Please notice that this passage does not only talk about people hearing; it talks about people from every “tribe and language and people and nation” being successfully brought into the kingdom of God.)

2 Peter 3:11-12a Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God . . . ?

TRYING TO PREDICT

I have the following books in my library:

“88 Reasons Why Jesus Will Return in 1988” (specifically in September)

The sequel:

“89 Reasons Why Jesus Will Return in 1989” (again, specifically in September)

“1994” (which “proved” exactly which day in 1994 Jesus would return. I bought it in 1995 when the author was trying to get all the remaining copies back from the bookstores.)

Now there’s a movie **“2012”** predicting the end of the world from the Mayan Calendar.

There are a lot of others out there that try to figure out the exact date.

According to Acts 1:7 will God allow any of those writers or filmmakers to figure out the date when Jesus returns?

HOW SOON?

So I sat down with the Missionary in Thamaga, Botswana and asked the question I had been dying to ask; and I got a surprising answer!

My question: The Bible talks about every tribe and people and nation and language. But out of about 6,000 languages in the world portions of the Bible have been printed in only about 1/3 of them. So how long will it be till we can say that people of every nation and language have been reached?

His answer: We don't talk in those terms anymore. Instead we make a **distinction between the untouched and the unreached languages**. **An untouched language** is one where the people do not have the Gospel in a language that they can understand. **An unreached language** is one where they do not have part of the Bible translated in their heart language, or a Pastor of their own native language. There are no more untouched languages. Out in the Kalahari they don't have the Bible in their own language, but they do have the Bible in Setswana, the common language that almost everybody understands. But there are a lot of unreached languages and peoples.

If you look at what is happening around the world and think about it in terms of "**how is Jesus Christ extending His kingdom**" what do you see? I see the Gospel spreading rapidly in many parts of the world. Some years ago I heard these numbers: 23 thousand a day **in Asia**; 23 thousand a day **in Africa**; 13 thousand a day **in South America**. **In China**, when the communist government took over there was an estimated 1 million Christians in China. Today the estimates are 30 - 100 million, and some are guessing even higher. The most resistant groups appear to be **in the Middle East**. But some things are happening there too. Jesus is doing His work, ruling all things and extending His kingdom.

Jesus sent us to make disciples of every nation. But He never tells us how long it will be from the time the Gospel reaches and brings people into the Kingdom from all nations. Our part is not to figure out the time of the end. We are simply to tell others about Jesus and let Him worry about when to come back.

6 **"To Judge" (the living and the dead.)** – What will happen on Judgment day? What will the order of events be? I expect that they might be very much like this.

(1) **Sun and moon** will be darkened, **the stars** will fall or go dark, and the sky will "roll up like a scroll." (There are other additional signs that will happen in nature.) Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12-14. Jesus said, "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is



drawing near." (Luke 21:28) (Besides, you wouldn't want to miss seeing any of the things that happen next!)

(2) The angel will sound **the trumpet**, announcing Jesus' return. 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:52.

(3) **Jesus will appear** and everyone will see Him. Matthew 24:27, 30.

(4) The **souls of Christians** will be reunited with their bodies and their graves opened (John 5:28). We will be resurrected (Daniel 12:2-3). So will the unbelievers, but they will be afraid and want to hide from Jesus (Revelation 6:16-17).

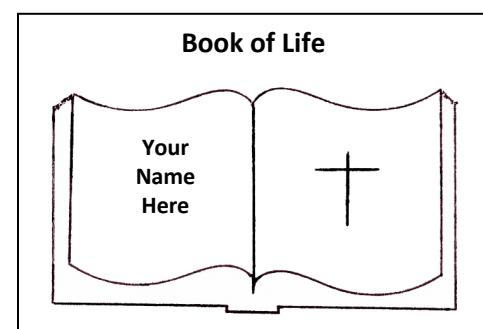
(5) The **angels** will be **sent** out all over the world **to gather Christians** to meet with Jesus (Matthew 24:31), both those who have died and the Christians who are still alive. Paul says, "in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air". 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

(6) Christ will gather **all mankind before His throne**. (Matthew 25:31 – 32a)

(7) **Books** will be **opened** and **Christ will Judge each person individually**.

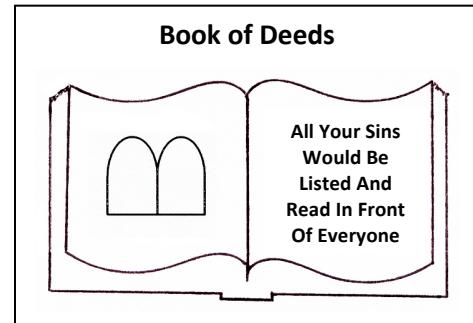


(# ?) **Zephaniah 3:17**
 Sometime among all the events of Judgment Day the things talked about in this verse will happen. Verse 15 leads up to it, "The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil." But then in verse 17 we read this surprising 3-part description, "He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing." We will get to hear Jesus celebrating; exulting "with loud singing" that we are with Him, living forever.



Revelation 20:12-15 talks about books being opened. One is **"The Lamb's Book of Life."** The Book of Life is also mentioned in the Old Testament. If your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life you are welcomed into eternal life. If your name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life you are judged by the book of all that you have ever done in your life. Every sin is made known. So Jesus will separate believers from unbelievers (the sheep from the goats – Matthew 25:31-33).

(8) The **General Judgment** will happen **for the believers**, where we are **vindicated** (Malachi 3:16-18). **Jesus will declare to the whole world that we are His and we are blessed.** This is also the time when the dialog in Matthew 25:34-40 will happen. Those who acknowledge Him before men He will acknowledge before the whole world and in the presence of His Father and the angels (Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8).



(9) The **General Judgment** will happen **for the unbelievers**, where they are condemned. Just as it is with believers this will be before the whole world (Matthew 25:41-45).

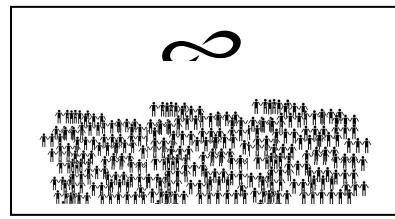
(10) The **unbelievers** will be **sent to hell**, and the angels will be assigned to "throw" them there. (Revelation 20:15) For the unbelievers there will be endless suffering and regret (Matthew 25:30; Mark 9:48). There will be no camaraderie in hell, instead only regret, loathing and anger. The ugliness inside that is restrained in this world will be their entire being. The believers will see the fate of the unbelievers (Isaiah 66:24).

(11) **We will then go with Christ into eternal life.** Revelation 19:6-9; 21:1-11; 21:22-22:5.

Because God has promised us glory, blessings, life and joy we wait for Jesus to return with hope and joy. "When these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Luke 21:28.

46.6 WHAT NEXT?

What will it be like to live forever? There are two groups of verses. One group talks about the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, and about spiritual things. The other group talks in very earthly terms such as: every man under his own fig tree; the lion lying down with the lamb; and the creation waiting for its renewal.



One of the more interesting passages is Isaiah 65. Verse 20 talks about the young man dying at 100 years old and that would be a curse. We think about 100 years as a very long life. But figure in all the years of life, both now and after Jesus returns. To only have 100 years would be to miss out on living forever. The child who dies young in our world but lives forever really does have much more life than the man who lives to 100 but misses out on living forever.

God says in verse 22, "*like the days of a tree shall the days of My people be, and My chosen ones shall wear out the work of their hands.*" (Use the literal Hebrew from the footnote.)

Again that sounds strange. Would you buy a piece of furniture if part of the guarantee was that “In your lifetime you will see this furniture fall apart”? But what if that wasn’t talking about the furniture? What if it was a promise that your life will be so long that no matter how well anything is made someday it will fall apart – but you will go on? Oh, that’s different! But that is God’s promise. You will go on forever and ever.



How do we imagine this? Maybe think about celebrating your 500,000th birthday, and saying, “I just don’t bother celebrating any birthdays without at least 4 zero’s.”

We know this – that things will be very different!

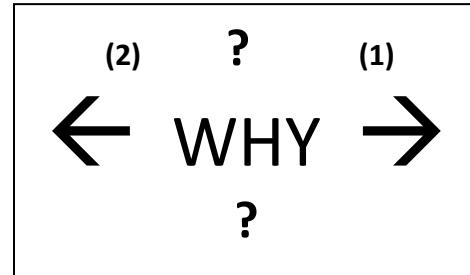
47. WHY?

Why does Jesus do all these things?

The word “Why?” moves in two different directions; into the future and into the past. There are two different ideas behind it

(1) **The goal** (“so that,” future) is so that we may be saved. **He truly wants us to be with Him forever**; to enjoy eternal life; to experience joy and happiness forever.

(2) **The cause** (“because,” past) is because **Jesus loves us**. Listen to these verses: “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. You are My friends . . .” (John 15:13-14) “While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly . . . God shows His love to us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. . . . while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, . . .” (Romans 5:6-10) **Jesus assures us of the Father’s love as well**. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) And, “the Father Himself loves you . . .” (John 16:27).



This is where we finish this lesson. It is the most important thing for you to know:

Jesus Christ the Son of God died and rose for you because He loves you. He cares about you personally and He wants you to live forever with Him.

49.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 4 – The Savior

Only-begotten Beget means to become someone's father. Jesus is the Only-begotten Son of the Father. He came forth from the Father in an absolutely unique way, and He shares fully in the nature of God.

Eternally-begotten That Jesus is eternally-begotten means that there never was a time when the Father was alone. Jesus was eternally the Son of God and always shared fully in the nature of God.

Incarnate That Jesus Christ took on Himself a human body and human nature as He was conceived by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary.

Word (2) Jesus is called the Word because He not only tells about but He is Himself the revelation of God's nature and grace.

Conceived Conceive means to begin to form a human being within the womb. The Holy Spirit acted so that Jesus was conceived within the virgin Mary and Jesus began His incarnation and human life in that way.

Substance The real or essential nature of a thing. That Jesus is of one substance with the Father means that Jesus is truly God in every way. Jesus is of one substance with the Father not just similar to the Father.

Divinity Being God, having the divine nature.

Humanity Being human, having human nature.

Theanthropos The combination of two Greek words "Theos" meaning God; and "Anthropos" meaning human. So Jesus is the "God-man."

Two Natures That Jesus has both divine and human natures.

Personal Union That in Jesus divine and human natures are joined in one person. Within Jesus God and Man are joined together.

Athanasius Bishop of Alexandria, Egypt. Before, during, and after the Council of Nicea he boldly witnessed and confessed that Jesus is truly God. Athanasius suffered greatly for his bold witness. He was not the author of the Athanasian Creed but it is named after him.

Arius He was a heretic who denied that Jesus is truly God, but did so in such a clever way that for some time many followed his teaching and turned against Athanasius and others for their witness to Jesus' divinity.

Virgin Never having had sex.

Anointed Having had the Holy Spirit given so that the person can serve God in the office of Prophet, Priest, or King. Anointing was done in the Old Testament by the pouring of Olive Oil mixed with Myrrh, Cinnamon, and other ingredients.

Messiah Hebrew word meaning "Anointed." The Greek word for "Anointed" is "Christ."

Mediator One who goes between others in order to reconcile them, to bring them together.

Salvation To save or rescue from death and hell.

Sacrifice To offer one life in place of another. Jesus made Himself the sacrifice for our salvation.

Ransom To free from sin by paying a price. Jesus ransomed us by paying the price in His own suffering and death.

Redeem To buy back. Jesus purchased us "not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death." Paul says, "You have been bought with a price."

Redemption The act of redeeming. The state of being redeemed.

Precious Of great price or value. (W)

Lodge A secret fraternal order that encourages honoring of "God" in general, not specifically the God of the Bible, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and claims that good works earn salvation and merit before God.

Three Offices The Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; those offices that involved anointing in the Old Testament and all come together in Jesus Christ.

Humiliation That during His earthly ministry Jesus did not always or in every way use His divine powers. (This is not the usual meaning of the word that has to do with lowering the dignity or pride.)

Exaltation That Jesus now always and in every way uses His divine powers, and He does so a human being.

Descent into Hell This is the first part of Jesus' exaltation. He did not descend into hell in order to suffer but to declare His victory over the devil.

Vicarious Endured, suffered, or performed by one person in place of another. (W)

Substitute One who takes the place of an other.

Atonement Atone means to make amends to another who is rightly offended. Jesus atoned for our sins to His Father who was rightly offended at our sins.

Justified To declare right and just, free from guilt.

Resurrection Raising the body from the dead.

Ascension 40 days after Easter Jesus left the earth bodily and entered into heaven.

Right Hand of the Father The right hand is the place of power. So the right hand of the Father is the place of power wherever God's power is exercised.

Authority The power or right to command, act, enforce obedience, and make final decisions.
(W) (1) Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth. He has the right to govern all things.

Intercede To go between, especially in speaking for another. Intercessory prayer is prayer for another person. Jesus continually prays for us.

Second Coming That Jesus will return, and at His return He will gather all people, to judge and separate between those who are His and those who are eternally lost. So the Second Coming is a time of great joy for us and we eagerly wait for it. But for those who do not know Jesus it will be a time of fear and loss.

The Great Exchange That Jesus takes our sins, death and hell on Himself on the cross and in exchange gives us His holiness, life and heaven.

Alien Someone else's. Alien righteousness is someone else's righteousness, namely Jesus' righteousness given to us.

Vicar One who stands in the place of another. Jesus is our vicar before His Father.

Satisfaction To satisfy means to give enough to meet the demand or debt. The Law of God demands punishment for sin and that demand must be satisfied. Only Jesus could satisfy the Law of God for us, through His suffering. Jesus' holiness requires eternal life for the world so the Law will not be satisfied until all who believe in Jesus have eternal life.

CATECHISM & MEMORY VERSES – (5) The Creed (Third Article)

50-a THE THIRD ARTICLE: SANCTIFICATION

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy Christian church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified, and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true. (149)

50-b Acts 2:17-18, 21 (NIV)

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
 your young men will see visions,
 your old men will dream dreams.

Even on My servants, both men and women,
 I will pour out My Spirit in those days,
 and they will prophesy. . . .

And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (67)

50-c John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (43)

50-d Romans 8:15-17

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (72)

50-e **Romans 8:26** The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (32)

50-f **1 Corinthians 2:14** 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 because they are spiritually discerned. (32)

50-g **John 3:5** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (24)

50-h **Ezekiel 36:26-27** "I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, . . ." (42)

50-i **2 Corinthians 5:17** "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (21)

50-j **Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (24)

50-k **John 15:26** "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me." (29)

50-l **Acts 1:8** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (34)

CHAPTER 5 – CONVERSION (The Third Article)

Small Catechism, Questions # 153 - 165

50. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

The Holy Spirit calls us to faith. Without His work we could not believe in Jesus. He actually creates faith within our souls, strengthens that faith during this life, and makes it permanent when we get to heaven.

51. THE THIRD ARTICLE

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

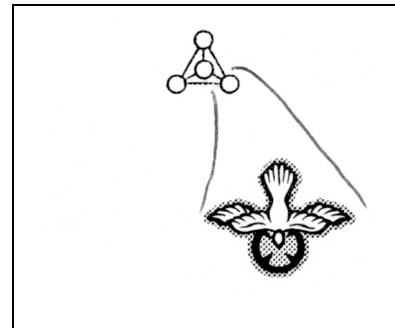
51.1 WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT

((Read through: Small Catechism Questions # 154 – 155))

A Quick Summary:

The Holy Spirit is God, the Third Person of the Trinity.

In the Nicene Creed He is called "*the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified.*"



How do we know that the Holy Spirit is God? We use the same four-part answer that we did with Jesus. We know that the Holy Spirit is God because He has:

1. **Divine Names** – The Bible calls Him God;
2. **Divine Attributes** – The Bible describes Him as God;
3. **Divine Works** – The Bible says He does things that only God can do, and;
4. **Divine Honor** – The Bible tells us to worship and pray to Him.

51.2 THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ((Small Catechism Questions # 156 – 161))

Third Article; Explanation; Paragraph 1

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified, and kept me in the true faith.

((Read through: Small Catechism Questions 156-158))

51.3 DESCRIBING THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are several ways we can describe the work of the Holy Spirit:

- Conversion**
- Regeneration**
- Bringing us to faith**
- Sanctification.**

One of the things we know with absolute certainty is this – everything the Holy Spirit does points to Jesus Christ. He doesn't go off on His own. Every word of the Holy Spirit has to do with Christ. Jesus said:

"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me." (John 15:26)

"He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you." (John 16:14)

Through the work of the Holy Spirit we also witness to Jesus:

"And you also will bear witness, . . ." (John 15:27)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

52. Martin Luther taught about the work of the Holy Spirit in the explanation of the Third Article:

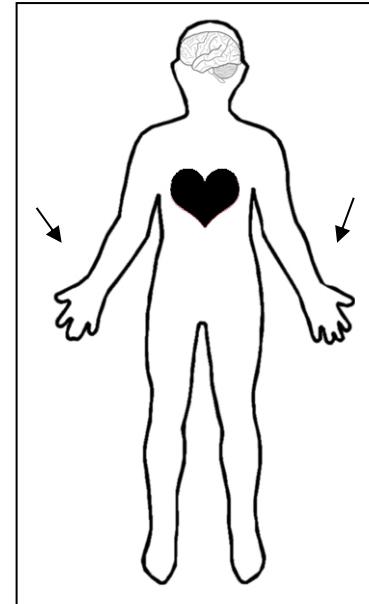
"But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith . . ."

Luther echoes **the 3-part pattern of Deuteronomy 6:4-5**. Verse 4 has been called the Old Testament Creed. "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One." Verse 5 describes human beings as made up of 3 parts: **spirit, soul and body**; and talks about the response of faith in each part. "Love the LORD your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **strength**."

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is a call from God to us. His Law demands that we respond in faith and have the Lord as our God. **But we are sinners** and because of our sinful nature we are not able to respond. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot even begin to believe in Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit does His work; and He does it in the same 3-fold pattern. **He Calls; Enlightens; and Sanctifies.** He does His work in your Heart; Soul; and "Strength."

THE HEART – In Scripture (and in modern use) the heart is the **innermost part** of the human being. It is the place of will, decisions and emotion.



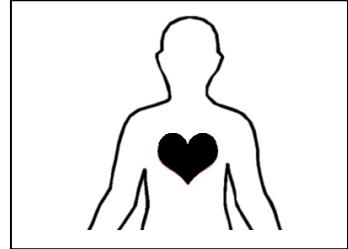
THE SOUL – In the ancient world they understood the soul to be roughly what we call the "mind," **the place of reason and thought**.

STRENGTH – Refers to everything we do with our lives, our skills, talents, work and abilities.

Now to describe the work of the Holy Spirit:

52.1 **CALLED (HE WORKS IN MY HEART)**

The Spirit begins His work down deep inside us. That is **the work of conversion**. It is (as one of my teachers in Seminary, Dr. Ji, used to say) **one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith**. Jesus said, *"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8) As Dr. Ji used to say, you cannot probe to the heart of the mystery. You cannot tell how conversion happens or look at it in the middle of its happening. All you can say is that in one instant a person does not believe in Jesus and is not a Christian; the next instant he does believe in Jesus and is a Christian. We can describe the things that lead up to that moment, and we can describe what happens after; but **the very act of conversion, in the very moment that it happens is a hidden work of God**.



Part of the reason **why it is hidden** is because it is a matter of the "heart" the innermost part of who and what we are. It is the beginning of who we are, and is something we are rather than something we think about or decide on.

Psychiatrists try to help people figure out why they feel a certain way or do certain things. Even when they are successful it is something that can take years to figure out. What is inside our heart, our true motives, is often mysterious and hidden from us.

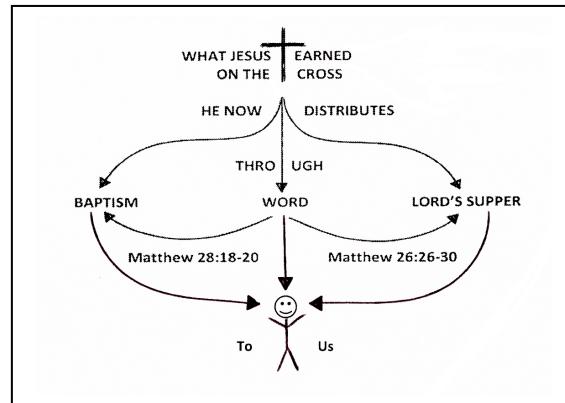
God knows the heart. It is not hidden from Him. In fact **this is where God begins His dealings with us**. The Bible talks about conversion as a new birth, a new beginning, and Paul says that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17) Through the work of the Holy Spirit we have a new beginning.

We find this teaching all through the Bible. One of the places it is most clear is **Ezekiel 36:26 - 27**, "**I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My rules."

The Holy Spirit does this through certain tools. We call them the "**Means of Grace**." They are what God uses to work forgiveness of sins, faith and salvation within us. They are **(1) the Word of God**, the message about Jesus Christ, **(2) Baptism**, and **(3) the Lord's Supper**. (We will take up Baptism and the Lord's Supper in their own lessons.) Note again the place of the Cross in the following diagram, and the **difference between something being earned and being given**.

Through the "Means of Grace" the Spirit teaches us about Jesus. He calls to us through the Gospel and invites us to believe in Jesus. He also actually does the work of creating faith within our hearts. We say He "effectively calls" us into faith in Jesus.

So . . . Our beginning as Christians is this: **"I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel . . ."**



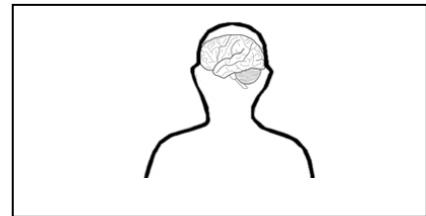
52.2 ENLIGHTENED (HE WORKS WITHIN MY SOUL)

The work of the Holy Spirit continues. He began in the deepest part of our being, He will continue to work through our whole being. **This second part is – He enlightens us with His gifts.** What does that mean?

Paul prays for the Ephesians that "having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, . . . you may know what is the hope to which He has called you." (Ephesians 1:18)

Left to ourselves we have our own way of thinking and reasoning. The unbeliever does not grasp or understand God's Word. Paul says, "Their minds were made dull." (2 Corinthians 3:14 (NIV)) **Our own old sinful nature** does not readily accept God's Word either. **Its desire** does not match what God desires for us. **Its understanding** does not match the reality of God's created world. And **its nature** does not match what God is like. **So we have conflicts inside ourselves, in our relationships, and with the created world.**

The Holy Spirit works within us to form a new pattern of thinking and understanding. He does this **through God's Word, the Scriptures.** That is why it is so important for us to continue in reading and studying our Bible. Gathering **in Church** to worship God is vital because **(1)** there **we are in God's presence** and it is a time to receive from God and listen to God; and **(2)** because we are in **the company of other Christians** who also are being "enlightened" – formed and fashioned in their thinking by the Holy Spirit.



Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

Over time we begin to notice that we are thinking in ways we would not have before. We are understanding things in different ways than before. And we begin to want to know more about Jesus Christ and His teachings. That is a sign that the Holy Spirit is doing His work.

So .I . . Our Christian walk continues: ". . . enlightened me with His gifts . . ."

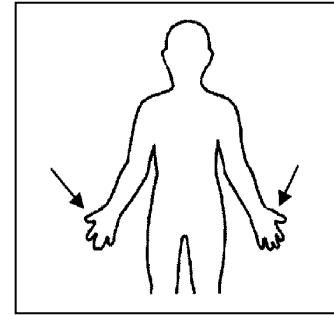
52.3 SANCTIFIED (HE WORKS IN MY LIFE AND STRENGTH)

((Small Catechism Questions # 162 – 163))

He began His work in our hearts; and continues within our souls. **The Holy Spirit continues by working His work into our lives.** "Sanctified" has to do with our life. This is the third part of Deuteronomy 6:5 "... and with all your strength."

We actually do **find our lives being changed** by the power of the Holy Spirit. It can even be a surprise! We begin to do things we would not have before. We are being changed. But this is never complete in this life and we will have to wait until we get to heaven to be completely changed. Then we will be rid of the old sinful nature.

Paul says, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."* (Galatians 5:22-23)
Read the rest of the passage (Galatians 5:16-25).



Also read Romans 8:5-17.

So . . . Our Christian walk continues: "... **sanctified . . .**"

52.4 KEPT ((Small Catechism Question # 165))

The last part of the work of the Holy Spirit is that **He keeps us in the Christian faith.** The Holy Spirit sustains our faith and keeps us believing in Jesus. **Without the work of the Holy Spirit every second of every day we could not continue to believe in Jesus, not even for an instant.** This is the last part of the work of the Holy Spirit, but it is a work that has to go on forever, or as the New Testament says, into the ages of the ages. He has to continue without stopping. He is the Lord of Life (Nicene Creed) and from Him we receive everlasting life (Galatians 6:8) and entrance into the everlasting kingdom (2 Peter 1:11).

So . . . Our walk as Christians continues: "... and **kept me in the true faith.**"

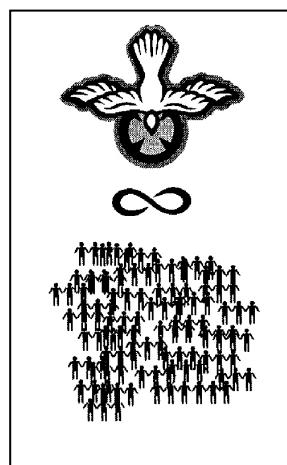
53. GATHERS

Third Article; Explanation; Paragraph 2

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In the second paragraph of the Explanation Luther added the word "gathers."

The Holy Spirit doesn't do these things (call, enlighten and sanctify) you or me alone. He calls, enlightens and sanctifies **everyone who has been called to faith in Jesus. As He does He brings us together** into what God has called "**the Church.**"



The various names for the Church show us a picture:

- 1) The New Testament name for the Church is "*ekklesia*" a Greek word meaning "those called out," that is called out from the rest of the world.
- 2) The word "**Congregation**" means literally "coming together."
- 3) The Jewish word "**Synagogue**" (where Paul told so many about Jesus) means literally "walking together."
- 4) Our own Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod is designed to be a "**synod**" a walking together.



Since we have been called out, called together, and gathered together by the Holy Spirit part of the whole purpose of the Church is that **we are to walk together and support each other as Christians**. It was never God's plan that we would have to walk alone as Christians.

So . . . Our walk as Christians is together with each other. "**In the same way He . . . gathers . . .**" (We will look more closely at this in the next chapter on the Church.)

54. **TO SHARE THE FAITH** ((Small Catechism Question # 164))

Third Article; Explanation; Paragraph 3:

In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

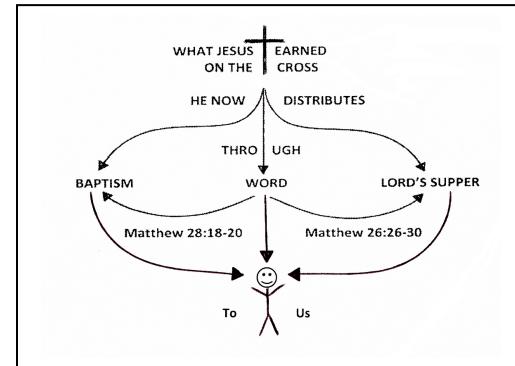
Again, Lutherans use the term "**Means of Grace**." There are specific ways God gives the forgiveness of sins to us. The ways that God gives the forgiveness of sins to us are:

1. **The Word of God** (the Bible with its message about Jesus' death and resurrection for us);
2. **Baptism**; and
3. **The Lord's Supper**.

Look again at **the diagram**. What Jesus earned on the cross; He now distributes through the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Martin Luther pointed out that there is **a difference between forgiving sins and distributing or giving that forgiveness to us**. We are **forgiven once, by Jesus on the cross; but God gives and distributes and tells us about that forgiveness over and over**. We need to be told many times over because we fall into sin, and we doubt and worry about God's forgiveness.

In the Christian Church the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bring forgiveness of sins to sinners. He does this through the means of Grace (God's Word, Baptism, and the



Lord's Supper. As He does His work He does not stop with us. He sends us out and invites us to be a part of the work of God.

Toward the beginning of this lesson we looked at John 15:27 "And you also will bear witness, . . ." and Acts 1:8 ". . . you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

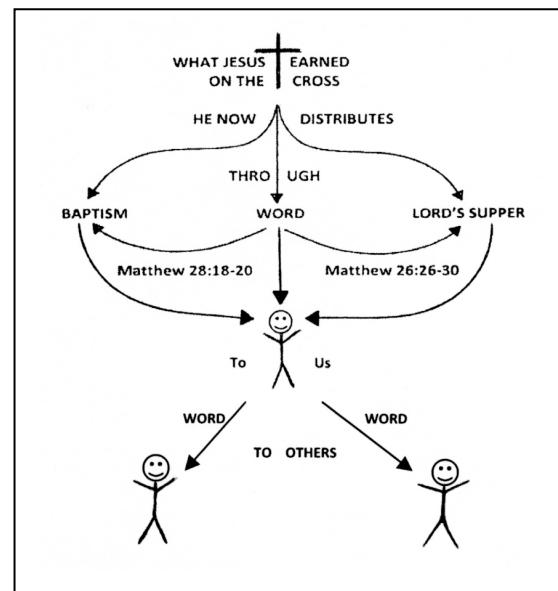
54.1 IN THE CHURCH:

- (1) We share the joy and freedom of being the forgiven people of God in Jesus Christ. Then
- (2) We share forgiveness with each other. We share it, we proclaim it, we give forgiveness to each other, and we remind each other about the forgiveness of sins we have through the cross of Jesus. We do this for each one of us within the Christian faith. And
- (3) We seek to tell everyone outside the Christian faith about the forgiveness of sins that we have in Jesus. This is the focus of our preaching. Billy Graham says he follows a simple rule: Remember that with every sermon you preach there may be someone there for whom it will be their only opportunity to hear the plan of salvation. If I have not told them that, I have not done my job. (Before Billy Graham said it, this was the motto of the first Lutheran Hour preacher back in the 1930's.)

54.2 SHARING THE GOSPEL

The greatest thing we can do with our lives, is to speak the praises of Jesus Christ to the world. Jesus said, "Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven." (Matthew 10:32 NIV) We may not all be able to become pastors and preach, or go to the mission field. But every Christian can use the Word of God and tell about Jesus where we are.

We do this: In our families, parents to children and children to parents; **with our friends**; and **neighbor to neighbor**. There will be times when our friends need our prayers, and times we will have the chance to tell about Jesus. In our families we talk about Jesus and encourage each other. Wherever we go in life we carry the news of Jesus' death and resurrection with us. This is **the Great Commission** ("Go, make disciples of all nations, . . ." Matthew 28:18-19). Jesus said we would (Acts 1:8) and it is just simply what we do ("Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word." Acts 8:4)



54.3 ANOINTING REVISITED

Now we can complete something from the fourth lesson, the diagram about the Three Offices. We add one more column to show what we are to do as we are led by the Holy Spirit.

ANOINTING					
The Symbolism: Anointing → Oil → Fire → The Holy Spirit					
	Office	OT Example	Purpose & Tasks	Jesus' Purpose & Tasks	Our Purpose & Tasks
(1)	Prophet	Elisha	1. To Foretell (the future) 2. To Forthtell (God's Word)	To Teach (about faith, salvation, God the Father, prayer, the future, heaven, etc.)	To tell about Jesus
(2)	Priest	Aaron	1. To Sacrifice 2. To Pray 3. To Declare Forgiveness	1. To Sacrifice (Himself as the Lamb of God) 2. To Pray (for us continually) 3. To Earn & Give Forgiveness	1. -- 2. To Pray for others 3. To tell about & share Forgiveness
(3)	King	David	1. To Rule ----- 2. To Serve	1. To Rule (shown through His miracles) ----- 2. To Serve (Matthew 20:28 John 13:4-5)	1. (We will rule with Jesus in heaven) ----- 2. Here we serve (in following Jesus)

So . . . Our walk as Christians involves going to the whole world.

55. AT THE END ((Small Catechism Questions # 167 – 168))

Third Article; Explanation; Paragraphs 4-5:

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

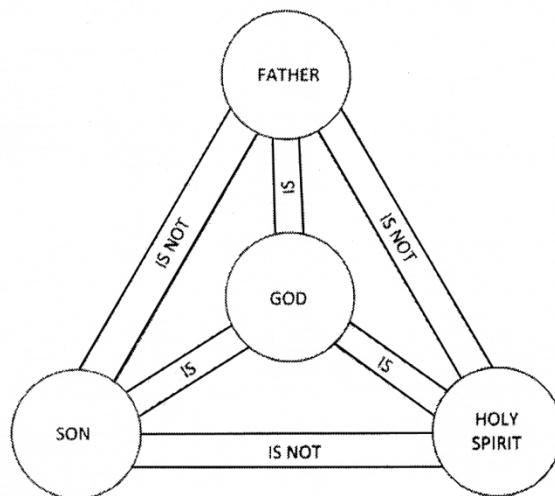
Remember, the Holy Spirit is called "the Lord and Giver of life." (Nicene Creed) At the end of the world, when Jesus returns He will give us life once again. Look in the last

lesson at the 6th step in Jesus' exaltation. **The Holy Spirit is closely and completely involved in the events of the Last Day. He raises our bodies, He gives us eternal life, and the Holy Spirit will keep us living and believing in Jesus forever.** So we say in the creed, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."

So . . . Our walk as Christians is forever.

56. THE TRINITY

Since we have now talked about each of the Persons of the Trinity it is a good time to bring together our teaching of the doctrine of the Trinity. Here is the classic Trinitarian insignia. This is also found on our Church ceiling above the altar.



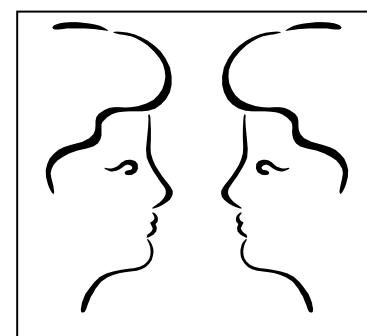
56.1 ILLUSTRATIONS

Some common ways of trying to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity are:

- A) The Clover – has three leaves but is one plant
- B) The Sun / The Rays of Light / The Heat we Receive
- C) An Apple – is core, flesh, and skin
- D) Water – Comes in three forms: Ice; Liquid Water; and Steam, but each one is water.

None of these is a perfect illustration. Neither is the next one.

- E) **My favorite illustration** is that of the Harm brothers: Fred and Rudy were twins and yes they sometimes attended each others' classes and went on dates for each other. You know how **identical twins** happen. Before they were born, just after being conceived there was only one cell. Later they split into two. **Before they split** – were they one soul or two?



If they were two souls already then were they "two persons in one substance"? **If they were one** soul – then did God add a soul and if so who had the original soul? You see, I can ask a question about one substance and two persons where you can't really be sure of the answer. If you

can't figure that out and it is part of our normal human experience why would we expect that talking about God would be simpler?

56.2 OUR LANGUAGE ABOUT THE TRINITY

There are **two ways the Christian Church has talked about the Trinity.**

One is by looking at **the relationships, things in common and differences between the Persons.**

Another is by looking at **the works of the Persons.**

The second way is easier to understand, but let's begin with the first.

- 1) **Look through the first part of the Athanasian Creed** (30-C above). It looks complicated at first but **it's actually easier than it looks.**

There are things we can say equally about each person, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are the things we say about God. They are **shared attributes.** God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit each are **eternal, uncreated, almighty, holy**, and so on. The Athanasian Creed # 6-14 are simply a long list of statements. Each are true and each are fairly simple in and of themselves.

But (as # 3-5, 11-12, and 19 say) **we do not want to "confuse the persons" or "divide the substance."**

I would be **"confusing the persons"** if I was leading the congregation in prayer and began to speak to Jesus, thanking Him for His love in suffering and dying for the sins of the world, and then (having forgotten how I had started the prayer) I were to say, "and thank You for sending Your Son." I would then have confused God the Father with God the Son.

I would be **"dividing the substance"** if I were to talk about the Trinity as being 3 gods or about each Person as being 1/3 of God.

We take the doctrine of the Trinity seriously and we want to know what we can know about each of the Persons.

The next part of the Athanasian Creed (# 20-26) **talks about the differences** between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We talk about the Father begetting the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. In the same way we talk about the Father as the "Fountainhead" of the Trinity.

But even as there are differences there is not a difference in rank, glory, honor or eternity. There never was a time when the Father was alone. Why? Because the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal.

The three Persons are **equal.** **We worship** Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **And we pray to** Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And the Persons of the Trinity are **in perfect harmony** with one another.

- 2) The second way of talking about the Trinity is **to talk about the acts of God.**

The theologians call this the "economic Trinity." One of the definitions of economy is how things work. So this is what the three Persons of the Trinity do to save and bless us.

The special work of **God the Father** is **Creation**.

The special work of **God the Son** is **Salvation or Redemption**.

The special work of **the Holy Spirit** is **Sanctification, calling us to faith and keeping us in faith**.

This is the way the Small Catechism talks about the Trinity.

We can address our **prayers to each of the Person of the Trinity**, paying special attention to the work of each Person. The Explanations to the three Articles of the Creed teach us this pattern, and it is reflected in our hymnals.

So we can address our prayers **to the Father** thanking and praising Him for the work of creating and preserving us (1st Article).

We can address our prayers **to the Son, Jesus**, thanking and praising Him for the work of saving us, earning forgiveness of sins and making us children of God (2nd Article).

We can address our prayers **to the Holy Spirit** thanking and praising Him for the work of bringing us to faith and keeping us in faith (3rd Article).

And we can speak our prayers **to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit**, grouping everything together, praising the three persons of the Trinity for all the works of God.

2b) While we talk about the 3 Articles of the Creed and the work of each of the Persons of the Trinity;

Each Person of the Trinity shares in the work of each of the others.

We talk about **the work of creation** as the work of God the Father. But Jesus is the Word of God and all things were created through Him. And the Holy Spirit was brooding over the waters in the beginning.

We talk about **the work of salvation** as being the work of Jesus. But it is God the Father who sent His only begotten Son. And it is the Holy Spirit who strengthened Jesus for His work.

We talk about **the work of bringing us to faith** as the work of the Holy Spirit. But Jesus Himself calls us into His kingdom. And no one can come to Him unless the Father draws him.

So every work of God is shared by all.

This is another illustration of how the Persons of the Trinity are in perfect harmony with one another.

BETWEEN CHAPTERS The challenge is to carefully read Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

59.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 5 – Conversion

Spirit A being without a body.

Holy Ghost The same as Holy Spirit.

Trinity Father, Son and Holy Spirit; three divine Persons in one God.

Confusing the Persons To mix up which person of the Trinity you are talking about. To talk about or pray to one of the Persons of the Trinity in terms that are appropriate only to another of the Persons.

Coeternal Equally eternal; existing together eternally. (W)

Coequal Equal with another person or thing; of the same rank, dignity or power. (W)

Counselor A helper who gives guidance and support.

Pentecost “The fiftieth day” after Easter, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and they began to boldly and publicly tell about Jesus.

Conversion To be changed from not believing in Jesus, to believing in Jesus; this happens only by the Holy Spirit creating faith within your soul.

Regeneration To be born again; spiritual rebirth; conversion.

New Birth To be born again; to become new and different through conversion.

Re-birth To be born again; spiritual rebirth; conversion.

Heirs Those who receive any part of another’s property, usually through that other person’s death. As heirs of God you and I receive blessings through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Believe / Believe in

- (1) To “believe in” means to trust in someone and put hope in their ability to help.
- (2) To “believe” means to accept what someone says is true. So “believing in” God and “believing” God are different things, though they do go together.

Heart The innermost part, the heart of a thing. The deepest part of who and what you are. David talked about “All my inmost being” Psalm 103:1 (NIV).

Call (1) To invite a person to believe in Jesus. So the Holy Spirit calls us through the Gospel.

(2) To actually bring you to faith in Jesus. To say the Holy Spirit “effectively calls” you means that He actually creates faith in Jesus within you.

Spirit vs. Soul There is a difference between

- (1) the life within us (spirit) and the rational thinking part of us (soul); or
- (2) between the desiring and choosing part (spirit) and the thinking, reasoning part (soul). Spirit and soul are non-physical; they do not cease to be when the body dies, but at death are separated from the body and we are judged by God.

Means of Grace The things God uses (“means”) to give salvation by creating and strengthening your faith in Jesus. Through the Means of Grace God takes what Jesus earned on the cross and makes them yours. The means of Grace are

- (1) the Word of God,
- (2) the Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Enlighten To give light; to enable someone to see and understand the truth. The Holy Spirit enlightens us through God’s Word so we see and understand the things of God.

Sanctify There are two ways the Bible uses this word.

- (1) As it is used mostly in the New Testament it means to make holy or sinless in God’s eyes through Jesus Christ.
- (2) As it is used mostly in the Old Testament it means to set apart for God’s use. Jesus calls us apart from the world and calls us His Church.

Sanctification – wide sense The whole work of the Holy Spirit, bringing us to faith and making us able to lead a godly life. (SC)

Sanctification – narrow sense Specifically what the Holy Spirit does to direct and empower the believer to lead a godly life. (SC)

Good Works

- (1) A good work in the sight of God is one that:
 - (a) comes from faith;
 - (b) is done according to God’s word; and
 - (c) is done out of love for your neighbor.
- (2) We also talk about civil righteousness. Some works are good in the worldly sense. They do things to benefit your neighbor but they might not be done from faith, or they are done for selfish reasons and not out of love for your neighbor. So they can both: be good works in this world, and; not be good in God’s eyes.

Keep To cause something to continue. To protect and sustain. The Holy Spirit keeps us in faith.

Gather To bring together. The Holy Spirit gathers Christians together into the Church.

CATECHISM & MEMORY VERSES – (6) The Church

Section 3: Table of Duties

Certain passages of Scripture for various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities.

To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers

- 60-a The overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. *1 Timothy 3:2-4 (51)*
- 60-b He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. *1 Timothy 3:6 (21)*
- 60-c He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. *Titus 1:9 (28)*

What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors

- 60-d The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. *1 Corinthians 9:14 (17)*
- 60-e Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. *Galatians 6:6-7 (29)*
- 60-f The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.” *1 Timothy 5:17-18 (45)*
- 60-g We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. *1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (41)*
- 60-h Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. *Hebrews 13:17 (42)*

Of Civil Government

- 60-i Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do

wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. *Romans 13:1-4 (129)*

Of Citizens

60-j Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. *Matthew 22:21 (12)*

60-k It is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. *Romans 13:5-7 (63)*

60-l I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Savior. *1 Timothy 2:1-3 (44)*

60-m Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good. *Titus 3:1 (21)*

60-n Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority; or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. *1 Peter 2:13-14 (41)*

To Husbands

60-o Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. *1 Peter 3:7 (40)*

60-p Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. *Colossians 3:19 (11)*

To Wives

60-q Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. *Ephesians 5:22 (9)*

60-r They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. *1 Peter 3:5-6 (34)*

To Parents

60-s Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. *Ephesians 6:4 (18)*

To Children

60-t Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and your mother" – which is the first commandment with a promise – "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." *Ephesians 6:1-3 (42)*

To Workers of All Kinds

60-u Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. *Ephesians 6:5-8* (78)

To Employers and Supervisors

60-v Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him. *Ephesians 6:9* (34)

To Youth

60-w Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. *1 Peter 5:5-6* (50)

To Widows

60-x The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. *1 Timothy 5:5-6* (42)

To Everyone

60-y The commandments . . . are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." *Romans 13:9* (14)

60-z I urge . . . that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. *1 Timothy 2:1* (12)

***Let each his lesson learn with care,
and all the household well shall fare.***

Other verses about the Church:

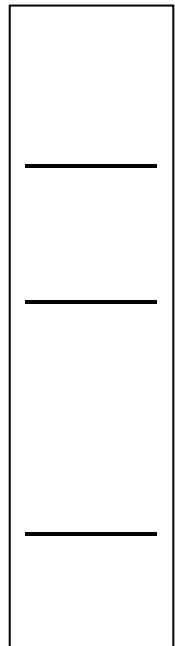
60-aa **Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (68)

60-bb **Matthew 5:14, 16** "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. . . . In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (44)

60-cc **Ephesians 4:4-6** There is one body and one spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (43)

60-dd **1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (36)

60-ee **Revelation 7:9-10** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (63)



CHAPTER 6 – THE CHURCH

Small Catechism, Questions # 166 – 192

60. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

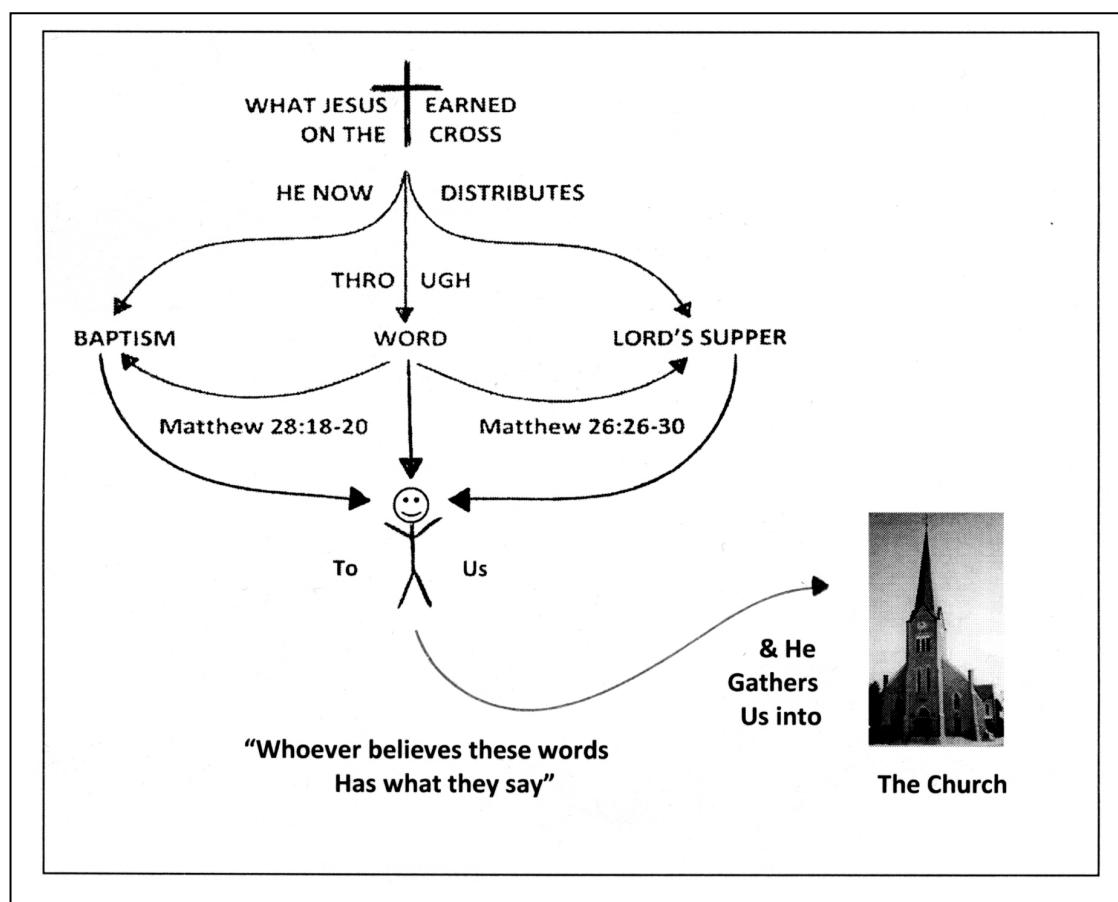
WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Luther answers: *“The Church is sheep that know the voice of their Shepherd.”*

Put it simply – the Church is **all people everywhere who believe in Jesus, who know Him as their Savior.**

“The Church” is not only one of the great teachings of the Bible; it is **a great idea** – that God puts us in the company of other believers so that we do not have to go through this life alone as Christians.

Before anything else let's complete the diagram from Section 54.



SO WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Here are more details.

61. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH ((Small Catechism Questions # 169 – 171))

Let's start with the description of the Church that's found in the **Nicene Creed**:

“I believe in one holy Christian and Apostolic Church”

This has a list of words that we can talk about.

61.1 ONE

We believe that **the Christian Church is one**. There is a reason for this. Jesus talked about Himself as the Good Shepherd and said about the sheep, “they will listen to My voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” (John 10:16) Listen to **Jesus’ prayer** in John 17, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, **that they may all be one**, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in us, . . .” (vv. 20-21) Paul follows Jesus’ words when he says, “There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)



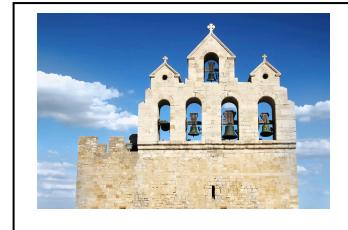
We might see a lot of **divisions** between Christians. But there is **something** happening that is a lot **more basic**. Like Luther said, “The Church is sheep that know the voice of their Shepherd.” To be in a sheep that belongs to Jesus is to be part of His Church. There is only one Jesus and all who are His are united in being His Church.

This means that when I go over to **Africa** and talk with Christians there I find their experience of knowing Jesus is the same as mine. It also means that when I talk with Christians from **other denominations** (Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Eastern Orthodox, etc.) underneath our differences there is a basic unity. We know that Jesus is our Savior and that it is by His cross and empty tomb that we are made right with God and saved.



61.11 DENOMINATIONS

It is true that the visible Christian Church is divided into many denominations. There are differences in what we believe, and they are important differences. When I was a young pastor in Iowa, something happened at a meeting of local clergy. Most of the pastors there were talking about how there is no real difference between denominations. This went on for a while, including Lutheran, Catholic and Protestant pastors agreeing that we all believe the same thing. I can’t remember if I said anything. But then a Catholic priest spoke up and said, “Wait a minute. **There are very real differences** between us. For example we believe that we pray to Mary and other saints. I would not expect all of you to go along with that. I would expect you to honor those beliefs by recognizing that they are different from yours and not joining in. To ignore our differences does not respect each other. And it isn’t honest. So what we do is: We treat each other with kindness and civility; but we are honest about our differences.” That made sense.



I believe he said it very well that day. That is the pattern we try to follow, and it is the pattern of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. We honor and respect Christians of other denominations, but we do not all believe the same thing. We believe that heaven will be filled with Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Eastern Orthodox, and many others including Lutherans. Of course, **when we are in heaven** we will all believe the same things. Paul said, “Now I know in part, then I shall know fully”. For now there are differences in our beliefs. We honor each other when we recognize and respect those differences. And we also speak our beliefs to each other, including when we believe the other is wrong. We go to Scripture to seek to persuade each other. Peter says we should do this “with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:16).

((By the way – Of course it’s true that we Lutherans believe we are right in what we believe. If we didn’t believe it we wouldn’t be Lutherans. When we tell others what we believe we want them to know that we have come to those beliefs through a long study of the Scriptures. These things are not simply opinions, they are what we have found that the Bible teaches.))

61.12 **ONE (continued)**

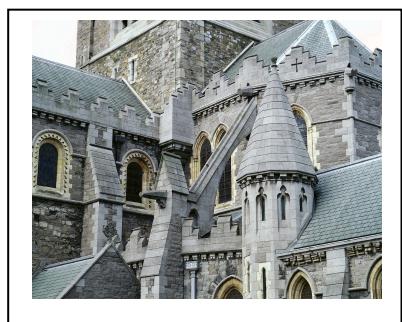
Because the Christian church is one, **we are joined together**. We are given to each other to support each other, to pray for each other, to care for each other, and when necessary to correct each other. Paul says a number of times that we are joined together.

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul talks about **the Church as a body**, joined together with every part supporting each other. We cannot live without each other; and when one part is blessed or suffers the other parts are blessed or suffer as well. ((Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27))

In Galatians 6:2 he says, “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

In Ephesians 4:1-13 he talks about the Church growing together as one body, to grow in good works and Christian maturity.

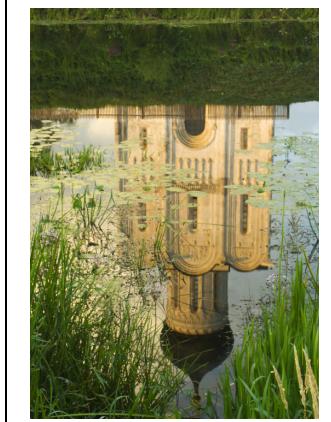
Because of this oneness the New Testament teaches us certain things **about our lives together**. Relationships between: husband & wife; father & son; ruler & people are governed by that knowledge. All relationships are transformed by that oneness. Families and societies are changed.



Maybe **the most extreme example** is found in Paul’s letter to Philemon. There Paul writes a letter on behalf of the slave Onesimus. Onesimus became a Christian while he was in prison with Paul. Paul sends him back to Philemon and says: Now he is your brother. Receive him as you would receive me. Philemon is not to treat Onesimus the same as he did before they were Christians. **Now they are brothers** and will share eternal life. Many have said that this letter was the death knell of slavery in the Christian world. While it took a long time happening, it was not possible for slavery to survive Paul’s words.

61.2 **HOLY** – ((Small Catechism Question # 172))

The Christian Church is holy. That does not mean we believe that we have reached perfection, far from it. **One of the least understood proofs** of the Christian faith is this: We are not what we would like to be. There are other religions that talk about “holy men” and act like the leaders of their religion have made it. We Christians follow someone who is so far beyond what we could ever achieve morally and spiritually that we are simply trying to follow in some small way. We are really not able to model Jesus to others. That is because of who He is. And this is how it should be. It’s not about us, it’s about Jesus. It’s like John the Baptist said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)



The Christian Church is holy because it is **clothed with the holiness of Jesus**. He lived a life of perfect holiness, perfect faith and perfect obedience. Remember, we talked about this in two parts: the active obedience, that Jesus fulfilled the commandments perfectly during His life; and the passive obedience, that Jesus submitted to the suffering on the cross in perfect obedience and faith. That perfect life of Jesus is reckoned (King James) or credited, accounted, etc. (more modern translations) to us. We are clothed in the robes of His righteousness. The Bible says it repeatedly: in Isaiah 61:10 (“He has clothed me with the garments of salvation.”), in the parable of the wedding banquet (Matthew 22:1-14) where the guests are given special clothes so they may share in the wedding banquet, and in other places.

Why must the Christian Church be clothed specifically with the holiness of Jesus? Very simply it fits us. The holiness of Jesus is specifically a human holiness. Jesus fulfilled the commandments as a human being. Galatians 4:4-5 says “God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, . . .” This is part of the teachings we discussed in Chapter 2 talking about The Great Exchange and about Alien Righteousness. We never have a holiness of our own to boast of, but through all eternity always will live before God on the basis of the righteousness of Christ.

61.3 **CHRISTIAN** – ((Small Catechism Question # 173))

We carry the name of Christ when we are called Christian. Acts 11:26 tells us **“in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.”** The word Christian apparently meant “followers of Christ,” but with a mildly derogatory tone to it. It began as an insult. But Christians accepted it as an honor to be known as followers of Christ. The name “Christian” should still remind us that we are followers of Jesus Christ, and that it costs something to follow Jesus.

61.4 **APOSTOLIC**

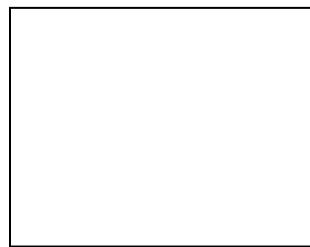
This Church is Apostolic because **we follow the teachings of the Apostles**. Paul says, “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.” We are anchored in and built on the teachings of the Scriptures, the New Testament (Apostles) and the Old Testament (Prophets). That is where we get our teaching and that is the only “source and norm” of Christian doctrine.

<p>QUESTION: Then what about the “Lutheran Confessions,” the Small Catechism, the Augsburg Confession, and other books that we Lutherans say we follow? If we say the Bible is the only source and norm of Christian teaching what place do they have?</p>	<p>ANSWER: We believe the teachings of the Small Catechism & the Augsburg Confession because they are faithful to the Bible. I find that I agree with the Lutheran Confessions in how they look at the Bible.</p>
<p>Notice the relationship between them. The Lutheran confessions do not replace or outrank the Bible. They agree with the Bible. If I could not say this I would not continue to be a Lutheran.</p>	

62. MORE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CHURCH (Small Catechism Questions # 175 – 178))

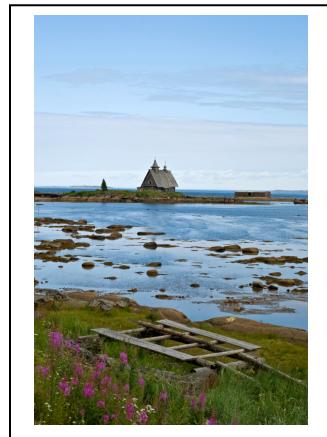
62.1 INVISIBLE

The Church is called “invisible” simply because **we cannot see the faith that is in the hearts of other believers.** It is not our goal to be invisible or to keep others from knowing that we are Christian. But the whole number of Christians, who is and who is not really a believer in Jesus, where they are, and so on can – only God can know that. He is the one who is in charge of the Christian Church. He governs it and leads each one of us in ways we do not understand.



62.2 VISIBLE

The Church is “visible” because **we are in the world**, given the task of going and making disciples of all nations. **Our light is to shine before all men.** Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35) And in the New Testament others said about the Church, “See how they love one another.”



62.3 MIXED

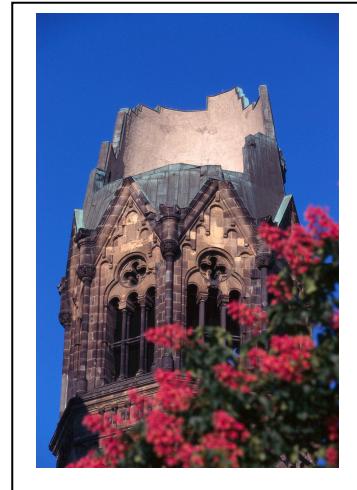
Within the visible Church now and until Jesus returns there will be a **mixture of believers and unbelievers.** Jesus told the parable about the enemy who sowed weeds among the wheat. Yes there is a mixture. Yes, there are weeds among the wheat. But there is also wheat among the weeds. That's what the Church is. So if you decide to stop going to Church because there are hypocrites there – that is just plain silly and you are not listening to Jesus.

62.4 **MILITANT**

The Church on earth is called “The Church Militant” because **we are in this world, still having to battle the devil and our own old sinful nature.** Paul says, “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but . . . against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” He talks about the enemies arrayed against us as the world, the flesh and the devil.

62.5 **TRIUMPHANT**

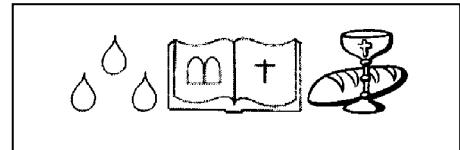
The Church in heaven is called “The Church Triumphant” because the Christians there celebrate the victory and reign with Christ.

63. **THE SIGNS OF THE CHURCH** ((Small Catechism Question # 174))

We teach that the Christian Church is present **where the Gospel is preached and the sacraments (Baptism & the Lord's Supper) are administered according to Christ's command.**

Isaiah 55:10-11 says, “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” **God's Word does what it is sent to do** – create faith and make new Christians.

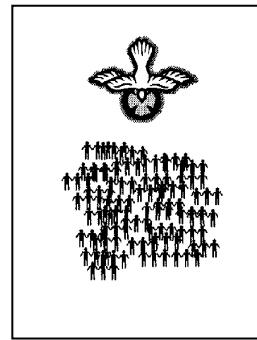
God's Word is what carries the power **in Baptism and the Lord's Supper.** So where the Gospel is preached and there are Baptisms and the Lord's Supper there the Church must be. The Holy Spirit will give faith, He will create Christians, and He will sustain us in faith.

63.1 **THE GIFTS GOD GIVES HIS CHURCH**

Paul says, “When He ascended on high . . . He gave gifts to men.” (Ephesians 4:8, quoting Psalm 68:18) And “He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” Ephesians 4:11-12). **The gifts are the gifts of Jesus** because they are used for the work of Jesus. They are **what Jesus is doing among us.** We are sent to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18) because Jesus is “a light for the nations, that . . . salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6) We “bear one another's burdens” (Galatians 6:1) because Jesus has borne the burdens of all.

God has equipped His Church with everything we need to care for and strengthen each other and to reach out to the rest of the world.

As he talks about the gifts of God Paul says “there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit,” and **the Holy Spirit “apportions** to each one individually as He wills.” (1 Corinthians 12:3-11) This is an important principle: We do not serve in the Church wherever we want doing whatever we want; **we serve as God chooses and directs.** There are restrictions about who may serve in certain ways. Paul lists “. . . sober-minded, self controlled, . . . not quarrelsome, not a lover of money” and “not a recent convert” among the qualifications for pastors. (1 Timothy 3:1-13)



Several passages in the New Testament teach us that **the office of Pastor** is reserved only to certain qualified men. (1 Corinthians 14:33-37 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12) It is not a matter of “what we want” or of “church traditions.” Why Jesus did not call a woman to serve as an apostle we do not know. Why Paul says it is a command of the Lord that women are not called to be pastors we do not know. There are all kinds of ideas but finally it is God’s choice and His Word. (See “What About . . . The Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Office,” Dr. A. L. Barry, President, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod)

We live in a time when almost everybody demands to be allowed to do whatever they want. It is a test of our commitment to the Word of God, that **we follow God’s Word** when we do not understand it or **when it is not popular.** But that is what it means to be the Church.

63.2 PASTORS AND PEOPLE

So we are **bound together as pastors and people who share the Word of God**, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the gifts of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper with each other. When we share the teachings of Jesus with each other, we build each other up and strengthen each other. We pray for each other, care for each other, serve each other, and love each other. We exhort each other, correct each other, and forgive each other.

Our **Augsburg Confession** says, “Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. . . .

“So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted.” (Augsburg Confession Articles 4,5)

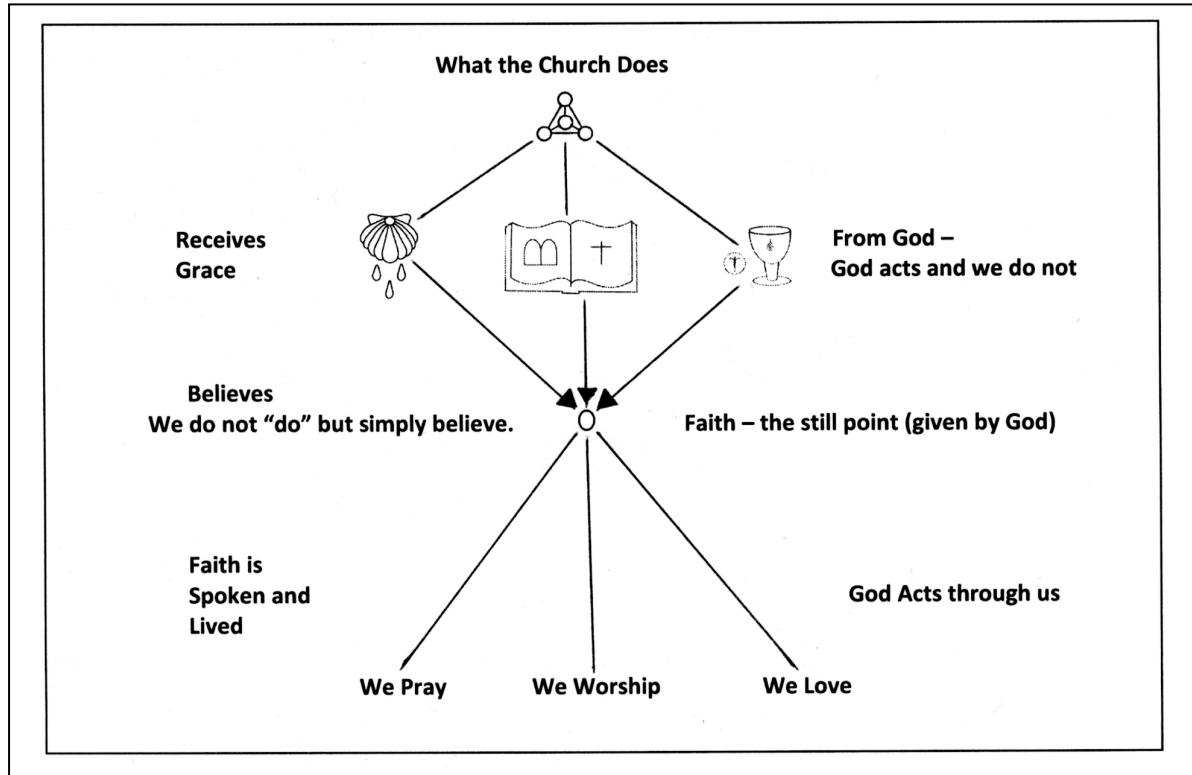
64. WHAT DOES THE CHURCH DO? ((Small Catechism Question # 179))

Let’s look at the church again.

Remember back in Chapter 2 we talked about “the 5 Great Themes.” That is the pattern of the Christian life and the 5 Great Themes are: Grace; Faith; Prayer; Rest; Love.

If we ask the question, “What does the Church do?” they look like this:

The Church (1) receives grace; (2) believes; (3) prays; (4) worships; and (5) loves. Now we take them up one at a time.



64.1 # 1 – THE CHURCH RECEIVES GRACE

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." (Exodus 20:2)

It all begins with God who gives forgiveness of sins and life. **He is the do-er** and we receive blessings from Him. Jesus Christ was born for us, was crucified for us and rose for us.

So God makes us His own and gives us a new identity as His people.

What Jesus earned for us on the Cross He distributes through The Word; Baptism; and the Lord's Supper. Back in the first lesson we called these things the Means of Grace. (And we will talk about this again in lessons 8-10.)

Through the Means of Grace we receive all the blessings of God; Forgiveness; Life; and Salvation – and many other blessings as well.

64.2 # 2 – THE CHURCH BELIEVES

"You shall have no other gods before Me." (1st Commandment)

Everything begins in our relationship with God. We receive His blessings by faith.

At its heart faith means simply to believe; nothing more complicated.

Paul talks about faith and says, "Abraham believed God . . ." He believed what God told him; **the Words and Promises of God**. At its core faith does not do anything. Faith means to believe that God has done everything through Jesus Christ. So faith is the spot where we do not do. We simply believe.

Lots of things come out of faith. We trust God. We pray. We begin to confess, speak about and share our faith. We show our faith in our life.



The original wording of the creeds was “**We believe . . .**” rather than “I believe . . .” Individually we believe. No one can believe for another. But it is together that we confess or proclaim our faith. Individually, each one of us stands before God and confesses our faith. But we also stand before the world, and together we say, “We believe . . .”

64.3 # 3 – THE CHURCH PRAYS

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.” (2nd Commandment)

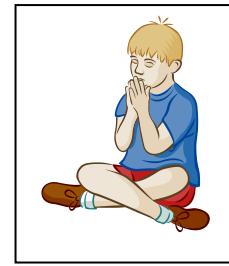
We pray anywhere, everywhere, any time, about anything. God invites us to talk to Him and trust Him with everything. So the Church prays:

We thank God;

We call on God in our troubles;

We pray for what we need (and even for what we want);

We pray for others! This is called intercessory prayer, and it is a part of who we are and what we do.



We pray alone, in groups, and when we gather together for worship.

But all of our next lesson will be spent on prayer, so we will leave this part for next time.

64.4 # 4 – THE CHURCH WORSHIPS.

“Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.” (3rd Commandment)

We worship, and that is a part of being a Christian. **Someone who knows all the doctrines of the Christian faith and yet does not desire to worship**

God together with other Christians, **how** can that person really be a Christian? No I cannot see inside his heart and tell whether faith is there or not, so I ask this as a question. But it is a part of Christian faith that we desire to worship our God. A heart that really does not want to worship can hardly be called Christian. And it is part of our faith that we are a part of the fellowship of all believers in Jesus.



There may be hurts and problems that get in the way of Christian fellowship. But someone who really does not desire to have that fellowship, can he truly be a Christian? I don't know how.

About worship: see page 6 of “Lutheran Worship” our Blue Hymnal. There is a definite rhythm and pattern of worship. Here is part of what it says.

Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. Music is drawn into this thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious giver God.

Saying back to Him what He has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. Most true and sure is His name, which He puts upon us with the water of our Baptism. We are His. This we acknowledge at the beginning of the Divine Service. . . .

The rhythm of our worship is from Him to us, and then from us back to Him. He gives His gifts, and together we receive and extol them. We build one another up as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. . . .

Saying back to God what He has first said to us – that is the simplest and most beautiful definition of worship I know. That is why so much of our worship is to repeat in word and song what God has first said to us. **Nothing more complicated. Nothing fancy.** But in that back-and-forth God draws us into eternal things, the things of God, and gives you what He wants to give you. And that is a whole lot!

64.5 # 5 – THE CHURCH LOVES (This is the 2nd table of the Commandments.)

Jesus summarized the whole 2nd table as, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

4th Commandment – **Parents & Children**

“Honor your father and your mother . . .”

5th – **Neighbors** – in times of need and in times of conflict

“You shall not murder.”

6th – **Husbands & Wives**

“You shall not commit adultery.”

7th – **Neighbors** – as they work for and with each other; and as they serve each other.

“You shall not steal.”

8th – **Neighbors** – as they speak the truth; and defend and encourage each other.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

9 – 10 **Neighbors** – being blessed by God and seeing others blessed.

“You shall not covet . . .”



Time after time the New Testament guides us in loving each other.

We love – by sharing the best thing we could possibly share (the Good News of Salvation) with those who do not yet know Jesus.

That is a part of our faith, a part of our worship, and a part of our witness. We love because he has first loved us. As Christians we love one another and we reach out beyond our fellow Christians to love all others. This is why we send out missionaries, why we evangelize, why we love to tell others about our faith, and why we invite others to come to Church. Review the diagram about the Three Offices in Section 54.3. Notice the last column, “Our Purpose and Tasks.

64.6 **VOCATION**

This idea helps sort out **what God has given us to do in our lives**. There are **five parts**.

1 **God puts us into different relationships and gives us different rolls to fill and responsibilities to carry out** in those relationships. We are parents, children, teachers, students, friends, neighbors, etc. Look through the “Table of Duties” in section 60-a through 60-z.

2 In the different parts of our lives **God invites and calls us to join Him** in working, **and share in the things He does** caring for His world and the people in it. This is an amazing privilege.

For Example:

Adam named the animals (Genesis 2:19)

That was part of God's command to have dominion over the earth.

In the same way **the farmer** feeds the horses, slops the hogs, builds houses to protect the chickens, and commands the sheepdog. This connects him with the verses in the Psalms that say, "The eyes of all look to You, and you give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing" (Psalm 145:15-16) and, "He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry."

God has invited and called him **to share in giving food to God's creatures**. As he does he serves God.

Question: What are the different roles and vocations that God called Adam and Eve to live in while they were in the Garden of Eden. Some of them are:

Gardening (Genesis 2:15)

Husbandry (care for animals) (Genesis 1:28b)

Parents (Genesis 1:28a)

Husband & Wife (Genesis 2:23-24)



3 So much of what we do connects with the First Article and its explanation:

"God has made me and all creatures" – Parents serve God bringing children into the world.

"eyes, ears, and all my members . . . and still preserves them" – Doctors, dentists, and many others preserve and serve to give healing.

"He also gives me . . . food . . . " – How many different people are involved in giving you food? What different rolls might you have in the future that will involve feeding, clothing, and providing for others?

"He defends . . . and guards and protects me" – How many jobs and professions can you name that help and serve your fellow man in this way?

**Applications:**

1. The call to Vocation reaches into every part of life. **The garbage collector** serves his neighbor in a terribly important way. Without him our towns would not be clean. He cares for us and acts as God's hands in our lives. We are called to care for his well-being by being careful what things we put in our trash and how we put them in. Doing this to serve God and care for our neighbor is part of vocation.
2. **A professor at a medical school** gave a test. After all the other questions were done, the last question for half of all the points on the test was this: "What is the first name of the lady that comes in and cleans up after we are done?" The idea is to never forget that everything we are called by God to do is to love and care for our neighbor.

Question: How does the musician fulfill his vocation?

Let him be a good musician. He does not have to produce only or mainly Christian music to have that vocation from God, but should first be a good musician and serve God and his neighbor in that way.

**# 4 It is part of our worship.**

There is an old saying, **“A man’s work is his worship of God.”** God gives you what you need to fulfill your vocation: hands, feet, voice, mind, talents, etc. We are fully equipped for what God has asked us to do. What we do with His gifts is a part of our worship. So we are guided by the Holy Spirit, live for God, and serve our neighbor.

There is so **much to do in every part of life that serves God.** In our relationship with God we gladly and cheerfully go and do the things He has given us to do.

5 Everything that you do serving God and caring for your fellow human being has eternal value.

1. It is the work of God through you.
2. God works through you to bless your neighbor.
3. So you live a life of Christian service and love, and
4. You grow in your relationship with God, and your walk with Him.

So **the next time you have an opportunity** to serve God and your neighbor, even in the simplest way, **celebrate! Rejoice!** (Luther says, “then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn . . .”) Even if it is when parents ask you to take out the garbage or clean the cat box; do it with joy because you are not just doing a chore. **You are serving God** and sharing His work of caring for His creation.

64.7 THE 10 COMMANDMENTS AND LIVING OUR FAITH

Section 27.0 – 27.c may be studied or reviewed here in combination with the section on Vocation.

65. THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

A great textbook on Church History is the Older CPH Text “Alive by Grace.”

I recommend using the Paul Maier video series on the First Three Centuries of the Church.

In addition there are several movies on Martin Luther.

66. THE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH

((Small Catechism Questions # 180 – 186))

As we look at the life of the Church we find there are several purposes of the Church, reasons why we are in the world and things we are given to do.

1. We are here **to live a life of faith in a world of difficulties** and problems that challenge our faith. **Through facing those things we grow in faith** and in our relationship with God.

2. We are here **to serve God through caring for our neighbor.**
These things are parts of our witness to the world, and this witness happens in our everyday life.

In addition,

3. **We speak the Gospel to each other and to the whole world.**
So we share the work of spreading the Kingdom of God to the whole world.

66.1 **THROUGH THE AGES**

Look through the following verses and notice how spreading the Gospel is at the center of Church History.



Genesis 12:3 God said to Abraham, “and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 22:18 (NIV) God said to Abraham on Mount Moriah, “through your seed all nations on earth will be blessed.”

Isaiah 60:3 “And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”

Micah 5:3 (NIV) “Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.”

((**It was always the plan** that through the spread of the Gospel, through Jesus all nations would come into God’s kingdom. In the Old Testament it was a promise. In the New Testament that promise was made very specific.))

Matthew 24:14 Jesus said, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Acts 1:8 Jesus said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Revelation 5:9-10 And they [the church in heaven] sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain, and by Your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

((We have heard all this without quoting the Great Commission yet. Notice that this is right at the center of the Bible’s teaching about the purpose of the Church. **Now it’s time to quote the Great Commission.**))

Matthew 28:18-20 [Jesus said], “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Note carefully: Why is it that we go and make disciples?

In Matthew 28:18, who is it **who has all authority?** Jesus, of course. **At its heart the work is His work**, to make disciples of all nations. **He is** the light of the world. **He is** sent to be “a light for the nations.” The only reason we are involved is because **we are joined to Him**. **But what a privilege**, to be invited to share in the work of God!

66.2 **END TIMES** ((Small Catechism Question # 187 – 192))

All of the verses above teach us **how to look at the end times, the end of the world and judgment day**. For the Christian it is a matter of victory and joy. In Matthew 24 Jesus talks about many signs of the end but says of each that they are but the beginnings or such things must happen. Then He points to **one sign** as the sign of the end. Matthew 24:14 tells us the one sign is **the spread of the Gospel**.

This is not like some books and movies that talk about the end of the world as a time when the devil takes over. It is a picture of victory with Jesus bringing into His kingdom people from every “tribe and language and people and nation.” Jesus is extending His kingdom and like He said to Peter, “the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18)



67. **DESTINY**

Our destiny is **to live forever with Jesus Christ**.

Different denominations talk slightly differently about that. Some talk about “the Beatific Vision.” Others about “Serving God forever.” Here is another place where I am comfortable with and thankful for the way Lutherans talk.

We speak about relationships, that the most important thing about heaven is **who we will be with – Jesus**; about the joy and freedom and celebration that we will experience. We are most comfortable with images like the wedding banquet, and the great multitude before the throne celebrating and waving palm branches. And we wonder what it will be like to talk with Abraham, or Paul, or Martin Luther.

The last two chapters of the Bible talk about the new heaven and the new earth, the new Jerusalem, and the river of the water of life. They fit right in with how we know Jesus.

So we hear about God saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. . . . He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son.” (Revelation 21:3-7 NIV) **Notice how God celebrates** that we will be with Him and share eternal life with Him.

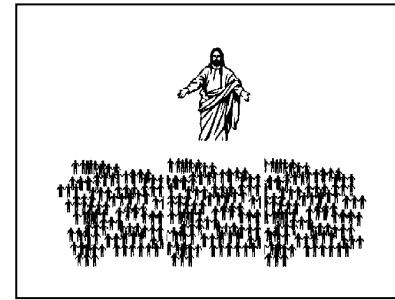
How will we be raised? What will it be like? We confess in the Creed “I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.” **We learn from Job** about seeing God. Job said, “with my own eyes.” It will be **this body, not another body** that will live forever. **These hands** will reach out and touch Jesus. **These feet** will stand in front of Him. **This mouth** that has confessed Jesus as my Savior and sung His praises will be

shouting Hosanna! **These ears** that have heard the gospel will hear Jesus say, “enter into the joy of your master.” And so on . . .

67.1 THE GREAT ASSEMBLY

Follow the passages:

- (1) Hebrews 2:11-12 says this about Jesus: That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, “I will tell of Your name to My brothers; **in the midst of the congregation** I will sing Your praise.”
- (2) The quote is **from Psalm 22:22**. As Jesus was on the cross He looked forward to the victory when He would gather everyone who believes in Him before His Father, and lead us in praising His Father.
- (3) This connects with a series of verses in the Psalms (1:5; 22:25; 26:12; 35:18; 40:9-10; 68:21; and 82:1). Together they show us **a picture of the “Great Assembly” or “Great Congregation.” It’s about the great gathering together of God’s people**. Psalm 35:18 is a good example of the whole group of verses, “I will give You thanks in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise You.” (NIV)
- (4) Finally the verses lead us to Revelation 7:9-10 where John said, “After this I looked, and behold, **a great multitude** that no one could number, **from every nation**, from all tribes and peoples and languages, **standing before the throne** and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” Think about being among **Christians as far as the eye can see, so many that you could never count them**, all praising God and loving each other.
- (5) Then remember the words of Jesus at the Last Supper when He said He would not drink of the fruit of the vine **“until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”** (Matthew 26:29) This is also called the “marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom” (Revelation 19:6-10 and Isaiah 25:6-9). Exactly how is all that going to happen? It is difficult to imagine and wonderful to look forward to. You do not want to miss this!



68. DAILY LIFE

So **in the Church** we are a people gathered by God. We are from every tribe and nation. Some of us are in heaven, some still in this world, and some are not here yet (we are waiting and preparing for them and getting ready for when they are born).

We are called to God through the forgiveness we have received in Jesus. So we are called to be a **forgiven and forgiving people**. That is part of the meaning of the 5th Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Our life together is marked by GRACE, faith, prayer, worship, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, forgiveness, love for one another, and the desire to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

BETWEEN CHAPTERS

The challenge is to read Psalms 1, 16, 23, 27, 31, 32, 42, 46, 51, 84, 89, 90, 100, 103, 116-118, 121-139, 150; and John 17.

69.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 6 – The Church

Saint Holy person. The New Testament calls all Christians saints because all Christians have the holiness of Jesus given to them.

One The Christian Church is one because the Church is made up of all who believe in Jesus Christ.

Denomination A group of Christians organized around specific beliefs.

Apostolic Following the teaching of the Apostles.

Invisible Unseen. The Church is invisible in that we cannot see the faith in another person's soul. But of course God sees our faith.

Visible Seen. The Church is visible in that Christians live in this world, worship God, speak about Jesus Christ, and do works of love.

Mixed The Church is mixed because in the visible Church there are both: those who believe in Jesus; and those who only belong to the organization but do not truly believe.

Church Militant The Church still on earth is the Church Militant because we still battle against sin and the devil.

Church Triumphant The Church in heaven is the Church Triumphant because they completely enjoy the victory and blessings won by Jesus.

Pericope Greek word meaning "a section." A portion of Holy Scripture read on a given Sunday.

(SC) A pericopal system is a plan to include all the different parts and themes of the Bible.

Epistle From the Greek word for "letter." In the Divine Service, the Epistle is the second reading, usually drawn from an Epistle in the New Testament. (SC)

Benediction A blessing from the Lord, spoken by the pastor at the conclusion of the service. (SC)

Witness To speak about Jesus Christ; to tell the message of salvation. The Greek word for witness is "martyr." The martyrs witnessed to Jesus through their words and through their sufferings.

Great Commission Jesus told His Church to go and make disciples of all nations. It is a commission because it is based on Jesus' authority.

Last Day The end of the world; the day when Jesus returns to judge the living and the dead.

Last Days The time leading up to the end of the world. The New Testament uses these words for times as early as the time of the New Testament.

Congregation Gathering together; a gathering together as Christians.

Synagogue Coming together; a gathering together of Jewish worshipers.

Synod A voluntary walking together. We use this word to describe our Church body, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

Fellowship To share in religious and spiritual things.

Reconcile To make friendly again. (W) To put aside arguments, disagreements, or anger.

Nave From the Latin word for "ship." The nave is the main part of the church where the congregation assembles for worship. (SC)

Narthex Hall or room at the entrance to the church. (SC)

Altar A stone or wooden structure at the center of the chancel from which the Lord's Supper is celebrated. Altars remind us of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for us. (SC)

Paraments Cloths placed on the altar, pulpit, and lectern in the color of the season of the Church Year. (SC)

Vestments Liturgical garments worn by the pastor, acolytes, choir, and others assisting in worship. (SC)

Church Year A way of organizing the calendar to have yearly reminders of events in the life of Jesus; and of the mission of the Church.

Advent Advent means "coming." It is the 4 weeks before Christmas looking forward to Jesus' birth, remembering the prophecies of the Old Testament, and remembering that Jesus is coming again.

Epiphany Epiphany means shining forth, or revealing the light. Epiphany is the season after Christmas when Jesus revealed His glory and His divinity.

Ash Wednesday The beginning of Lent, Ash Wednesday is a day of repentance, and remembering that we are "but dust and ashes."

Lent The word means long, for the lengthening of days in the spring. Lent is the forty days, not including Sundays, before Easter.

Holy Week The week before Easter, which includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.

Maundy Thursday The day when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. Maundy is from the Latin for "command," referring to the new command Jesus gave to "love one another" (SC)

Easter The day of Easter is when we celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead. The season of Easter lasts for 7 weeks, leading up to the day of Pentecost.

Pentecost "The fiftieth day" after Easter, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and they began to boldly and publicly tell about Jesus. The season of Pentecost continues until the end of the Church year and the beginning of Advent.

Pulpit A raised platform or stand from which the pastor preaches the sermon. (SC)

Lectern A stand with a book rest from which the Scriptures are read. (SC)

Chancel Front of the church containing the altar and pulpit. (SC)

Sacristy A room in church where a congregation may keep robes for pastors and acolytes; paraments for altar, pulpit and lectern; and communion ware.

Acolyte Person who lights and extinguishes the candles at church services. (SC)

CATECHISM & MEMORY VERSES – (7) The Lord's Prayer

70-a **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

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. (70)

70-b **ADDRESS**

Our Father, Who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father. (50)

70-c **Matthew 7:7-11 (NIV)** "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

"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!" (99)

70-d **THE FIRST PETITION**

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean?

God's name is certainly holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is this done?

God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity; and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in Heaven!

But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, Heavenly Father! (97)

70-e **Matthew 6:6-8 (NIV)** "When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, Who is unseen. Then your Father, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." (70)

70-f **THE SECOND PETITION**

Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean?

The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How does this happen?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity. (68)

70-g **Luke 12:32 (NIV)** "Fear not, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom." (15)

70-h **Revelation 22:20**

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (16)

70-i **THE THIRD PETITION**

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How does this happen?

God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil (plan and purpose / desire and scheme) of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's Name or let His kingdom come;

and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die.

This is His good and gracious will. (106)

70-j **Micah 6:8 (NIV)**

He has showed you, O man, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you

To do justice, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God. (30)

70-k **THE FOURTH PETITION**

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people; but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by "daily bread"?

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home, land and animals, money and goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like. (115)

70-l **Matthew 6:31-33** Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (56)

70-m **Proverbs 30:7-9 (From the Hebrew)**

O LORD; . . . give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.

That I may not have too much and disown You
and say, "Who is the LORD?"

Or be in want and steal,
and so dishonor the name of my God. (45)

70-n **THE FIFTH PETITION**

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us. (96)

70-nn **THE FIFTH PETITION (Alternate Wording)**

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not count our sins against us or deny our prayers because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. But we ask that He would give them all to us by grace. So we too will forgive from the heart, and gladly do good to those who sin against us. (98)

70-p **The Seven Words of Jesus from the Cross**

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)
2. [To the thief,] "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)
3. To His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" [and to John,] "Behold, your mother." (John 19:26-27)
4. "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34)
5. "I thirst." (John 19:28)
6. "It is finished." (John 19:30)
7. "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." (Luke 23:46) (67)

70-q **THE SIXTH PETITION**

And lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean?

God certainly tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh may not deceive or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great (shame and vice / sin and shame.))* Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and (win / keep)** the victory. (72)

*I translate this way because first comes the sin and then when it is found out comes the shame. ** The German "behalten" means retain, maintain, keep. Indeed, Christ has already won the victory and we pray that we may keep it.

70-r **John 17:11, 15-17 (NIV)** "Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name--the name You gave Me--so that they may be one as We are one. . .

"My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth: Your word is truth." (68)

70-s **THE SEVENTH PETITION**

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and honor; and finally when our last hour comes, give us a (blessed end / Christian death)) and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven. (59)

70-t **Job 19:25-27 (NIV)**

"I know that my Redeemer lives,
 and that in the end He will stand upon the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed,
 yet in my flesh I will see God;
I myself will see Him
 with my own eyes--I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!" (51)

70-u **THE CONCLUSION**

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.

What is meant by the word "Amen"?
This means that I should be sure and certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has (commanded / told) us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. "Amen, Amen", that means "yes, yes, it shall be so." (73)

SECTION II

**HOW THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH
HIS HOUSEHOLD TO PRAY MORNING AND EVENING**

70-v **MORNING PRAYER**

(In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say:)

In the name of the + Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:)

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your Holy Angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen. (81)

(Then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn, like that of the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion may suggest.)

70-w **EVENING PRAYER**

(In the evening, when you go to bed, make the sign of the holy cross and say:)

In the name of the + Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:)

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your Holy Angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen. (74)

(Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer.)

**HOW THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH
HIS HOUSEHOLD TO ASK A BLESSING AND RETURN THANKS**

70-x **ASKING A BLESSING**

(The children and members of the household shall go to the table reverently, fold their hands, and say:)

The eyes of all wait upon You, O Lord, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15-16)

(Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:)

Lord God, Heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (54)

70-y **RETURNING THANKS**

(Also, after eating, they shall, in like manner, reverently and with folded hands say:)

O, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His mercy endures forever. He gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.

(Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer, and the following:)

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen. (99)

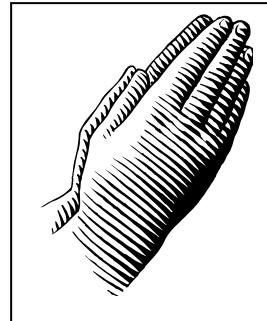
CHAPTER 7 – PRAYER

Small Catechism, Questions # 193 – 235

70. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

Prayer is talking to God.

(Is that all? Well, yes and no . . .)



71. A UNIQUE IDEA

Our Father, Who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

The Christian understanding of prayer is **unique among the religions of the world**.

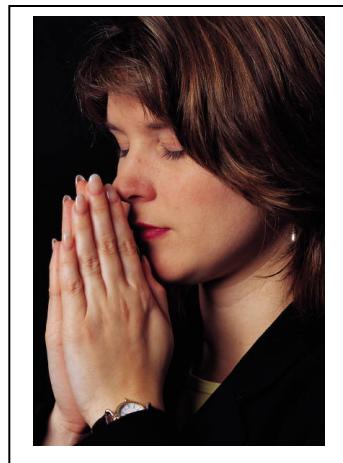
We assume and do not pay as close attention to this as we should; so we often fail to appreciate just how different the Christian teaching about prayer is or how strange it actually seems to others.

72. WHAT IS PRAYER? ((Small Catechism Questions # 193 – 195))

The most simple definition is that prayer is talking to God.

But what does that mean? Prayer must be bound together with the Word of God. Like with worship we can use this phrase about prayer: **"Saying back to Him what He has first said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure."**

Talking to without listening is not what prayer is about. **God has a lot to say to us. He says it through the Scriptures.** God speaks to us through His word and applies that word to us personally. He does that through the work of the Holy Spirit who brings to our minds the passages of Scripture that He would have us remember.



God also speaks to us through other Christians. In the fellowship of believers God leads Christians to strengthen, exhort, and when needed to rebuke one another. That is why Paul says "Bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2) and "If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1) and the letter to the Hebrews says, "do not forsake the gathering together of yourselves." (Hebrews 10:25 (NIV))

God speaks through the situations of our lives. The answers to prayers teach us what part of the life of faith God wants us to be focused on and growing in.

There is more, but what we will focus on here is the Scriptures, the Word of God.

73. THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF PRAYER

((Small Catechism Questions # 196 – 197))

Sometimes it helps to compare and contrast. We could take a **journey through world religions** and ask how others understand prayer. After we do this we will come back to Jesus' teachings.

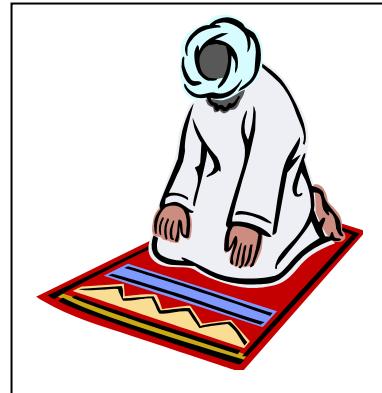
73.1 **In Hinduism:** Prayer is basically the devotion to a specific god or number of gods. Here are some examples of how that's done.

1. Reciting the name over and over (it's called a "mantra"). The **constant repetition** is believed to make it more likely that the prayer will be heard.
2. Acts of devotion and physical suffering (for example the Hindu believer who wanted to do a great act of devotion. He decided to make a short pilgrimage. But he would do that pilgrimage on his knees. He would also pull a Hindu holy man behind him on a sled, runners not wheels. He would pull that sled by cords attached to hooks that were driven through the flesh of his back.) The **suffering is believed to make the prayer of the pray-er more powerful.**



In contrast: *The Christian idea that God already knows our needs, hears our prayers, and doesn't have to be coaxed or cajoled is strange and different to them. It is also a wonderful release from a terrible burden.*

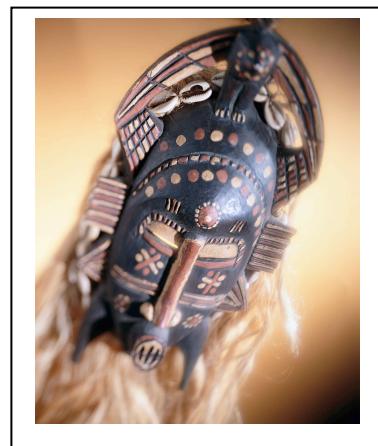
73.2 **In Islam:** Prayer is to be done **5 times a day, facing the proper direction, in the Arabic language, using specific words.** A missionary couple was kidnapped in the Philippines. When they would say their prayers before meals their Muslim captors would laugh that they didn't even know which way to face to pray properly.



In contrast: *The idea of an impulsive prayer simply talking from the heart whatever the pray-er wants to talk to God about is completely foreign and unfamiliar to them. That God would be close, informal and friendly is an amazing freedom.*

73.3 **In many African settings:** Prayer is done **to appease the spirits** so they won't cause trouble, sickness or death. Elaborate rituals are a part of prayer, and they are done with fear.

For example **Galebotse** in the Kalahari explained to the missionary one day that we are all members of God's flock. What did this mean? Good Shepherd and sheep? Well, no, it's like the chickens in my yard. When I am hungry I go and kill one and eat it. That is how it is with God and us. When he is hungry he takes one of us and



eats us.

In contrast: The idea that we talk to a loving God is almost incomprehensible to them; but it is also the most incredibly good news we can imagine.

73.4 In "One Village in China" (there was a PBS Special of that title):

The Christians are called "the people who pray." Prayer for the rest (with a **Buddhist** background) is done with **incense and prayer wheels**. They write a prayer on a piece of paper, put it in the wheel and spin it. Each time the wheel goes around the prayer is counted as being prayed. If you get a whole community joining in you can have a prayer prayed tens of thousands of times a day. ((**Update:** The Dalai Lama has recently said that prayers placed on a computer's hard drive count, because the hard drive spins. The prayer is counted as being prayed once with each rotation.))



Or a prayer is written on a piece of paper and burned. As the smoke rises to heaven so does the prayer. Perhaps the ancestors will hear.

In contrast: The Christians are called "the people who pray" because to the others . . .

It is such a strange idea that we believe we can simply talk to God and He hears -- no special words, posture, direction to face, anything. We simply believe that we talk to God out loud or silently within our heart and God knows and hears our prayers. How very, very strange an idea for everybody else. How wonderful a teaching from Jesus!

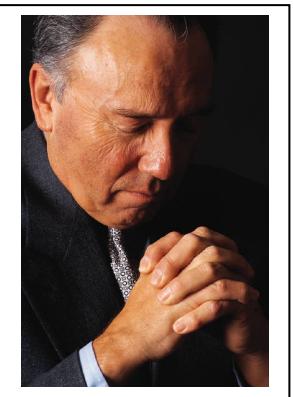
74. **JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER** ((Small Catechism Questions # 198 – 204))

"Our Father who art in heaven . . ."

Read **Matthew 6:6-8; and Matthew 7:7-11** (Both are printed at the beginning of this lesson) and **Matthew 6:31-33**

Jesus' teaching about prayer is **different from all others**. It comes from the relationship that He has with His Father, and from Jesus inviting us to be a part of that relationship.

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father. (Martin Luther)

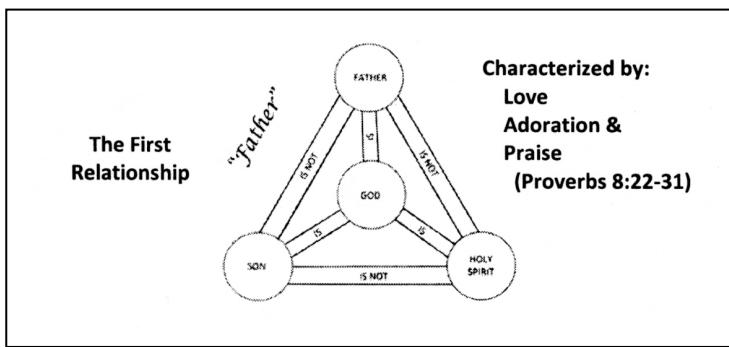
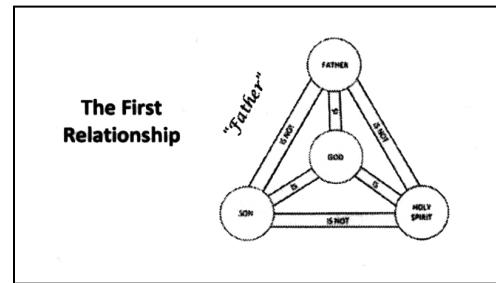


74.1 **WITHIN THE TRINITY**

The first words of the Lord's Prayer are "**Our Father**." But in and of ourselves none of us has the right to call God "Father." We forfeited that right when we ate the fruit and fell into sin. Only one person has the right to use the word "Father" and that is Jesus. He has that right not only because He lived the perfect life of faith; but also because of who He is.

Prayer has its beginnings deep within the relationship between the persons of the Trinity. It comes from **the first relationship**, between the Father and the Son. Let's explore this some.

Proverbs 8:22-31 gives us a picture of what was happening before the beginning of creation. These verses are spoken by "Wisdom" celebrating the work of God in creation. Since the time of the early Church, people have noticed how this sounds like it was written for and about Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity. The passage finishes with **Wisdom** saying, "Then I was beside Him, like a master workman, and I was daily His delight, **rejoicing before Him always**, rejoicing in His inhabited world and delighting in the children of man." (vv. 30-31) Notice that **the character and content** of that communication before and during creation **was praise**.

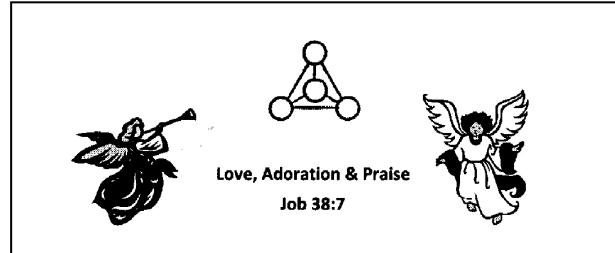


There is a particular character to the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity. That character is described by the three words: **Love, Adoration, and Praise**. **Love** is a particular attitude of one person toward another. **Adoration** is to look at and dwell on the good qualities in

that person. **Praise** is to express the love and speak of those good qualities. Love leads to Adoration and Praise. And true Praise cannot happen without Love and Adoration. Exercise # 51 explores some of the verses of the Bible where Love, Adoration and Praise are expressed.

74.2 INVOLVING THE ANGELS

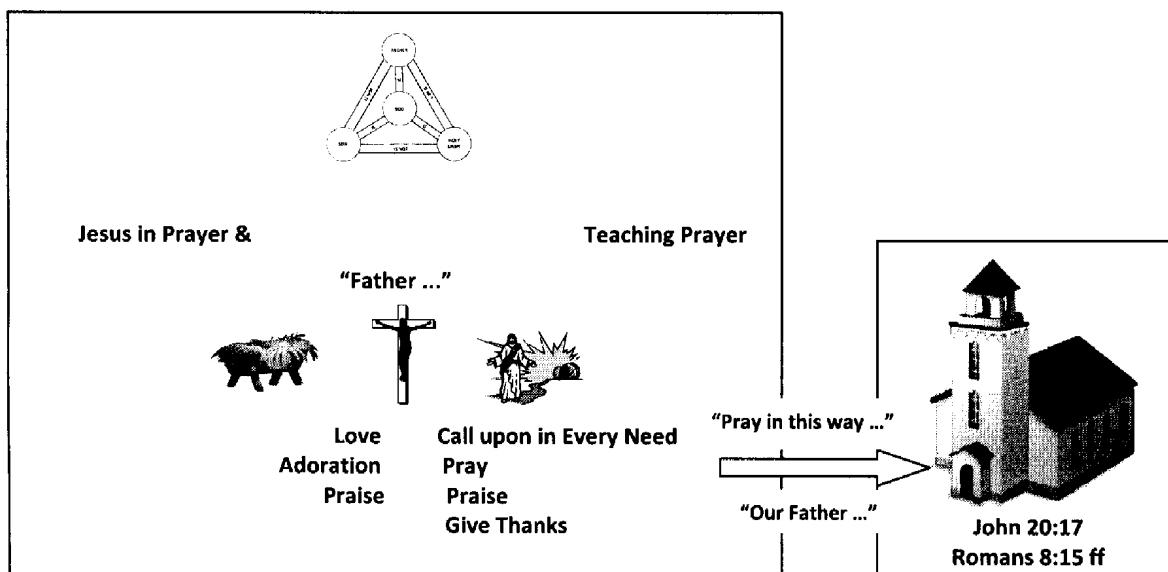
As the angels are created they also join in the Love, Adoration and Praise of God, right from their beginning. In Job 38 God talks to Job and asks: Where were you when I was creating, [notice the quotes here] **"when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy"**? (Job 38:7) "Morning stars" and "sons of God" are words describing the angels in this verse. So the angels join in the song of praise, at the beginning of their existence. The love, adoration and praise is also what happens in **Revelation 5** where we see the picture of the heavenly worship. Verses 8-14 include three groups, the Church, the angels, and all creation, praising God.



74.3 JESUS THE MAN

When Jesus became a human being, "conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary," the relationship He had with His Father continued. The relationship of Father and Son was the same; and Jesus' words and thoughts toward His Father were built around **love, adoration and praise**. **But the setting was different**. There were different needs and concerns. Jesus prayed as a human being.

Study the prayer life of Jesus. It includes the Lord's Prayer, the prayers in Gethsemane, Jesus great High Priestly Prayer (John 17), John 11:41-42 outside Lazarus' tomb, Matthew 11:25-27 giving thanks, Mark 1:35 very early in the morning, Matthew 14:19, 23 during and after feeding the 5,000, Isaiah 50:4-5 showing Jesus' pattern of prayer, and many others. The Psalms have been called "the prayer book of Jesus."



74.4 TEACHING US TO PRAY

So when Jesus taught His disciples how to pray He began with the words "Our Father." Luther's explanation of the Address to the Lord's Prayer gets right to the heart of the whole matter,

"Our Father, who art in heaven."

What does this mean?

"With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, . . ."

We do not deserve that right, and it is not ours by nature. **The only one who** really and truly **has the right to pray using the word "Father"** is Jesus.

But He tells us to pray this way. **He invites us** into the eternal relationship that He has with His Father. In fact this is part of what Jesus said on **Easter morning**, in John 20:17 talking to Mary Magdalene, "But go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.'"

Again, we do not deserve the right to say "Father." **Adam and Eve** threw away the relationship they had with God. They turned away from following Him and turned away to follow the devil. By their moral choice they became children of the devil.

But Jesus came to set us free and bring us back to God. Through His cross and resurrection Jesus changes us from being children of the devil to being children of God. John said, "to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood . . . nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13) Jesus calls us His brothers and it is at the first appearing of the risen Lord Jesus that He says, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father."

All the other passages about prayer in the Gospels come out of this understanding. (And since prayer begins with love, adoration and praise this means that Christian prayer is much more than asking God for things we want, or calling out when we're in trouble.)

Paul joins in to teach the same thing in **Romans 8:15** and following, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but **you received the Spirit of adoption** as sons, by whom we cry, '**Abba! Father!**' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs -- heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. . . ." (Through the rest of Romans 8 Paul explains more of what this means.)

75. THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER

Christians pray in a variety of ways:

Alone	In groups	In Church
Out loud	Silently	
Using patterned prayers (such as the Lord's Prayer and the Psalms)		
From the heart		
Spoken	Sung	
With fasting		

The way most are taught to pray is with folded hands and closed eyes. But there are times when those things are not practical; when driving or in a deaf congregation.

Christians are free to pray **anywhere, any time, in any situation, about any need.**

We do not believe we are heard because our prayers are spoken well, have well chosen words, or even because they are truly heartfelt. Our good works do not make us more worthy of having our prayers answered. Instead, very simply, **God accepts our prayers because of Jesus.**



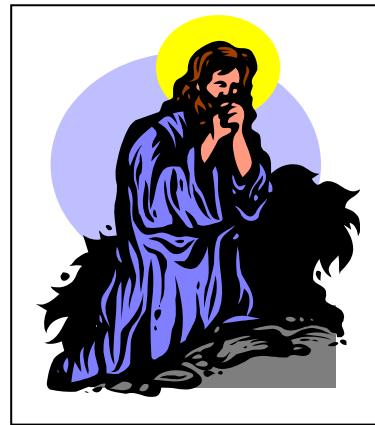
75.1 PRAYER AND GOD'S WORD

For prayer to be what it is supposed to be it has to be **bound together with the Word of God.** We don't just talk to God without listening to Him. Instead we hear the Word of God. We take it into our heart and soul. This is **Jesus' pattern of prayer.** In Mark 1:35 we learn about Jesus "rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark . . . [going] out to a desolate place, and there He prayed." In Isaiah 50:4-5 we hear about Jesus in

prayer. "Morning by morning He awakens [Me]; He awakens My ear to hear as those who are taught."

This is the same pattern that we learned when we talked about worship. In just the same way we can say this about prayer: **"Saying back to Him what He has first said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure."**

Because prayer is closely bound together with the Word of God, some have gotten things confused and said that Prayer is a Means of Grace. Remember, a Means of Grace is something God works through to do His work in our lives. Through the Means of Grace God forgives sins, creates faith and strengthens faith. So does prayer forgive sins, or create or strengthen our faith?



We want to keep things clear and unconfused. Prayer as prayer does not do those things. Prayer is **not a Means of Grace**. Prayer is from us to God and our words to God are not able to forgive, create faith or strengthen faith.

But we also want to keep things properly connected. We want to hear the Word of God before prayer and include the Word of God all through our prayers. We "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" the Word of God. We meditate on the Word and use the Word of God as we talk to God in our prayers.

The Word of God does its work. (Isaiah 55:10-11) When we take the Word of God into our prayers and use it **"saying back to [God] what He has first said to us,"** the Word of God will do its work within us – in our souls and in our lives.

In fact **God gives us prayers written in His Word**, the Bible. There are the **Lord's Prayer, other prayers of Jesus, prayers of the Apostles, and prayers in the Old Testament**. The Book of **Psalms** from beginning to end are "call[ing] upon [His name] in every need, pray[ing], prais[ing] and giv[ing] thanks." Prayers that are given to us in the Bible are in fact Word of God, and the Word of God is Means of Grace.



So prayer is **closely connected with the Means of Grace**. We keep our prayers close to the Word of God – the Bible. In the same way **we connect our prayers with** remembering our **Baptism**. And **around the Lord's Supper** there is a constant back and forth of the Word of God and Prayer. (The back and forth is constant, rapid, and concentrated.)

In this way **the Means of Grace are so closely bound to prayer that it is difficult to disconnect prayer from them. This is how it should be.**

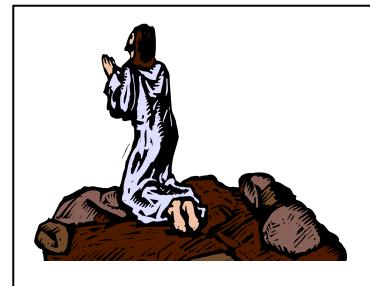
So: It seems like a **pretty silly misunderstanding** of Christian prayer **to neglect** and ignore **the Word of God** (as well as Baptism and the Lord's Supper) **and turn our prayers into**, **"God, I want this" and, "God, I want that."** God gives His Word to us and we learn to talk to Him by reading, learning, and using His Word in our prayers. It is through His

Word that God invites us to come to Him in prayer. It is **through His Word** that **God teaches us how to pray**. And then we constantly **use God's Word** and we **have it in our mouths and on our lips when we talk to God in prayer**. When the hymn says that Prayer is the Christian's constant breath, that's what we mean, God's Word coming into our souls and God's Word coming out of our mouths.

76. **THE GREATEST OF PRAYERS;
GATHERING ALL PRAYERS TOGETHER**

As **Polycarp Lyser** said: There are certain portions of Scripture where God has brought together in a very brief form all the teaching on a certain subject. In the same way as John 3:16, or Genesis 3:15 can be called the Gospel in a nutshell, the Lord's Prayer is that place where God has brought together all of His teaching on prayer. It was spoken in response to a specific question of the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1) Right at the beginning the Lord's Prayer is set apart as more than a prayer. It is a prayer given us by God Himself for the expressed purpose of teaching us to pray.

The **Lord's Prayer holds within it** the full scope and range of **all true Christian Prayer**. This means that the complete variety of concerns and petitions are within the words of the Lord's Prayer. In the same way the full range of prayers, from the easiest to the most difficult prayers to pray are in this prayer that Jesus taught. Everything that can properly be prayed as a Christian is and must be in harmony with this prayer and included in this prayer. The Lord's Prayer is the greatest of all prayers.



But first of all, the Lord's Prayer **starts out as something other than a prayer**. How does this happen? Luke 11:1-2 says, "When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." And He said to them, "When you pray, say, ' . . . ' "

Prayer is from earth to heaven. But **the Lord's Prayer comes from heaven to earth, given by Jesus to His disciples**. You could say it begins as the opposite of prayer.

Then Jesus invites us to follow Him with His words. As we follow His words it is a prayer – and the greatest of prayers. The study of the Lord's Prayer is **a study for your whole life**.

76.1 **THE 5 GREAT THEMES**

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus leads us in the same pattern we talked about studying the 10 commandments: **GRACE; Faith; Prayer; Rest; Love**. This brings us half way through the Lord's Prayer (**Address - 3rd Petition**). **Then in the 4th - 6th petitions** He teaches us **how the Persons of the Trinity work in our lives**. The 7th Petition is a summary, and the final words bring us back to the theme of faith.

THE PRAYER AND THE FAITH			
LORD'S PRAYER	5 GREAT THEMES	10 COMMANDMENTS	THE CREED
(Address) "Our Father who art in heaven"	(#1) GRACE	(Exodus 20:2) "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery"	
(Address) "Our Father ..."	(#2) Faith	(#1) "You shall have no other gods before Me"	
1. "Hallowed be Thy name"	(#3) Prayer	(#2) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain."	
2. "Thy kingdom come"	(#4) Rest	(#3) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"	
3. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"	(#5) Love	(# 4 – 10) "Honor your father & your mother ... You shall not murder ... commit adultery ... steal ... bear false witness ... covet ..."	
4. "Give us this day our daily bread"			(1) "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."
5. "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."			(2) "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord ... was crucified, died and was buried. The third day He rose again from the dead. ..."
6. "And lead us not into temptation"			(3) "I believe in the Holy Spirit ... "
7. "But deliver us from evil"			(3) "... I believe ... in the resurrection of the body, and the life of the world to come."
(Conclusion) "Amen"	Faith		" . . . Amen."

Since Baptism, the Office of the Keys and the Lord's Supper fit well with the 2nd Petition ("Thy kingdom come") it turns out that **every part of the Catechism fits within the Lord's Prayer**. In fact **every part of Christian faith**, every doctrine, every teaching and every verse of Scripture gathers together within the Lord's Prayer.

SUMMARY: We have learned and will learn more of Christian teaching. What we learn; we then pray. The doctrines of the faith become part of our worship. **What the Lord's Prayer does is turn Biblical teachings, facts, and knowledge into a matter of a relationship. All of Christianity comes together in a prayer.** I do not believe you can do that with any other religion.

76.2 MORE ABOUT PRAYER

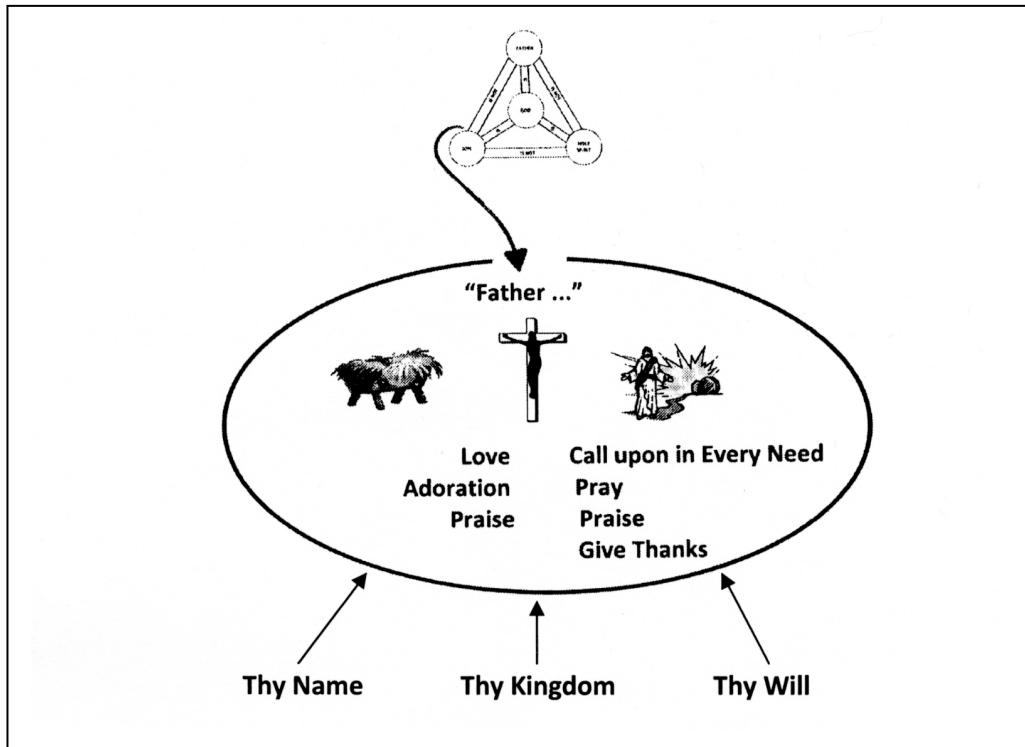
1. Normally Lutherans give the closest attention to Grace. That means we see the following things about prayer. **By His grace** God wishes to hear our prayers and considers our needs important. **By His grace** He accepts our prayers no matter that we often pray poorly (Romans 8:26). **By grace** we have the amazing privilege of prayer, so as the children of God we have constant and free access to God and He hears us. Jesus tells us to "pray continually" and instead of being mainly a command it is much more a tender invitation. Jesus says to pray privately and in our hearts and that our Father in Heaven will reward us for what we have done in secret. All these things teach us that the Lord's Prayer really is **the easiest of all prayers**.
2. We often call prayer **a conversation** of the soul with God. Prayer is not only calling out to God and asking for things. It is also **listening to what God has to say to us through His Word**. Within our souls **God calls us to agree with Him** about what is most important. He guides us in knowing what to pray about. See Romans 8:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 2:12-13. **We struggle to bring our wishes, desires, and petitions into harmony with God's will.** There are a lot of times it is not easy. See Isaiah 55:9 and Matthew 16:22-23! This is what discipleship is about.



So the Lord's Prayer is also a **faithful guide through the most difficult parts of growing in prayer**. The petitions of the Lord's Prayer not only assure us that Our Father hears our prayers and cares about our needs. They also **call us to follow and guide us in growing as disciples even where (especially where) growing is difficult**. Watch how the little words "us" and "our" in the 4th, 5th and 6th Petitions lead us into praying for and serving others.

77. THE INDIVIDUAL PETITIONS

THE FIRST GROUP -- # 1-3



The first 3 petitions are **about God's Name, Kingdom and Will**. We pray them as the first part of our prayer. By praying them first we are saying that they are the most important things in our lives. Just as God invites us to call Him Father, in the same way God invites us: **to Hallow His name and be hallowed by His name; to share in His kingdom in many ways; and to join His will and our will**. He has in mind that we should share with Him in all the ways that are possible. **This is a tremendous gift!** It is also a call to discipleship, following Jesus, and devotion to the things of God.

77.1 THE FIRST PETITION

Hallowed be Thy name.

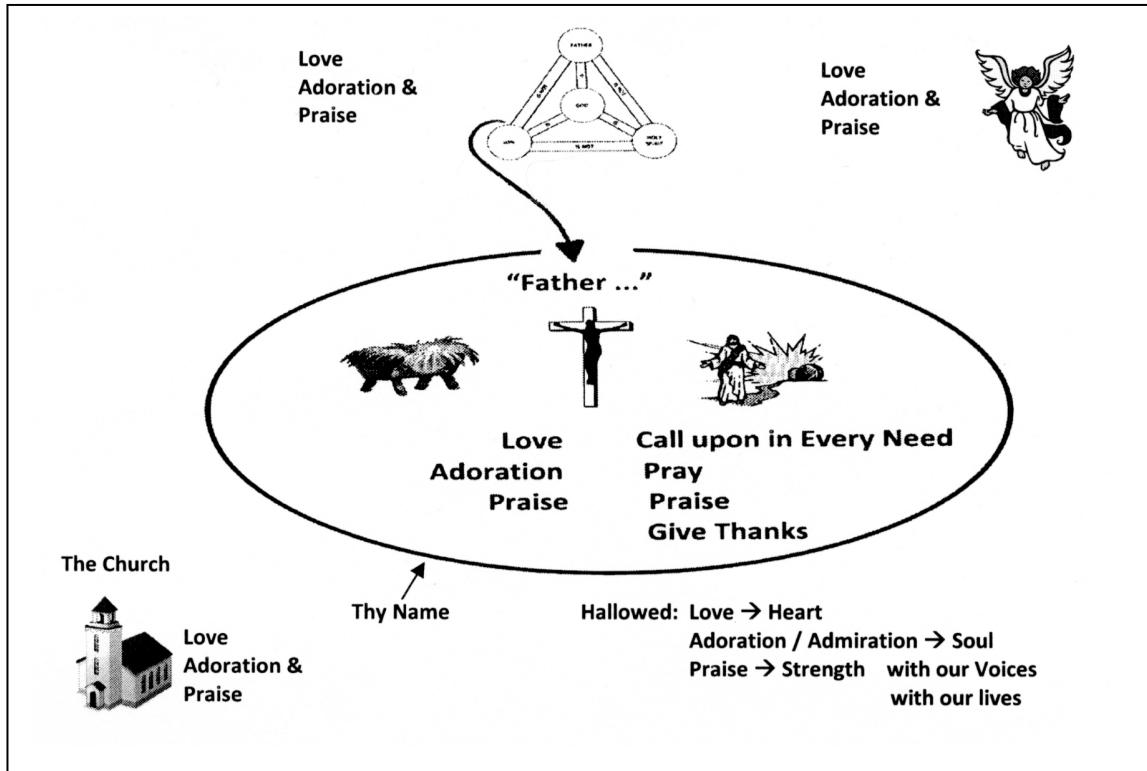
What does this mean?

God's name is certainly holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is this done?

God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity; and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in Heaven!

But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, Heavenly Father!



The First Petition takes us right back to **where prayer begins**. Remember, the focus of the relationships within the Trinity is Love, Adoration and Praise. **The love, adoration and praise between the persons of the Trinity** are voiced in the pages of the Bible.

The angels join in. See Job 38:7, Isaiah 6:2-3, and Revelation 5:11-12.

We are invited into this relationship of Love, Adoration and Praise.

What does it mean to hallow God's name?

First we look at **what God has done**. He has created us. He has forgiven our sins through Jesus Christ. He has brought us to faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. It's what Martin Luther said, "**The holiness of God is what God does to make us holy.**" So when we say "Hallowed be Thy name" part of what we are praying about is our salvation. We thank God for all that Jesus has done, and for the gift of faith. We look forward to the day when we will see God, be standing there with bodies that are risen, transformed, perfect and glorious, be living forever, and be celebrating how good it is to be with God. Paul says, "we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Romans 8:23) When we look at these things we have a particular attitude toward God. It's **the attitude of love**. We love God because of all that He has done in our lives. "**We love because He first loved us.**" (1 John 4:19) That is the attitude of the heart.

(Without this love the other parts of this petition do not happen.)

Second, in our thoughts – in our minds – we think about all that God has done. **We adore, or you could say admire His work.** Everyone from farmers, to hunters, to scientists, to doctors and nurses, to everyone else can find things in their lives where

they see the wonders of God. Paul says "what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made." (Romans 1:19-20) David says in Psalm 19 "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork." There are many, many other verses that teach the same thing. (Ponder for a moment the things you have seen in the world that cause you to admire the amazing works of God.)

So we learn and teach and share the Word of God. We want all the word of God and we want the Word of God in its purity. God's Word is a rich treasure, and we want all of His teachings in our heart, soul and mind. We want to hear His Word and we want to speak His word. These are the things of the soul. To keep God's Word and teach His Word brings praise to God. To disregard God's Word, to be careless with it, or to contradict God's Word profanes God's Name. (Note: Profane means to treat something as being unimportant and not very special.)

Third, with (1) our voices and (2) our lives we praise God.

- (1) **We tell each other** what God has done through Jesus, and what God has done in our lives. **We tell about Jesus** to others who do not know about God. So King David says "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to you." (Psalm 51:13) And **we get together to talk about God's love** in Jesus Christ. We hear about Jesus, we recite God's Word back and forth, and we sing about God's love. It's called Church. This is right in the middle of our relationship with God and it's essential. It's part of the relationship where we say, "Father."
- (2) We do not want to speak God's praise with our lips and bring shame to God with our lives. Think of a fellow driving along weaving through traffic honking and making rude gestures; with a "Jesus Loves You" bumper sticker on the back of his car. That is a picture of **what happens when our lives say the opposite of our words.** How many ways do we act that are the opposite of our praise to God. How many things do Christians do that bring embarrassment to the Church and bring shame to the name of God. When God sent the prophet Nathan to King David to convict him of his sin, Nathan said, "because you have caused the enemies of the Lord to show utter contempt . . ." Then Nathan pronounced judgment on David. (2 Samuel 12:14 & 12:10 NIV) Solomon prayed "O LORD; . . . give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. That I may not have too much and disown You and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or be in want and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God." (Proverbs 30:7-9)

What then do we want to do as Children of God? We carry the name of God as Christians. **So we want to live lives that bring praise to God.** We want to live lives of faith, prayer, worship and love. Jesus said "**let your light shine before others**, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) And He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people

will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35) Paul and the other apostles spent a lot of time teaching Christians **to love one another**, because it **is a part of our worship to God and it hallows God's name**.

This is why we pray about hallowing God's name, "**Help us to do this, dear Father in Heaven!**" and about profaning God's name, "Protect us from this, Heavenly Father!"

77.2 THE SECOND PETITION

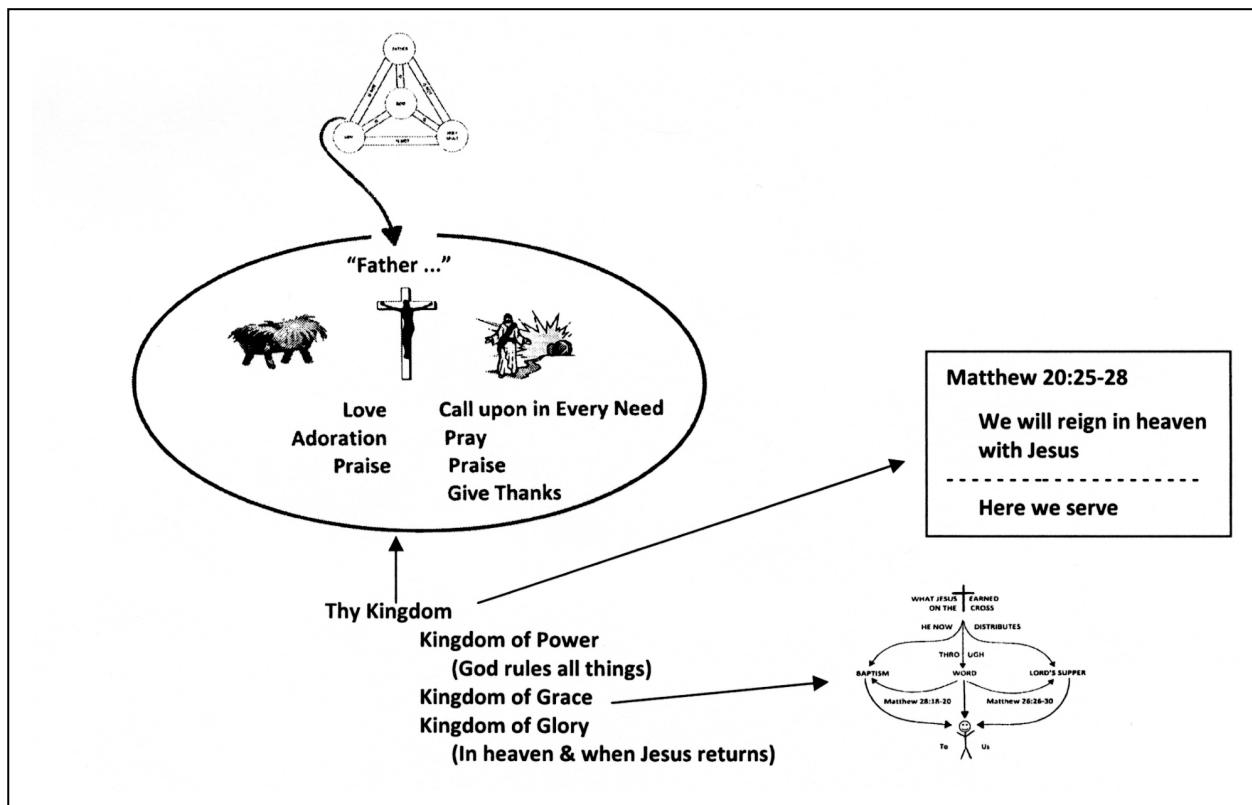
Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean?

The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How does this happen?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives ((here in time and there in eternity / now in this age and forever in the next.))



77.21 What is the Kingdom of God and who is included in it?

This is actually a 3-part answer:

- (1) **The Kingdom of Power** is **everywhere where God rules**. Everyone is included and there is no way to be outside of God's kingdom of power. David said in Psalm 139, "Where can I go from Your Spirit or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven You are there. If I make my bed in Sheol behold You are there." Jonah prayed to God from the most extreme place on earth ever that we know about -- from the belly of the fish. (Jonah 2:1) **Not even**

the devil is outside of this kingdom. When Jesus descended into hell He did that "to preach to the spirits in prison." The devil didn't want to hear what Jesus had to say; that Jesus had won the victory, that we will be free and that the devil had lost and was doomed. But the devil had no power to prevent Jesus preaching right there in hell. The kingdom of power is that God is ruling everywhere over everyone. This is just simply fact. Whether we want it or not, and no matter how we respond, God is ruling.

- (2) **The Kingdom of Grace** is the kingdom of salvation. Not everyone is included, but only the saved. God brings us into this kingdom through Jesus' death and resurrection, and by creating faith within us. The kingdom of grace grows with each soul that comes to faith. It started with Adam and Eve as they believed God's promise of a Savior and will keep on growing until it is "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages (Revelation 7:9) This is the kingdom Daniel saw in his vision (Daniel 2:31-35 and 2:44) "a kingdom that shall never be destroyed". This is the kingdom Jesus was talking about when He said about His Church, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)
- (3) **The Kingdom of Glory** includes everyone who is in heaven. Right now that includes the angels and all Christians who have died and are with Jesus in heaven. When Jesus returns the kingdom of glory will be completed in two ways. First, everyone who is going to be there will be there. The "multitude that no one could count" will be gathered together and will celebrate the coming of the kingdom wearing white robes, holding palm branches and shouting, 'salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.' (Revelation 7:10) Second, the glory will be complete. Jesus "will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious bodies." (Philippians 3:21 NIV) We will see Him face to face.

So what do we pray for when we say, "Thy kingdom come"? God's kingdom of power is always here. It always comes to us. What we are praying for specifically is for the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. We want to be in God's grace and in His kingdom of glory. And we want our friends, our family members and our neighbors to be included. We want them and everyone else to be saved.

When we pray "Thy Kingdom come" we say to God that this is important. It is on our hearts. We really do desire these things.

77.22 The Kingdom of God is different.

It is a kingdom where the King serves, and a kingdom where the king wins His kingdom by dying for His people.

It is also a kingdom where all Christians will reign with Christ.

Look at the **Parable of the Prodigal Son** (Luke 15:11-32) After the lost son returned, after his father welcomed him, put a nice robe on him and they began to celebrate with music and dancing; when the father went to talk with the older brother what did he say to him? In verse 31 the father said: "Son, **you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.**"

In Revelation 20:4 John saw a vision of those who are now in heaven with Jesus. He said he saw the souls of the faithful, and "**They came to life and reigned with Christ . . .**"

In Matthew 25:34 Jesus says He will welcome us into eternal life saying, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you** from the foundation of the world."

77.23 ***So in a kingdom where everyone reigns, who actually rules?***

Jesus gave a surprising answer. In the kingdom where everyone reigns, the one who rules is the one who serves. "[T]he rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But **whoever would be great among you** must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25-28) Jesus is the one who meets every need, answers our prayers, gives everything we need for every day, gives Himself to us in His Word and in the Lord's Supper, and will give us eternal life. Paul says that **Jesus took "the form of a servant,"** and was "obedient to the point of death. . . . therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name . . ." (Philippians 2:7-10) **Jesus is the one we look to for every blessing and call on in every trouble.** Luther says whatever you look to for your blessings and "for refuge in every need" is your God. As we look to Jesus for everything He is the one who rules.

? RULING BY SERVING ?

Does it really make sense to say that the one who serves best is the one who rules? Actually, yes. It doesn't sound like it could be. But that is what happens. **The one who best serves his neighbor**, who is best at supplying what they want and need **is the one everyone will look to.** He will be trusted. Others will depend on him and look to him for guidance. There are many, **many examples**. One of the most interesting is with computers. There are several inventors who started making things and became very rich. They did so well because **they made something that almost everybody wanted.** They served their neighbors well so their neighbors look to them and rely on them; until they stop serving their neighbor. What does that mean for you? When you have a job, be glad to serve others. A good attitude and being glad to serve your neighbor teaches others that they can rely on you and trust you. So it's true. You actually do make your way in life by serving.)

77.3 **THE THIRD PETITION**

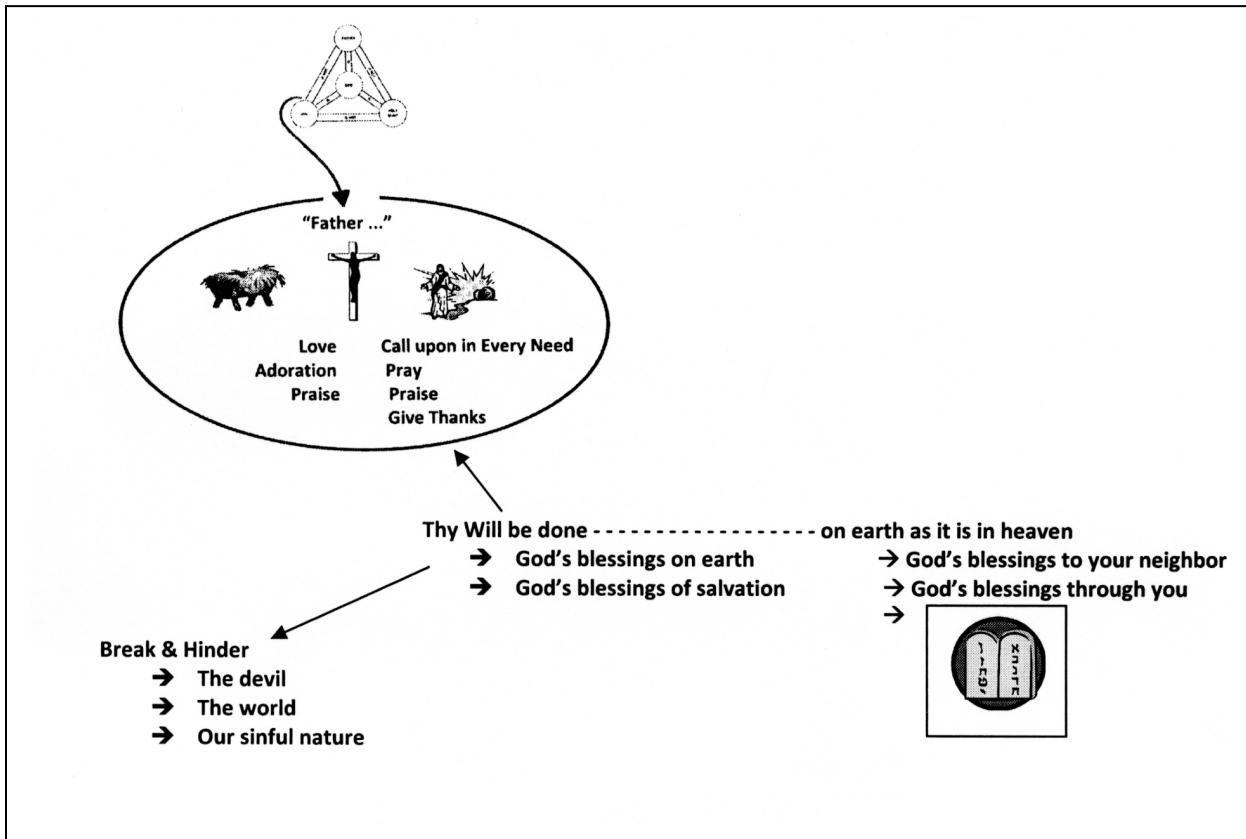
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How does this happen?

God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil ((plan and purpose / desire and scheme)) of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's Name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.



77.31 What God desires:

God shows His love to all. "He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust." (Matthew 5:45) So **God gives every earthly blessing** – like we talked about in the chapter on the First Article.

God also gives His spiritual blessings. He does not want anyone to be lost. He wants every human being to be saved and to live with Him forever. The Bible says that over and over again. Paul says, "God our Savior . . . desires all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3-4) Peter says that God "is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

The angels show God's attitude. Jesus said, "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance" and "there is **joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.**" (Luke 15:7, 10)

What we pray for is for all the blessings of God to come to us, to our friends, family and neighbors, and to all people.

77.32 Defeating the Enemies:

But there are enemies. Paul lists them as: **the world, the flesh and the devil**. Read the Small Catechism, Question # 216 and each of the verses quoted there. Then read the following paragraphs and the words of the hymn below.

The devil wants to destroy all the good blessings that God gives. He **does not want** us to be in the relationship of Love, Adoration and Praise with God. He **does not want** you to experience the eternal life or the glorious transforming of your body that Jesus is planning to do. He **does not want** you to be in God's kingdom of glory. Instead he wants you to be in hell.

"The world" means all the people in the world around us who have turned away from God. There are different ways we face problems. **(1)** Friends who are not following God will invite you to join in doing things you know you should not. **(2)** Others might make fun of being a Christian, laugh at your choosing to live a moral life, and mock the idea of going to Church. **(3)** There are many in this country who try to prevent Christians from practicing our faith or talking about our faith in Jesus. **(4)** Others around the world actually do persecute Christians by threatening them, physically harming them, imprisoning them and killing them.

If it wasn't bad enough to have enemies around us, **the third enemy is inside us**. "The flesh" means **our old sinful nature**. Paul calls it the "Old Adam." The sinful nature wants **nothing to do with God, except to boast about how good it is and how it "deserves" blessings and eternal life**. But most of the time the old sinful nature simply wants to ignore God and indulge in sin. **John talks** about the flesh **like this**, "**the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does**".

(1 John 2:16) **James talks** about "**bitter jealousy and selfish ambition**". (James 3:14) **Paul lists** "sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies," and then warns "those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19 2D21) **Read also Romans 7:15-24.** Paul finishes by saying, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

So one of the difficult parts of this petition is that **we have to pray against ourselves**. Luther says the prayer is fulfilled **when God "breaks and hinders every evil desire and scheme of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature."** When we pray, "Thy will be done" we are praying in part, "**Lord God, break, hinder and crush the part of me that goes against Your will.**" Take a moment to think through the parts of your life and your desires that you need to ask God to break and hinder.

What God wants is to pour out His blessings. **Luther said God desires to be an unending fountain of blessings where the more we call on and ask for and receive His blessings the more He pours out for us.**

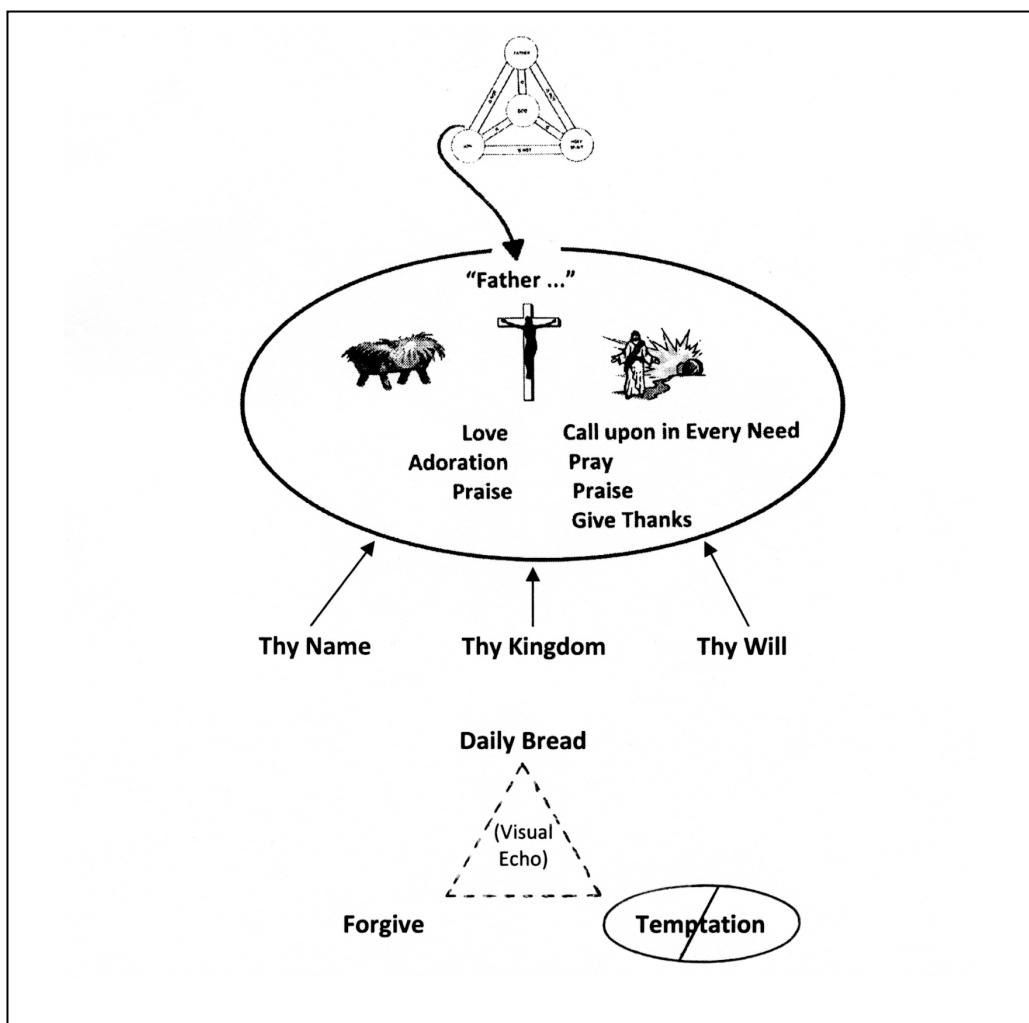
The blessings of God come to us through the Word of God. The greatest blessings are forgiveness and eternal life -- the things that Jesus has earned and won for us. In addition, God's blessings include every good thing we receive in this life. God "strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith" so His will may be done and we may be blessed.

77.33 You share in giving the blessings:

God invites you to share in His work. Jesus said, "love one another; just as I have loved you". (John 13:34) This petition links together with the Second Table of the 10 Commandments. Those commandments are summed up in the words, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Go back to the 10 Commandments; read through the 4th through 10th Commandments and look at the parts after the "but." Each one is a study in how we are to love our neighbor and so do the will of God.

So we finish the Third Petition with the words, "on earth as it is in heaven."

77.4-77.6 THE SECOND GROUP OF PETITIONS – # 4-6



77.4 THE FORTH PETITION

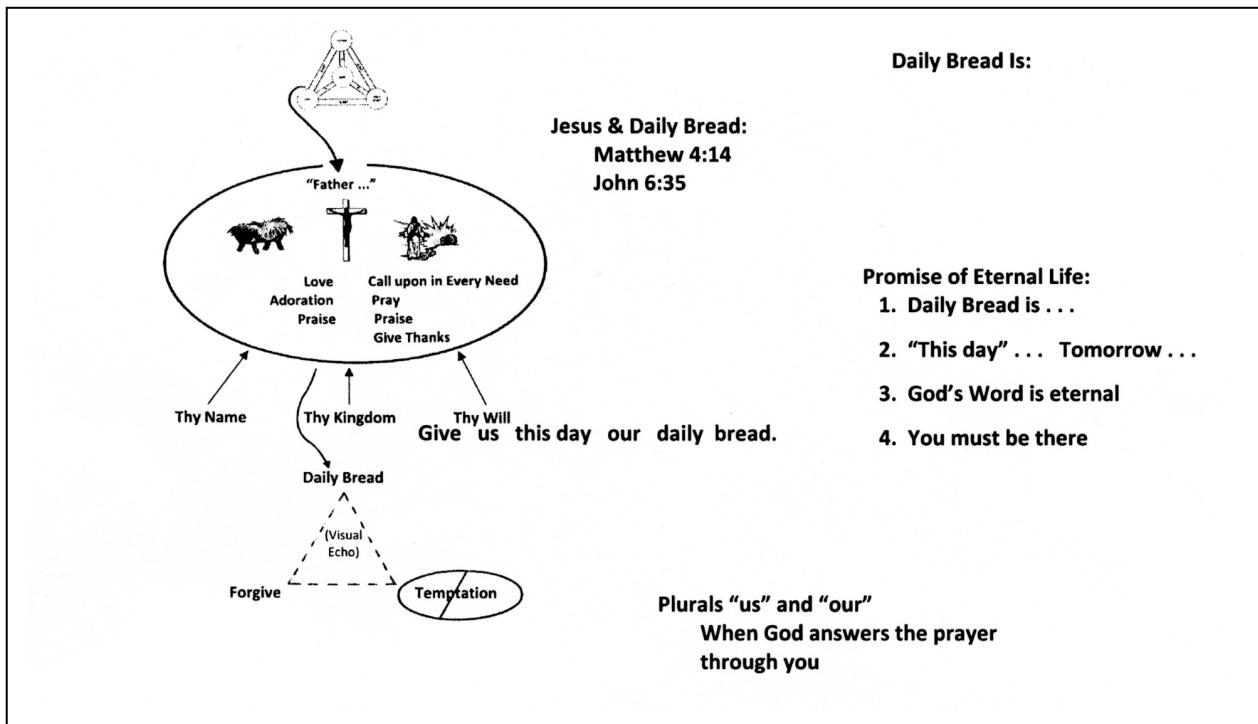
Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people; but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by "daily bread"?

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home, land and animals, money and goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.



77.41 WHAT IS DAILY BREAD?

Daily bread includes everything we need for the support and needs of the body. So we can explore this in a series of questions:

1. Does daily bread include the stuff on your table that you take a slice of and put butter on it?
Yes, of course.
2. Does daily bread include also the hamburger or the chicken that you have for supper?
3. Does it include vegetables? Even the ones you don't like to eat?
4. Does daily bread include proper exercise, sleep and brushing your teeth?
5. Does daily bread include the job that brings in money that pays the bills and buys the food?
6. Does daily bread include medicine the doctor gives you? How about the tetanus shot that really hurts?
7. If you are caught speeding does daily bread include the policeman, the ticket and the reminder to slow down before you hurt somebody?

8. If you have appendicitis, does daily bread include the doctor cutting you open and taking out your appendix before it kills you?
9. On the day of your death, what will be the most important part of your daily bread?
10. When Jesus returns what will be your daily bread on that day?

77.42 HOW THERE IS A PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE HIDDEN IN THESE WORDS

This is a wonderful insight from Martin Luther. There are four steps to it.

First, understand that daily bread is "everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body".

Second, ask **why do we pray "this day" and "daily?"** Why don't we pray for a whole year's bread or pray for "a lifetime of bread so we don't have to come and bother God every day"? The answer is not because it wouldn't work or because God couldn't do that. **The answer has something to do with relationships.** God wants us coming to Him daily, and talking to Him frequently. It's the relationship we have with God that is so important. In fact the relationship is more important than the answer. (Hey, how about if I decided to tell my wife only once a year that I love her. Would that work? Hah! **It's not a contract; it's a relationship.**) In the same way God calls us into a relationship with Him. He wants us to come to Him constantly and wants to answer our prayers constantly too.

When we say "this day" and "daily" we are saying that our relationship with God is the most important thing. We call on God for this day's bread. He answers. We leave tomorrow's bread for tomorrow. When tomorrow comes we can call on Him and He will answer. **God will be there tomorrow** and He will be the same. **We can trust Him for tomorrow's bread.** And the next day. And the day after. The promise for tomorrow is part of what Jesus is teaching us when He tells us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Third, how long will the prayer "Give us this day our daily bread" be good? How long will it last and keep on being answered? This petition comes from God. It's His Word. Jesus said, "**Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.**" (Luke 21:33) Luther has a really important understanding about this. He says **we should be "sure and certain** that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has told us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us."

The words "give us this day our daily bread" can't ever wear out. There will never come a time when God will say, "sorry, the prayer was good yesterday, but time ran out on it. No more daily bread." It can't happen because **they are God's words. They're eternal.**

Fourth, in order for the prayer to be answered and be eternal, certain things have to happen. **God must be there.** He will be. **God's word has to be there.** It's eternal. **One more thing has to be there. You.** The prayer for daily bread

cannot be answered if there is no one to receive the answer. In order for the prayer to endure forever you must be there forever. So there is a promise of eternal life hidden in these simple words.

77.43 "US" AND "OUR" – PLURALS WHERE GOD TURNS THE PRAYER AROUND

When we pray, "give us this day our daily bread," **who is included** in the words "us" and "our?" Do they include only you, or your whole family? Do they include your neighbors? Did they include the victims of Hurricane Katrina? How about people half-way around the world who are starving?

What do you do when you are praying, "give us this day our daily bread" and realize that your neighbor down the street doesn't have anything to eat? What happens is that **God turns the prayer around** and says, "Now you are going to be the answer to prayer. I have heard your prayer, and you have not only prayed for yourself. You have prayed for your neighbor. I have decided to answer your prayer, and I am **going to answer it through you.**"

Who is included in the petition? The words "**us**" and "**our**" **push us** into relationship with everyone who is in need of daily bread. And remember, daily bread is not just bread. It includes everything we need for the support and needs of the body.

77.44 HOW JESUS PRAYED

This prayer is also Jesus' prayer. So **how did Jesus deal with daily bread?**

In Matthew 4 Jesus had been fasting for 40 days and was hungry. The devil tempted Him to turn stones into bread. Jesus answered that "**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.**" (Matthew 4:4) He kept sorted out what was most important.

In **John 6** Jesus took 5 loaves and 2 fish. **He prayed and gave thanks**, and then broke them **and fed 5,000** men (plus women and children). The chapter continues with Jesus saying that He is the Bread of Life. **Jesus is our Bread of Life because He gave Himself for our salvation**, to forgive our sins and give us eternal life, so that we will rise from the dead and receive our daily bread forever.

77.5 THE FIFTH PETITION

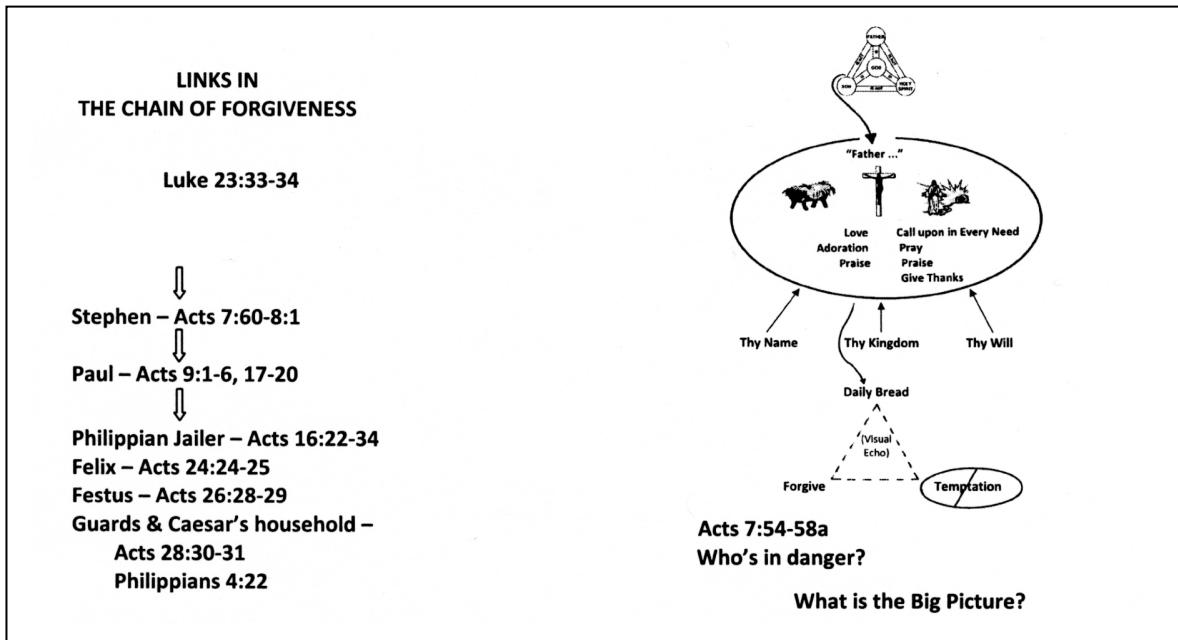
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

What does this mean? (Alternate Wording)

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins or deny our prayers because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. But we ask that He would give them all to us by grace. So we too will forgive from the heart, and gladly do good to those who sin against us.



77.51 THE BIG PICTURE

Let's begin by forming a picture. Open your Bible to **Acts 7**. Stephen is the first martyr of the Christian Church. He has been arrested for speaking about Jesus. He has had to stand trial. He has given his defense. He started by reciting the history of Israel beginning with Abraham. He finished by warning them that they were guilty of betraying and murdering "the Righteous One," Jesus. (Acts 7:51-53) They were enraged! **Stephen**, though, **looked up and God gave him a vision of heaven**. He saw the glory of God, and saw Jesus at the right hand of God. He joyfully told them about it! The result – **they yelled, rushed at him, dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him**.

Now form the picture in your mind. **Stephen** is standing there **about to die!** The crowd is getting **ready to** throw large stones at him and **kill him**. **Which one is in danger?**

Is it **Stephen**? He has seen Jesus in glory. He has a pretty good guarantee for his future. **He knows where he will be in just a few minutes.** No, he's fine. **The crowd** on the other hand is **about to murder one of God's people**. They are bringing judgment on themselves. **They are in danger** of being in hell forever.

So what is Stephen to do? Read verses 59-60.

Notice his two prayers. **Stephen sees the big picture.** He knows who's really in danger. **So he prays for them.** "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." He prays for them to be forgiven.

This has been the pattern of Christian martyrs through 2,000 years of Christianity. Time after time a Christian has stood in front of his persecutors and turned to God and prayed for them. For the Christian there may be a time of suffering. Whatever we suffer here will be followed by an eternity of glory. For the unbeliever what hangs in the balance is

an eternity of heaven or hell; an eternity of life or death. **We remember that our neighbor's soul is at stake.** In any situation your neighbor's soul is most important.

77.52 A CHAIN OF FORGIVENESS

Look again at the end of Acts 7. In 7:58 and 8:1 you find the name of one of the people involved in Stephen's murder – Saul, also known as Paul. He was included in Stephen's prayer for forgiveness. Was the prayer answered?

In Chapter 9 we find Paul riding to Damascus. In verses 3-6 he has an encounter with Jesus: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" "Who are you, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. . . ." Paul then is blind for 3 days, is visited by Ananias, believes in Jesus, and is baptized.

What happens next? Acts 9:20 says, "And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'"

The chain continued. In Acts 16:22-34 we read about **Paul and Silas in Philippi**. They were beaten and thrown **in jail**. What do they do? They realize that God has put them there to tell about Jesus . . . to people they would not usually have gotten to meet. They were praying and singing.

An earthquake shook the jail and the jail doors flew open. **The jailer** was about to kill himself thinking the prisoners had escaped. Paul called out and stopped him. He took them home, came to faith and his whole family was baptized.

In Acts 24:24-25 Paul was under arrest again. **He had the chance to talk to Felix the Governor.** So he talked about faith in Jesus, and about judgment day.

In Acts 26:28-29 Paul had the chance to **Herod Agrippa**. Herod said to Paul, ". . . would you persuade me to be a Christian?" Paul answered, ". . . I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am – except for these chains."

In Acts 28:30-31 we find Paul in Rome **waiting for his trial before Caesar**. He could be set free, or he could be executed. For two years he lived there telling about Jesus. In Philippians 4:22 as he writes one of his letters from prison he says, "All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household." **Paul was working at converting the guards and Caesar's family!**

All of this shows that Paul understood the big picture. He valued his neighbor's soul because God had valued his soul. This is why we forgive; because we have been forgiven.

77.53 THE BEGINNING OF THE CHAIN

Stephen's prayer did not begin with Stephen. It came from someone else. Turn in the Bible to **Luke 23:33-34** and read it.

The prayer for forgiveness comes from Jesus. In the middle of suffering He prayed for forgiveness for the soldiers, . . . and for Pilate, . . . and for the Jewish leaders, . . . and for you because your sins were part of why He was there.

Jesus prayed for our forgiveness. But forgiveness came at a price. It had to be earned through Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.

77.54 GOD'S VALUES

Why did He do all these things? The letter to the Hebrews says that "Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, . . . for the joy set before Him endured the cross." (Hebrews 12:2) The joy set before Him was **to have you with Him and living forever.** There's joy and gladness in giving forgiveness and eternal life.

It is an amazing thing to have God talk straight to you and say that you are important to Him; that He wants you living forever; that the Father wants this so much that he gave His only-begotten Son; that Jesus cares about you so much that He laid down His life for you.

When you see all these things you begin to think about "**God's values.**" What does God desire? **What does God treasure?** What does God think is the most important thing in the universe?

God calls us to share in His values; to value our neighbor's salvation. We are to prize our neighbor's soul. Jesus said in Matthew 18:15 that if you turn someone from sin to forgiveness "you have gained your brother." James says that, "whoever brings back a sinner will save his soul from death." (James 5:19-20)

77.55 THE LAST PART OF THIS PETITION

"So we too will forgive from the heart, and gladly do good to those who sin against us." How can we be glad to do good to someone who sins against us?

God invites us to be a part of forgiveness. We are forgiven, we forgive, and we tell our neighbor about God's forgiveness in Jesus. **When we understand God's forgiveness it gets into our heart, and it comes from our heart to others.** This is an amazing thing! As you forgive, you tell about Jesus, and you are a part of bringing eternal life to your neighbor!

It's a wonderful thing to save somebody from dying. We celebrate heroes who rescue others from danger. But that kind of hero doesn't keep someone from dying; he only delays their death. How much more wonderful is it **to be part of bringing forgiveness that leads to eternal life.**

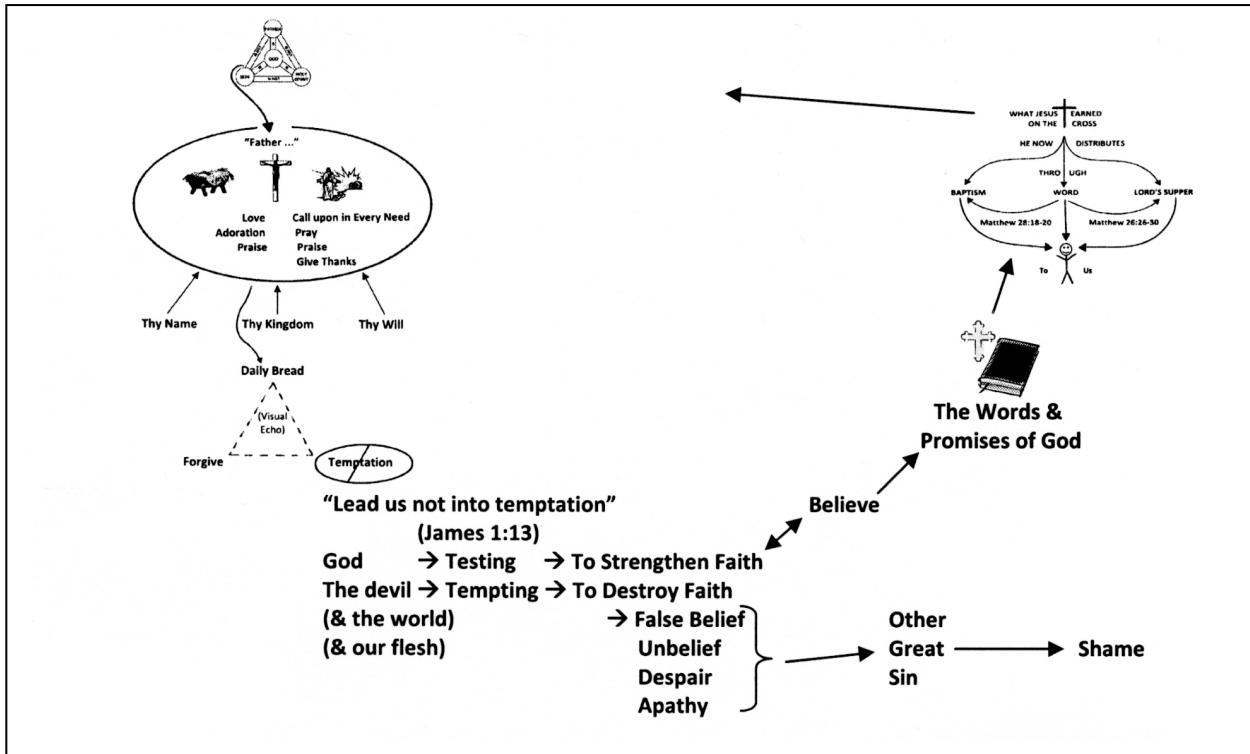
There is tremendous joy in turning someone from death to life. That's the joy that is shared by the angels. (Luke 15:7, 10) That is the great joy and celebration that happens in heaven. And that is the greatest joy of the Christian's life.

77.6 THE SIXTH PETITION

And lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean?

God certainly tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh may not deceive or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great ((shame and vice / sin and shame.)) Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and ((win / keep)) the victory.



77.61 GOD

"God cannot be tempted with evil, and He tempts no one." James 1:13 The reason why is because **temptation is to want and claim something that is not rightfully yours.** # 1 There is nothing that is not rightfully God's, and # 2 God is the One who gives. He gives us life, eternal life, heaven, the name and the rights of being sons of God. **He cannot be tempted by the opposite because He is doing exactly what he wants in pouring out blessings and giving to others.**

The devil tempts, and along with the devil the world and our sinful nature join in. "Each person is tempted when he is lured by his own desire." (James 1:14) When the devil tempts it is **for the purpose of destroying your soul.** So we pray for God to guard and protect us.

Notice in the diagram: God tests / the devil tempts. **When God allows the testing of your faith** it is so your faith may be strengthened. **When the devil tempts** he does it in order to destroy your faith.

God tests. He tests our faith through different things that happen in our lives. Peter talks about various kinds of trials that "have come **so that your faith – of greater worth than gold . . . – may be proved genuine**" (1 Peter 1:7 NIV). Job went through great trials and out of those trials came **his great confession**, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see Him with my own eyes – I and not another." (Job 19:25-27 NIV)

What God does through the testing of our faith is to bring us back to focusing on Jesus. He is the heart of our relationship with God. Other things get set aside. We get **back to basics**. And **when our faith is so focused it is stronger**.

When we go through a time of testing, it is important that God's Word is in the middle of everything. Faith means to believe. Remember the question: what is the difference between "**Abraham believed God**" and Abraham believed in God? To "believe in God" means to believe that He is and that He helps those who trust in Him. To "believe God" means to believe what God has said. **Everything comes back to "The Words and Promises of God."**

77.62 THE ENEMIES

The three enemies Luther names are **the world, the devil and our sinful flesh**.

Review who they are and what they do from the Third Petition (above). **They would pull us away from God** and lead us into sin.

77.63 BAD RESULTS

What do the enemies of faith lead us into? Read these 3 definitions carefully and know the differences between them:

(1) **False belief** – Is when you believe something that is wrong. Imagine if I got hit on the head and suddenly believed that a green light means "stop" and a red light "go." **If I were driving along believing something that was wrong**; what could happen? What kind of consequences could I face?

If I believe something that is spiritually false (like believing that it is not Jesus but witchcraft that I should trust) **what could happen to my soul?**

It's also a false belief to think:

- (a) that it's OK to do the immoral thing; or
- (b) that it's OK to neglect God or prayer or worship.

(2) **Unbelief** – Is when you do not believe that there is a God.

If you do not believe that God exists

- then you have no reason for believing that there is a right and a wrong
- then it does not matter what you do because there is no right or wrong
- then you do not matter to the universe
- then it does not matter whether you exist
- so you might just as well do whatever you feel like.

The big problem for the unbeliever is that there is a God and the unbeliever will have to answer for his actions. **The other problem** for the unbeliever is that **it is a terrible thing** to live in a universe where you believe that your life means nothing.

(3) **Despair** – means **to believe that there is no hope because either**

- (a) **you believe that there is no God or**
- (b) **you believe that God does not love you.**

Despair is the problem of many in our time. We see it in the number of suicides and shootings in schools. That is the last act of a soul who believes there is nothing to live for and nothing better in the future.

Question: Is there ever a reason why a Christian should despair? Why?

(4) **Apathy** – means **to not care**. When you are uninterested and do not care **about spiritual things, moral truths or the wellbeing of yourself or others** then you have fallen into apathy. This is not just being tired or wanting to be alone. It is believing deep down that neither you nor anyone else matters. It can separate you from God because God truly loves life and loves truth.

(5) After listing false belief, and despair Luther continues with the words, "and **other great sin and shame**." Notice how it works!
First come problems with belief.
Then come the sins.
 The sin is **found out**,
 And **then** comes the shame!

77.64 KEEP THE VICTORY

How do you avoid all these bad things happening to you? **Answer:** God works within your soul to create and strengthen your faith. This is the work of the Holy Spirit who "*has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified, and kept me in the true faith.*"

It is always the way the Holy Spirit works that He uses:

- (a) The Word of God, the Bible; and
- (b) the Word of God together with water, Baptism; and
- (c) the Word of God together with bread and wine, the Lord's Supper.

So we use the Word of God, and our Baptism, and the Lord's Supper to fight against the enemies.

The Holy Spirit and the Word of God **always point us to Jesus**. It is always a matter of faith in Jesus and what He has done – **notice the past tense, "has done."** The victory **has already been won** by Jesus. On the cross he said, "**It is finished.**" When we fight against the world, the devil and our sinful flesh; and when the Holy Spirit helps us and we overcome them; we simply keep the victory that Jesus has won.

77.65 JESUS FACED TEMPTATION

Read Matthew 4:3-11.

When Jesus faced temptation:

How did He answer the devil?

There are three words Jesus used in each answer. What are they?

Jesus is the One who spoke the Word of God to us. He is the giver of the Word. But in Matthew 4 He puts Himself under the Word. He is obedient to the Word.

Each temptation was for Jesus to claim a higher place:

- (1st)** through doing a miracle;
- (2nd)** through demanding the service of the angels; and
- (3rd)** through claiming a kingdom without suffering.

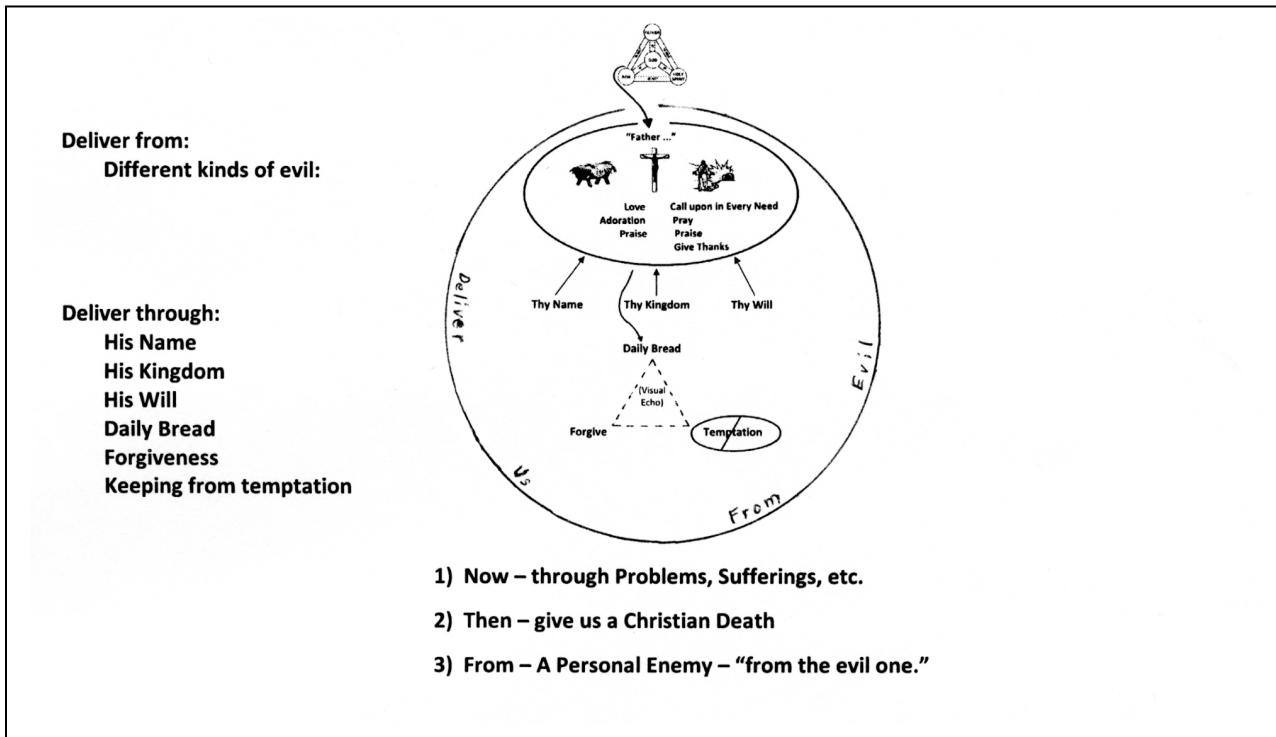
With each temptation Jesus claimed the lower place. Paul says He "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted Him . . ." (Philippians 2:8-9)

77.7 THE SEVENTH PETITION

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and honor; and finally when our last hour comes, give us a ((blessed end / Christian death)) and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to Himself in heaven.



77.71 "IN SUMMARY"

This is a summary. The 7th petition gathers together everything in the Lord's Prayer one more time. We could say, "Father, deliver us: by Your name; by Your kingdom; and by Your will. And, Father, deliver us: through giving us daily bread; through forgiving our sins; and through keeping us from temptation." Every petition leads us back to what Jesus has done.

Again, this is a summary, gathering everything together. So we pray for deliverance from "every evil of body and soul, possessions and honor". From the beginning to the end of our lives, there are different kinds of problems. God watches over us through all of them.

But it's more. **This is personal!**

77.72 "HO PONEROU"

We pray, "deliver us from evil." The Greek words actually say deliver us from "the evil one." There is an evil one, a devil, who fights against us. He desires the destruction of your soul by separating you from God, and by taking away or twisting God's Word.

We need for God to deliver us from him. And God has done this through Jesus. He gives us His name to use, His kingdom to be in, and His saving will to keep us. Our Father gives daily bread, Jesus has won forgiveness and the Holy Spirit strengthens our faith.

77.73 A BLESSED END / A CHRISTIAN DEATH

There has been an **interesting change** in how people think.

Several **centuries ago** when people talked about a **blessed death** they meant something specific. What they described was a **death where you knew you were going to die and had enough time to call on God and say goodbye to your family**.

Now in our time when most people talk about a blessed death they mean something else. What they describe is a **painless death**. Sometimes they talk about some dying **in their sleep**. Other times they mean any death that is quick and painless. Some will even talk about a sudden death in an accident and say, "that's how I want to go."

Who is right? The people centuries ago, or people now?

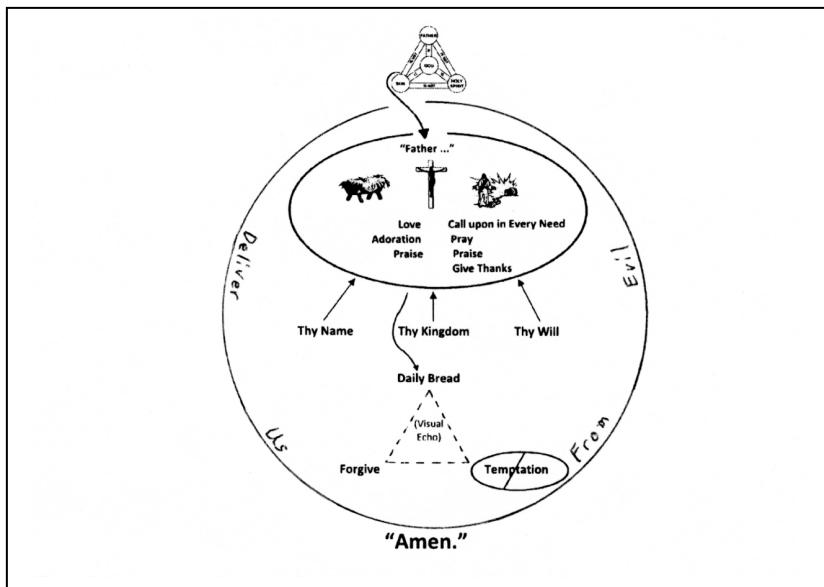
What is a Christian death? The very simple answer is: It is **to die believing in Jesus**. That makes all the difference. To die without faith in Jesus leads directly to hell. **Dying as a Christian opens up into heaven**, eternal life and being with God forever. A Christian death is a tremendous blessing! It is a thing that God gives us by His grace (God's Riches At Christ's Expense). A Christian death is something that we should pray for. And even if you didn't notice it, we do this **every time we pray the Lord's Prayer**.

77.8 CONCLUSION

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

What is meant by the word "Amen"?

This means that I should be sure and certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has ((commanded / told)) us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. "Amen, Amen", that means "yes, yes, it shall be so."



77.81 AMEN

The word "amen" simply means "it shall be so."

It takes us back to the beginning. God invites us to call Him "Father" and by these words **He "tenderly invites us to believe** that He is our true God, and that we are His true children. At the end we respond, saying "amen, it is true." God tells us that we can ask Him as dear children ask their dear father. And we respond, saying "amen, it shall be so.

The word "Amen" comes from a Hebrew word that means "**it shall be.**" Interestingly the word "amen" is related to another Hebrew word "**emet**" that means "Truth". Our Small Catechism uses the phrase, "Yes, yes, it shall be so."

77.82 A DETAILED DEFINITION

A detailed **definition** of "Amen" would have to include:

1. **What has been spoken is God's Word and it is true. (Acknowledging)**
2. **It is true for me, and yes, that is good. (Confessing)**
3. **I will see God's truth filling all creation. (Waiting & Hoping)**
4. **Praise God for His love, His wonderful words, and His mighty acts. (Worshiping)**

77.83 IN THE LIFE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

In **Deuteronomy 27** there are a series of curses spoken including for anyone who misleads a blind man on the road, and anyone who takes a bribe to shed innocent blood, "**and all the people shall say, 'Amen.'**" The people of God standing there that day **accepted these words as God's Word and true.**

More often the Israelites spoke the "amen" **as a part of their worship.** In 1 Chronicles 16:36 Asaph and his brothers are leading the worship and they finish by saying, "**Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!**" Then all **the people said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD.** There are other examples. And each of the first four books of the Psalms end with "Amen." (Psalms 41, 72, 89, and 106)

Most of the "amen's" in the epistles follow after **doxologies (words that wrap up a thought with something like "to God be glory forever and ever").** And of course the word "amen" is used plenty of times in the book of Revelation where we read about the **heavenly worship** now and at the end of the world.

77.84 JESUS

We are on the receiving end of God's Word, so as we respond in faith we say "amen." **Jesus is on the other end and speaks the Word.** So He gets to begin with "amen" (usually translated as "**truly**" in our Bibles). In Matthew 10:42 about the one who gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, "**truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.**" Often Jesus says the "amen" **before difficult statements.** In Matthew 17:20 He says, "**For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move . . .**" **In John** the "amen" is **doubled**, as in John 3:5, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**"

In fact, in the book of Revelation **Jesus is called "the Amen, the faithful and true witness"** (Revelation 3:14).

77.85 IN OUR PRAYERS

When we respond to a prayer and say “amen” – it means: Yes we agree that these things are true and God pleasing; and may they happen.

When we finish our own prayers with “amen” – it means: We pray that they are pleasing to God; and may they happen.

When we pray the Lord’s Prayer or other things that God has invited us to pray – we are to say the “amen” with boldness and confidence.

77.86 THESE PETITIONS ARE PLEASING TO OUR FATHER

The words of the Lord’s Prayer are given by God. **He told us to pray these things.** The Lord’s Prayer is part of the Word of God.

This means that **the petitions are forever.** They cannot be set aside or wear out. Remember, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." (Matthew 24:35)

We have God’s invitation (connected with these words). **We have God’s promise** to hear (connected with these words). So we can be sure and certain. **We can trust Him** to hear us and answer our prayer. **The Lord’s Prayer is friendly to the soul and the easiest of all prayers.** In these words **God tenderly invites** us to believe.

78. A PRAYER OF DISCIPLESHIP

Prayer is not only calling out to God and asking for things. It is **listening to what God has to say** to us – and that includes **agreeing with God within our souls** about what is important and what we will pray about (Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13). **In this sense the Lord’s Prayer is the most difficult of all prayers. The struggle to bring our wishes, desires, and petitions into harmony with God’s will is not easy.** See Isaiah 55:9; Matthew 16:22-23. But discipleship means to seek to do just that.

The Lord’s Prayer is a faithful guide through the most difficult parts of growing in prayer. **The petitions** of the Lord’s Prayer **assure us** that Our Father hears our prayers and cares about our needs. **But they also call us to discipleship** and guide us in growing as disciples. They do this **even where (or "especially where") that growth is difficult.** This is true even when we are praying about simple things. Notice how the little words "us" and "our" give the 4th – 6th Petitions such tremendous range of meaning and application for our lives.

 BETWEEN CHAPTERS

The challenge is to carefully read Romans 5-8

79.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 7 – Prayer

Petition A particular request either alone or put together with other petitions in a prayer. (W)

Litany A structured form of prayer consisting of a series of petitions and responses. (SC)

Plead To make an earnest appeal. (W)

Meditate (Meditation) Focused, continual thought reflecting on the truths of God from passages of Scripture, looking at them from different angles, in different situations, and over a period of time.

Contemplate (Contemplation) Continual thought focused on the nature, attributes and acts of God as they are revealed in Scripture.

Inwardly Digest From the phrase "read, mark and inwardly digest," it means to continue to think about the Scriptures in your mind and soul, to meditate on them, and so grow in your knowledge of God.

Fasting To go without food in order to devote your time to spiritual things, such as prayer; or done as an expression of grief, sorrow or repentance.

Intercession (Intercessory) A prayer for another person.

Imprecatory A psalm or prayer asking God to save, rescue or deliver through judging or defeating an enemy.

Worship To adore and praise God either alone or together with other Christians.

Liturgy Greek word meaning "public service." (SC) A liturgy is a planned pattern of worship where Scripture is spoken back and forth between a leader and a congregation.

Hymn A song of prayer or praise . . . (SC)

Stanza A numbered division within a hymn. (SC) Commonly called a "verse."

Psalms An Old Testament collection of hymns and poems worshiping God, meditating on His goodness, and telling about His acts. Some types and groups of psalms include:

Penitential There are 7 psalms we have traditionally called penitential. They are 2, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143; and they focus on God's judgment and turning from our sins.

Messianic Psalms that have clear and often extended parts that are talking about Jesus.

Song of Ascent Psalms 120-134 talk about going up to Jerusalem to worship.

Deuteroisaianic Psalms 90-100 are hopeful expectant and comforting very much like the "book of comfort" in Isaiah (chapters 40-66).

(Greater & Lesser Hallel This will be covered in Chapter 10.)

Invoke (Invocation) From the Latin "to call upon;" to call on God's name at the beginning of worship, prayer or speaking His word. The words "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" are the invocation spoken at the beginning of the service. (SC)

Introit From the Latin word for "enter." Psalm verses are often sung or spoken toward the beginning of the Divine Service. (SC)

Gloria Patri Latin for "glory to the Father." This is a text used to conclude a Psalm or Introit with the words "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit . . ." (SC)

Kyrie eleison Greek words for "Lord, have mercy." (SC)

Gloria in Excelsis Latin words meaning "glory in the highest." This is a Hymn of Praise in the worship Service. (SC)

Collect A brief structured prayer [bringing together the themes of the lessons for the day]. (SC)

Offertory A portion of Scripture sung either in response to the Sermon or as the offering is brought forward.

Hosanna A Hebrew word of praise meaning "Save us now." (SC)

Agnus Dei Latin words meaning "Lamb of God;" what John the Baptist called Jesus (SC)

Nunc Dimittis Latin words meaning "now [let your servant] depart." This is from the Song of Simeon when he saw the baby Jesus at the temple.

Doxology Words of praise to the Triune God, that mention Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Matins A morning service of psalms, readings, and prayers. (SC)

Venite Latin words for "O come," the first words of Psalm 95, sung as the first psalm in the service of Matins. (SC)

Vespers An evening service of psalms, readings, and prayers. (SC)

Boldness To do a thing with confidence and courage.

Hallow To reverence and honor something as sacred and holy.

Profane

- (1) To treat a holy thing as if it was common and unimportant.
- (2) To speak or act with contempt for a sacred thing.
- (3) To bring a holy thing into contact with things that are unclean.

Kingdom The area where a king rules. Also the ways in which a king rules. We talk about Christ's:

- (1) kingdom of power;
- (2) kingdom of grace; and
- (3) kingdom of glory.

Gracious Not just kind and generous; gracious refers to how God's GRACE comes to us in Jesus Christ.

Hinder To make it more difficult for a thing to happen; to try to prevent.

Scheme To plot or plan to do something wrong.

Devout Sincere in the respect and worship of God.

Trespasses (2) Offenses against the person or rights of another.

Unworthy Not deserving.

False Belief To believe something that is wrong, especially something wrong about God.

Despair To believe that there is no hope because you either

- (1) believe that there is no God or
- (2) believe that you are not loved by God.

Apathy Lack of interest, indifference and unconcern for spiritual things, moral truths, or the wellbeing of yourself or others.

Shame Dishonor and disgrace that comes from having your sins found out.

A Christian Death To die while believing in Jesus, and so be brought to heaven and welcomed there.

Ex Corde Latin words for "out of the heart;" a prayer that is not written ahead of time.

"Us" & "Our" When the petitions of the Lord's Prayer say "us" or "our" God is teaching us that we are not to be concerned for ourselves only; but pray for, care for, and encourage each other.

Amen Greek and Hebrew word meaning "it shall be so." When we say "amen" we are agreeing with God that He has heard our prayer and His will will be done.

Catechism & Memory Verses – (8) Baptism

80-a **1. THE NATURE OF BAPTISM**

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) (64)

80-b **Numbers 6:22-27 (From the Hebrew)**

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD smile upon you and give you peace. So they will put My name on the Israelites, and I will bless them." (65)

80-c **2. THE BLESSINGS OF BAPTISM**

What does Baptism give or profit?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark:

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16) (68)

80-d **Matthew 3:16-17** And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (55)

80-e **3. THE POWER OF BAPTISM**

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's Word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a ((washing / bath)) of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, (79)

80-f As St. Paul says in Titus, chapter 3: "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying." (Titus 3:5-8) (57)

80-g **Matthew 3:15** Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. (22)

80-h **4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTIZING WITH WATER**

What does such baptizing with water ((indicate / teach))?

It ((indicates / teaches)) that the Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and, again, a new man should daily emerge and arise, to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes, in Romans, chapter six:

"We were therefore buried with Him through Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:4) (96)

80-i **Revelation 21:3,6-7 (NIV)** I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and will be their God

" . . . To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son." (79)

CHAPTER 8 – BAPTISM

Small Catechism, Questions # 239 – 260

(Note: Preview Section 82.1 to cover the idea and definition of a Sacrament.
Understanding that idea is important for this Chapter and Chapter 10)

80. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

In Baptism God joins His name to us and forgives our sins. He takes what Jesus earned on the cross and makes it mine, so I can trust Him, remember that I belong to God, and turn away from sin.

81. QUESTION # 1 – WHAT IS BAPTISM? ((Small Catechism Questions # 239 – 245))

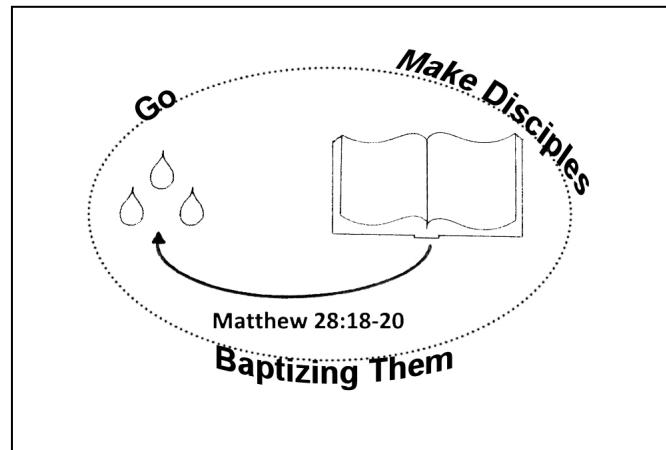
Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

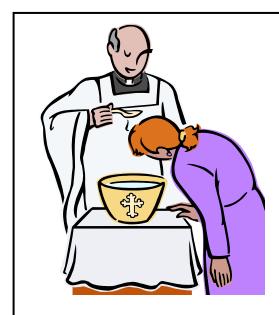
81.1 "INCLUDED IN GOD'S COMMAND"

We have to have God's command in order to properly baptize. I am not allowed to take a fire hose to the hydrant next to the church about 3:00 on a summer afternoon when people are driving home from work with their windows open and spray them down while yelling out the words of Baptism. Not only would I get in trouble; I also do not have God's command to do it. I need to have God's command.



Matthew 28:18-20

Baptism is commanded when either the person is of age and asks to be baptized; or is brought by the parents who have spiritual authority to do so. **God has repeatedly given that spiritual authority to parents and called for them to raise their children in the knowledge of God** – as early as Deuteronomy 6:6-7, ***"These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."*** We read in the New Testament about the apostles baptizing whole families. For example, Paul and Silas baptized the Philippian jailer's whole family. (Acts 16:29-33).



Part of our teaching about Baptism is that **it is something God does**. Baptism is included in God's command. It is His idea, using His words, His water, His plan, His doing. The Pastor simply applies the water and speaks the words but those things belong to Jesus. We say, **"The Pastor pours, but Jesus Baptizes."**

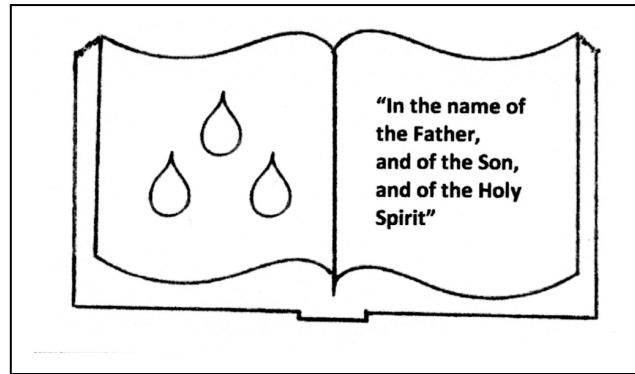
81.2 "COMBINED WITH GOD'S WORD"

Question: What are the 4 things necessary to have a baptism?

Answer:

1. Water
2. Word
3. Baptizer
4. Baptizee.

These are pretty obvious. If you are missing any one of those 4 things you cannot and do not have a baptism.



Question: Which one carries the power of God?

Answer: The Word of God.

81.3 WHERE TO (AND WHERE NOT TO) PLACE OUR TRUST

Down through the centuries **people have placed their trust in each of the other three things** and that has led to problems. We look at them individually.

1) The Water: Some have placed their trust in the water in three ways.

First, some have insisted that water from the Jordan River was preferable for baptizing to other water.



Second, some have insisted that the water had to be blessed in some way.

Third, some have said that baptism is not really baptism if enough water is not used.

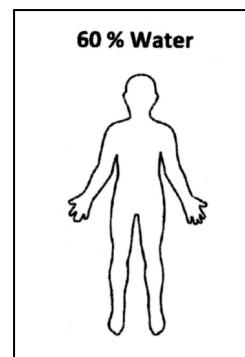
God has arranged that the element we use in Baptism is everywhere on earth. In fact as human beings we are mostly water. Think for a moment how baptism could be done in the following situations:

(a) On an arctic expedition when someone was dying and said they wanted to be baptized;

(b) In a life raft out on the ocean when there was no more fresh water to drink;

(c) After a car wreck when all you have is a bottle of 7-Up;

(d) In the desert when there was no more water in the canteens.



Notice that **wherever we go we carry the stuff of baptism with us**. Even if it is the salty water of sweat or tears we carry with us what we need for baptism.

IN AN EMERGENCY!

By the way, since we are on the subject every Christian should be familiar with the way to do an emergency baptism. **Find the service of emergency baptism in the catechism and in each hymnal.** It is printed in the Blue Catechism on P. 212; the Burgundy Catechism on P. 216; at the very end of the TLH (Red) Hymnal; on P. 312 in the LW (Blue) Hymnal; and at the end of the LSB (Burgundy) Hymnal, P. 1023. Part of God's plan is that every Christian is equipped to bring others into His Church; all over the world hundreds of millions of Christians sent out as an army of salvation.

3) **The Baptizer: Some have placed their trust in the Baptizer.** Early in Church

history **the Donatists** (who had other doctrinal problems too) taught that if you were baptized by a pastor who fell away from the Christian faith later on; you needed to be baptized again. How could they make sure the pastor who baptized them didn't later fall away? How would you try to make sure? In fact they followed the pastor around everywhere and watched him constantly! Imagine being one of those pastors!



Since that time the Christian Church has taught that baptism is baptism regardless of the faith of the Baptizer. Besides, no one can actually know that the pastor who baptized them is a Christian. You can't ever know absolutely for sure. We cannot see faith inside another person's soul.

4) **The Baptizee: Some have taught that Baptism depends on the faith of the one baptized.**

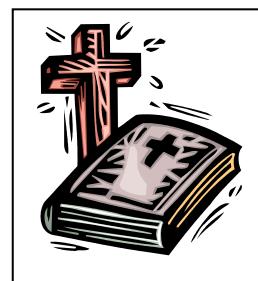
There are some who have doubted whether they really were Christians or not. This has become a problem where there are some who have been baptized a dozen times or more. They would go to the pastor and tell him of their backsliding and ask for baptism. This time they would hold to Christ more firmly and would not fall away.



We can sympathize with the desire to know for sure that you are baptized and forgiven. But being baptized over and over again, actually ends up creating more doubt than certainty. It is always a misplaced trust to trust ourselves. The Bible tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things." (Jeremiah 17:9)

2) **The Word of God:** This is **the only thing that remains constant, sure and solid**, no matter what happens.

It is safe to put our confidence in God's Word. Even if I were to be baptized and fall away from faith for 50 years I would still have God's word spoken over me and His name placed on me. (See also # 82.3)



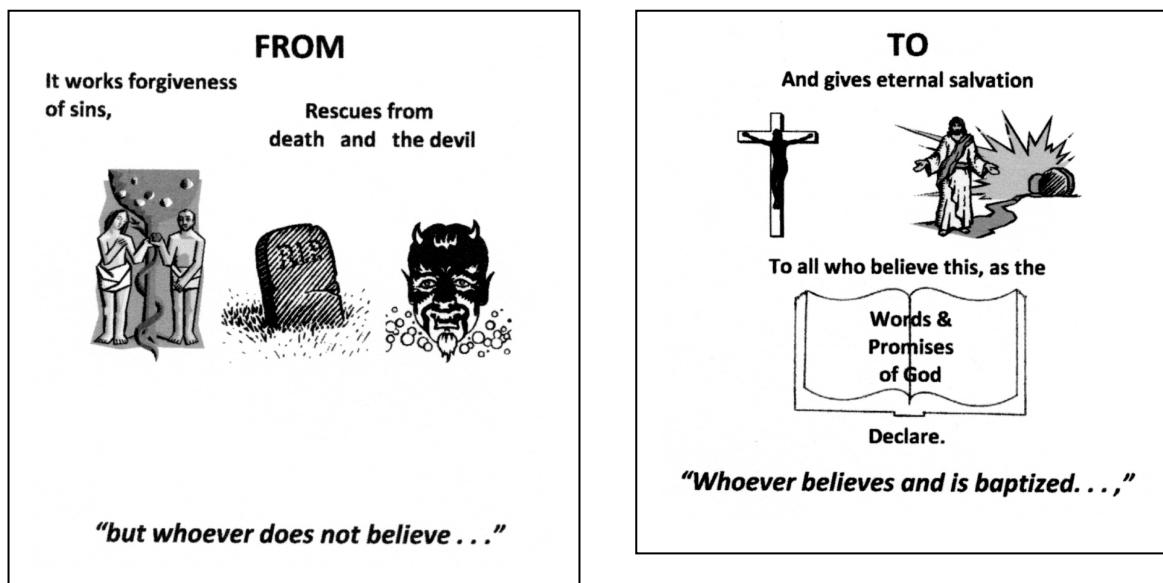
82. **QUESTION # 2 – WHAT DOES BAPTISM GIVE OR PROFIT?**

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark:

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

82.1 **A SACRAMENT** ((Small Catechism Questions # 236 – 238))

Baptism is the first of two things we call a “Sacrament.”

A Sacrament is something:

1. **Instituted by God and connected with Jesus;**
2. **Combining visible elements and God's Word (specifically words spoken by Jesus);**
3. **Where God promises and gives the forgiveness of sins earned by Jesus.**



A. There are **only two things** that fit this description completely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

((By the way, the Roman Catholic Church uses a different definition of the word “Sacrament” and names 7 things that fit their definition.))



B. **Think about a Sacrament this way:**

In a Sacrament we receive one thing with our bodies and another thing with our souls.

IN BAPTISM	
With our body we receive	With our soul we receive
The Water	The Word of God – the name of God spoken over us and the promises of forgiveness and life that are joined to Baptism.

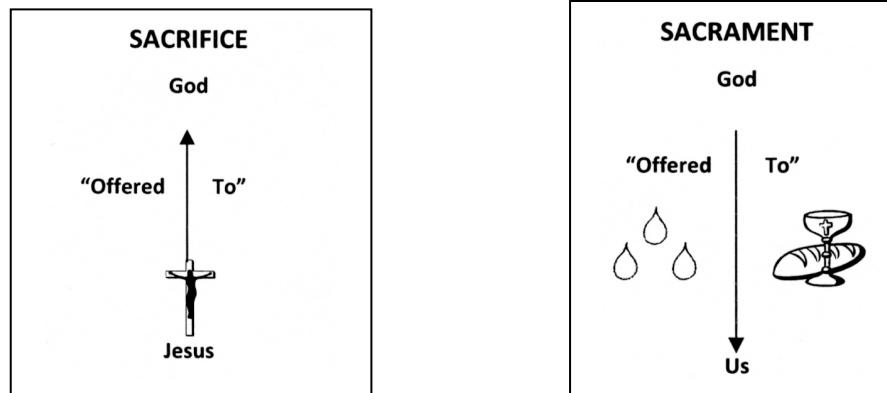
IN THE LORD'S SUPPER	
With our body we receive	With our soul we receive
The Bread and Wine, together with The Body and Blood of Christ	The Words of Jesus, and the Promises of Forgiveness of Sins, Life and Salvation that He Speaks to us.

(Notice that the blessings we receive with our souls always come mediated or brought to us through the Word.)

C. In a **Sacrament** blessings come from **God** and are given to **us**. This is the opposite of a “**Sacrifice**,” where a thing is offered from human beings to God.

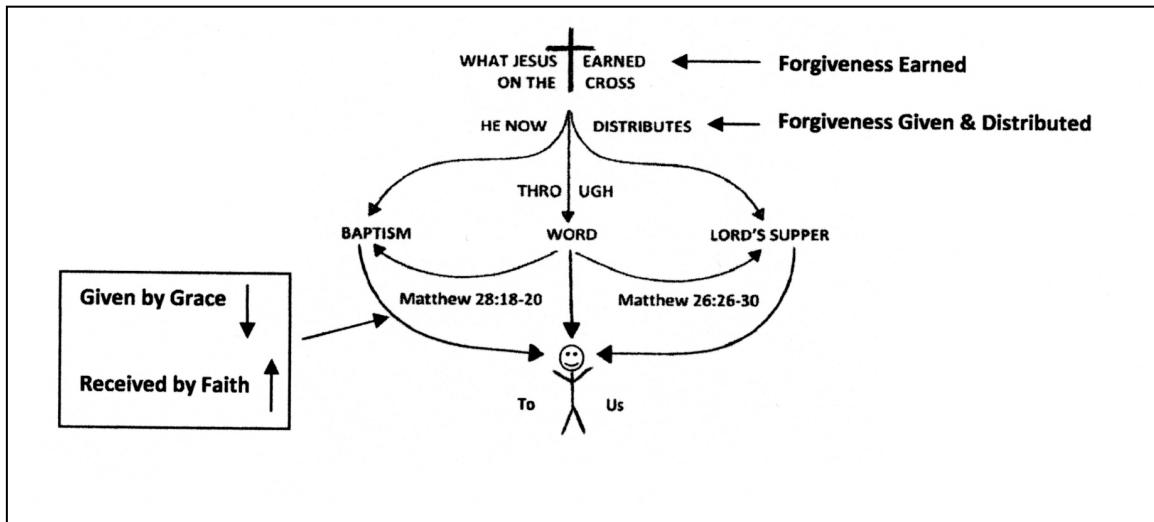
On the cross Jesus offered Himself to His Father for the sins of the world. He was our sacrifice.

In Baptism and in the Lord's Supper Jesus gives us the forgiveness He earned for us. They are **Sacraments**.



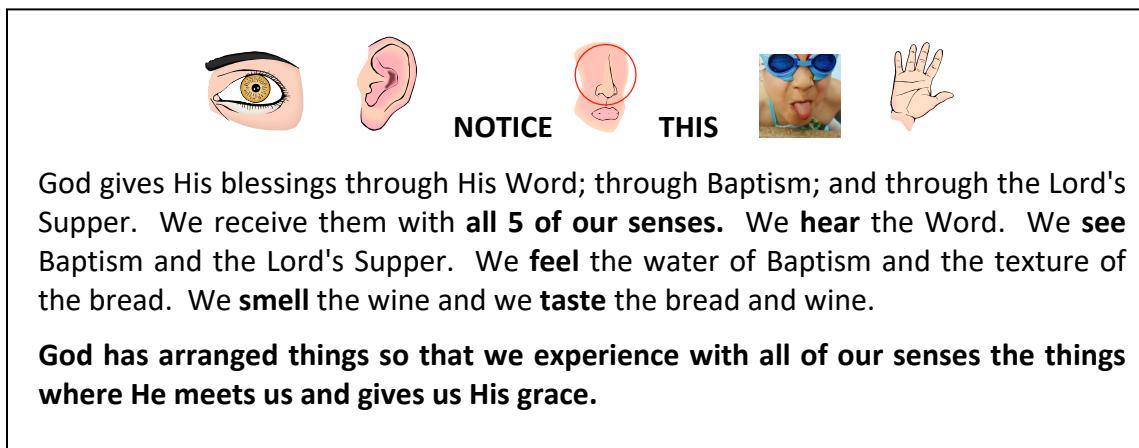
82.2 MEANS OF GRACE / WORD AND SACRAMENTS

Lutherans use the term “Means of Grace.” These are the ways God gives the forgiveness of sins to us. The ways that God gives the forgiveness of sins to us are the Word of God (the Bible with its message about Jesus’ death and resurrection for us); Baptism; and the Lord’s Supper. Remember the diagram we have been using:



This idea comes from Luther. **There is a difference between forgiving sins and distributing or giving that forgiveness to us.** We are **forgiven once, by Jesus on the cross; but God gives and distributes and tells us about that forgiveness over and over.** We need to be told many times over because we fall into sin, and we doubt and worry about God's forgiveness.

1. Everything that Jesus earned for us is put into Baptism and we receive it with the water.
2. Everything Jesus earned is put into the Word and we receive it through our ears when we hear it, and through our eyes when we read it.
3. And everything Jesus earned is put into the Lord's Supper and we receive it when we eat and drink it.
4. But the forgiveness of sins is only earned once.



82.3 **MATTHEW 3:13-17** ((Small Catechism Questions # 248 – 252))
 Jesus came to the Jordan River to meet John the Baptist and be baptized. **John met Him with a question:** "I need to be baptized by You, and do you come to me?"

John's question & Jesus' answer are helpful for us in learning what we receive in our Baptisms.

1. Jesus was baptized though **He had no sin.**
2. Jesus answered John, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us **to fulfill all righteousness.**" But Jesus had no need of forgiveness and did not need to have His righteousness filled up or increased. Instead **He was there in our place**, "to fulfill all righteousness" on our behalf.
3. **So the blessings** at Jesus' baptism are also **blessings for us.**



"And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and a voice from heaven said, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:16-17)

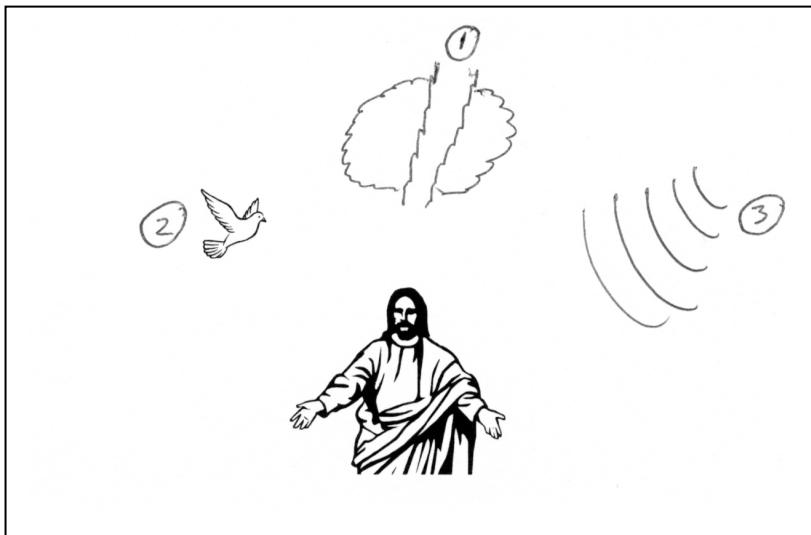
(In the Gospel of Mark it says, *"when He came up out of the water, immediately He saw the heavens being torn open . . ."* (Mark 1:10) It is the same word as in Mark 15:38 where it says "the curtain in the temple was torn in two".)

THE BLESSINGS OF BAPTISM – Matthew 3:16-17

1.	Heaven was opened	Heaven is opened to us through the forgiveness of our sins.
(Mark 1:10) The separation between heaven and earth is "torn apart" and God comes to us with forgiveness and mercy.		
2.	a. The Spirit of God descending like a dove	The Holy Spirit is given, and the first and chief work of the Holy Spirit is to create faith.
	b. . . . and coming to rest on Him	When the Holy Spirit begins His work in us He promises to continue that work through our whole life, either keeping us in faith or calling us to repent and come back to faith.
3.	A voice from heaven . . . "This is My Son . . ."	The Father calls us His own, adopting us into His family.

In Summary – What Baptism gives is: 

- (1) **the work of Jesus** forgiving our sins through His cross;
- (2) **the Holy Spirit's work** creating faith within us, keeping us in faith, and calling us back to faith; and
- (3) **the Father** calling us His children through Jesus Christ.



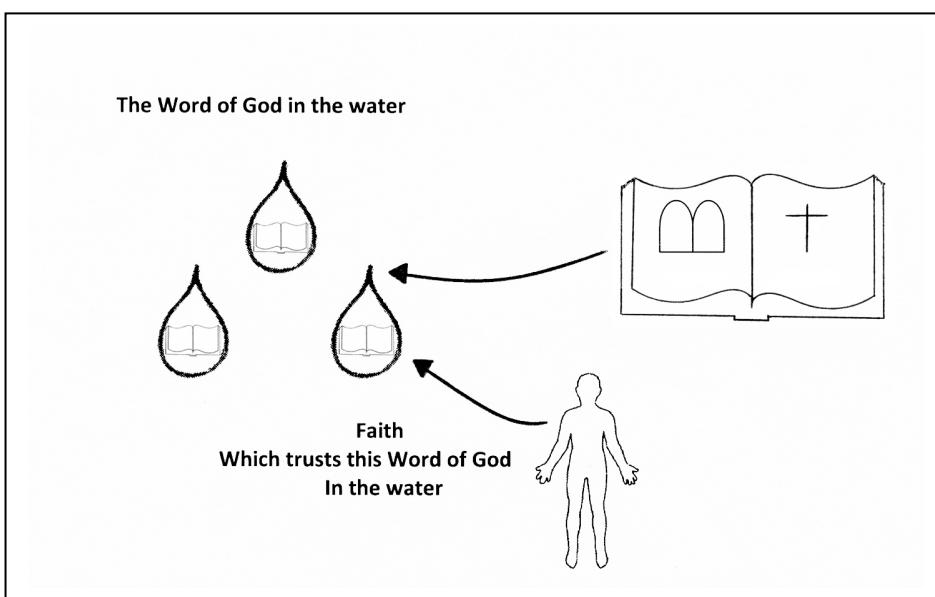
Notice also that when Jesus was baptized each of the persons of the Trinity are present in the same place at the same time – doing different things.

83. **QUESTION # 3 – HOW CAN WATER DO SUCH GREAT THINGS?**

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's Word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a ((washing / bath)) of the new birth in the Holy Spirit,

As St. Paul says in Titus, chapter 3: "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying." (Titus 3:5-8)

((Small Catechism Questions # 253 – 254))



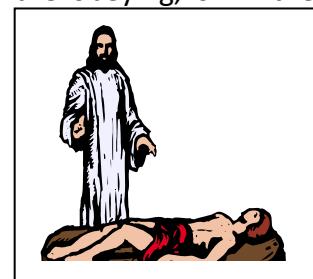
Once again the power is in the Word. **It is the Word that makes Baptism what it is.** The Holy Spirit uses the Word to create faith. Without the working of the Holy Spirit by and through the Word we could not believe in the promises of Baptism. It is as Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-10, *“For by grace you have been saved, through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God . . .”*

83.1 EXAMPLES FROM SCRIPTURE

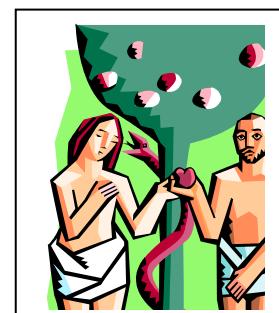
The idea that **the power is in the Word** is familiar throughout Scripture. Here are several examples:

(1) **Luke 17:11-14** tells about Jesus meeting **the 10 lepers**. They asked to be healed. He told them to go show themselves to the priests and we read that as they went they were healed. Was the power in the going, the obeying, or in the showing themselves to the priests? No. They were healed before they got to the priests, and one of them came back before getting there.

The power of healing was in the Word of God.



(2) **John 9:1-7** tells of **the man born blind**. Jesus put mud on his eyes and told him to wash. He did and came home seeing. Was the power in the water, or the mud, or the washing? No. The power was in the word that Jesus spoke.



(3) **Genesis 2:16-17** tells of **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. God said that when they ate of it Adam and Eve would die. Was the fruit poisonous? No. In and of itself it could not bring death into the world. Instead the word of God was the power that enforced the penalty.

So it is no surprise that God would combine visible things and acts with His word to produce spiritual blessings. **The power is always in the Word.**

83.2 INFANT BAPTISM ((Small Catechism Questions # 246 – 247))

Question: Why do we baptize babies? (See Catechism Question # 246) That question lists 4 reasons:

- a) **Babies are included in Jesus' words “all nations”**
- b) **Jesus especially invites little children to come to Him**
- c) **Babies are sinners and need what Baptism offers**
David confessed that he was sinful from birth, sinful from the time his mother conceived him. (Psalm 51:5)



d) **Babies are able to have faith.**

We know this from Luke 1:41-44 (when Jesus, still in the womb, came to visit John, also still in the womb).

"And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.'"

From these verses we know these things. They are not just likely. **These things are true.**

- # 1) John leaped within his mother's womb.
- # 2) Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.



Because Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit we know that what she said next was "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

- # 3) Elizabeth said, "the baby in my womb leaped for joy."
- # 4) Before John the Baptist was even born he leaped for joy that Jesus was there.
- # 5) John the Baptist had faith. He believed in Jesus that day.
- # 6) Therefore babies are able to have faith.



As long as babies are able to have faith we will baptize them, putting the water on them and speaking the Word of God over them.

CAN YOU SHOW THAT LITTLE CHILDREN CAN HAVE FAITH?

There is a question that shows how little children can have faith and know Jesus. I have asked it many times:

I explain that there are at least 4 correct answers. How many can you get? (How many can your child get?)

Here's the question: **"Where is Jesus?"**

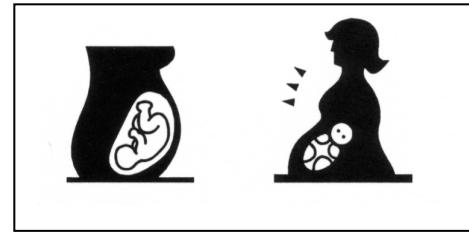
Answers are: (1) Up in heaven; (2) Everywhere; (3) Right here with us; (4) In Church or wherever Christians meet and worship; (5) In my heart; (6) there in the Lord's Supper.

Usually even little children can answer 4 out of the first 5.

I ask the parents, "How does your child know all those things about Jesus? That's pretty sophisticated for a young child. The only reason I can think of is that (s)he actually knows Jesus." That's faith.

83.3 → NOTICE THIS! ←

The first work of evangelism Jesus did in His earthly ministry was done by one baby, not yet born, to another baby, not yet born!



By the way this has all kinds of implications for the right to life and abortion debate. I believe this is the single most powerful argument that unborn infants are living, aware, fully human, persons.

1. **The infant still in the womb has relationships with other human beings, and is able to know God.**
2. **The unborn child is able to have faith and is able to express that faith in God.**
3. **This means something very important for a young lady who is going to have a baby.** Jesus said, “where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.” (Matthew 18:20) She should be absolutely sure to bring her child to Church. There Jesus is with us. There we have the Word of God. And then when her baby is born let her bring the baby to have God’s Word and God’s name spoken over her child in baptism. If her baby was to die it would be a comfort to her to know that she has brought her child to where God meets us and speaks His Word to us.
4. **This is also why we want our children to be in Church during the worship service;** not taken somewhere else. Jesus is there with us and He invited the children to come to Him.
5. **To have an abortion** doesn’t only break the commandment, “You shall not murder,” and ignore other verses of the Bible such as Psalm 139:13-15, and Jeremiah 1:5. It also:
 - (a) denies how Jesus came into the world (conceived by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary);
 - (b) denies the faith of John the Baptist;
 - (c) denies Jesus’ love for the little children; and
 - (d) denies how Jesus works in our lives and our children’s lives.



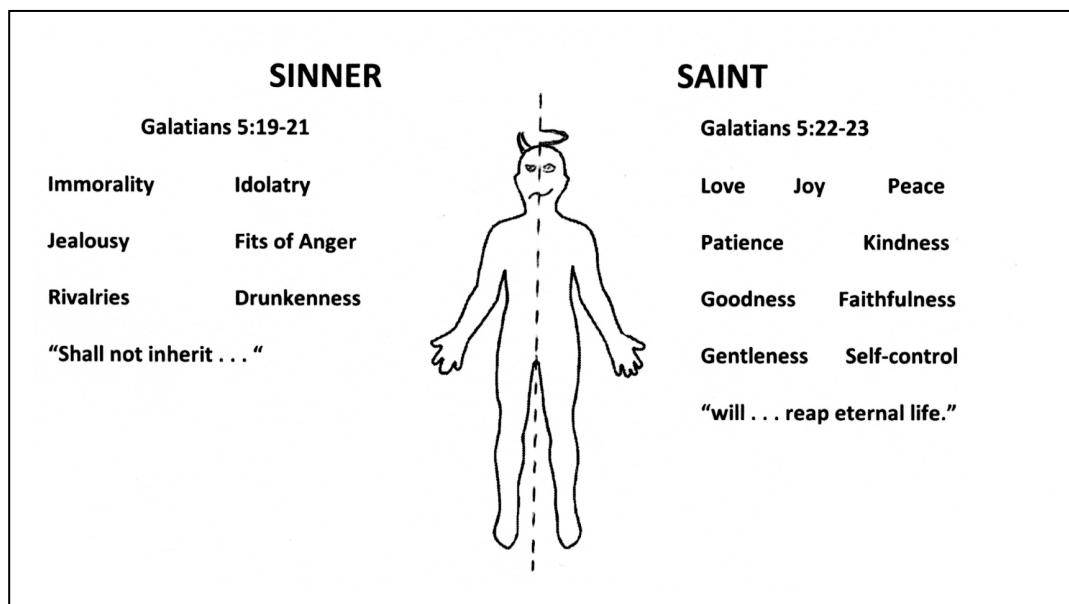
84. **QUESTION # 4 – WHAT DOES SUCH BAPTIZING WITH WATER INDICATE?**

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and, again, a new man daily emerge and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes, in Romans, chapter six:

We were buried with Him by Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.



((Small Catechism Questions # 255 – 260))

84.1 **THE DAILY USE OF OUR BAPTISM**

We talk about a daily renewal. This is to be the pattern of our lives every day, calling on Jesus as our Savior; repenting and turning away from sin and turning to God. **The Bible warns us against saying that we believed in Jesus years ago or came to faith years ago – and making that a substitute for believing in Jesus today.** See Ezekiel 18:21-28; 33:10-20.

God said through Ezekiel,

"When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness . . . None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered . . ." (18:24)

"though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die." (33:13)

84.2 **OLD ADAM / NEW MAN**

Paul uses the terms "Old Adam" and "New Man" to describe **the battle within the Christian.**

The Old Adam is our old sinful nature. It does not want God and His Commandments; does not want the spiritual life; desires the things of the flesh; and if it does something spiritual it is so wrapped up in its own good works that everything is spoiled.

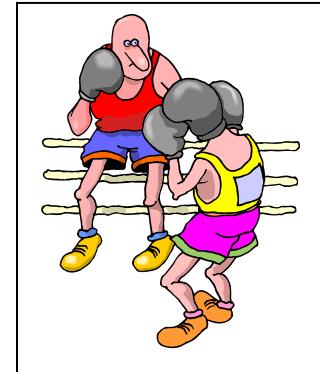
The New Man is the new nature that responds to God, responds in faith, prays naturally and from the heart, truly worships God, and loves its neighbor.

The Christian has both Old Adam and New Man struggling against each other. As Christians we are called “Sinner / Saints”.

84.3 THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE WITHIN US

Paul tells us about the battle between Sinner & Saint within us.
“The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”
 (Galatians 5:17 (NIV))

Then he lists the acts of the sinful nature Galatians 5:19-21; and the fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-23.



How does this play out?

There is a constant battle going on. We war against the Old Adam within us, sometimes with great success and sometimes failing miserably.

There is always **strength from God**:

- (1) in the Scriptures, through the word of forgiveness we have in Christ;
- (2) in the strength God gives in our Baptism; and
- (3) in the Lord’s Supper.

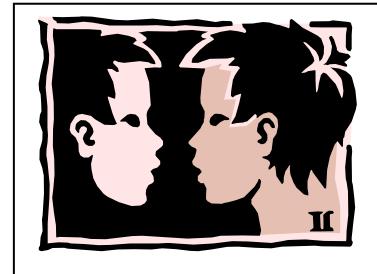
Wherever God gives His grace, His Word, and His promises there we have help in fighting against the Old Adam.

There is always a struggle inside. **The Old Adam fights back; and the Holy Spirit within us battles against him.** This is why a Christian can go through a “mountain top spiritual experience” and suddenly fall to temptation. That is part of the battle. Or we may wander far from God for a long time and suddenly come to a time of repentance. This is how the battle happens; the Old Adam and the New Man, and the battle goes back and forth.

(Thank you to Matt Buse who shared the following.)

In the book “The Lifelines of Love” we find a poem:

“Two natures beat within my breast
 The one is cursed, the other is blessed
 The one I love, the other I hate
 The one I feed will dominate.”



The Lifelines of Love, Dr. Peter M. Kurowski. Copyright © 1994 Peter M. Kurowski.

You can find **this understanding** of the inner battle, fighting the old sinful nature **in many unexpected places**. This one is even taken **from a comic book!**



TWO DOGS

Describing his inner struggles, he says . . .

"There are two dogs inside me. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time.



... the one dog was like your dreams and good intentions. He is full of purpose. . . . He maybe represents your respect for others and your respect for yourself. . . . And the other dog . . . he has no respect for anything. He's like a rabid beast. Crazy and self-indulgent. He blames everyone else for his sickness. He lashes out at every opportunity. He loves nothing but wallowing in the hot darkness of his anger."

So someone asks this guy . . . which dog usually wins. And the guy sort of looks down and thinks about it for a while. He doesn't say anything for a long time. And then . . . he answers. . . . He says, "The dog that wins is the one that I feed the most."

From Marvel Comics, "Daredevil: The Man Without Fear" vol 2, No. 55 February 2004. Copyright (c) 2003, Marvel Comics, Inc..

84.4 IN THIS BATTLE

In the battle between the Old Adam and the New Man **each nature is a "package deal."** **You cannot indulge in one pet little sin without strengthening the whole Old Adam.** So often people will be surprised by the unexpected great and terrible sin coming along when all they intended was to indulge a "tiny" sin "just a little bit."

The good news is that **in the same way the New Nature can be fed and strengthened.** **When we take time to read our Bibles, hear God's Word in Church, and use God's Word in prayer the New Man grows stronger, and we will find help from God in unexpected ways.**

There is a battle going on and we are expected to take a side, not remain neutral. We are to fight against the Old Adam and fight with the help of the Holy Spirit against temptation. We do so **with the tools and weapons God has provided – God's Word; Baptism; and the Lord's Supper.**

BETWEEN CHAPTERS

The challenge is to carefully read Matthew 5; Matthew 18; and John 20

89.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 8 – Baptism

Sacrament An act:

- (1) Instituted by God and connected with Jesus;
- (2) Combining visible elements and God's Word;
- (3) Where God promises and gives the forgiveness of sins earned by Jesus. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only two acts that completely fit this definition.

Institute Begin, set up, put in place.

Baptize The Greek word means simply to apply water. Christian Baptism is to apply water to a person in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Emergency Baptism To baptize when the person is in danger of dying at any moment.

Water The water used in Baptism is no different from any other water, but is joined with God's Word.

Font The chancel furniture holding the water for baptism.

Word (3) The Word of God in Baptism and in the Lord's Supper are specific words spoken by Jesus. This Word makes the Sacrament what it is.

Signify Not simply be a symbol for, Baptism signifies certain things by pointing to them and being one of the tools that the Holy Spirit uses to cause them to happen.

Old Adam The old sinful nature that rebels against God, rejects God's word, and lives for itself.

New Man The new nature, that has its beginning in faith, loves God's word, and loves the neighbor.

Contribution Sorrow over sin.

Repentance Repentance has two parts: turning away from sin and turning to God with faith in Jesus Christ.

Evil Desires The desires of the Old Adam, the old sinful nature.

Baptizer The one who does the baptizing.

Baptizee The one being baptized.

Jordan River The river in Israel where Jesus was baptized.

Donatists A North African group that believed that Christians who had fallen away needed to be re-baptized, and that baptism was only effective when the priest was worthy. (DIT)

Visible Elements The visible things combined with the Word of God in the Sacraments: in Baptism it is the water; in the Lord's Supper it is the bread and wine.

Means of Grace Those things through which God gives salvation by creating and strengthening our faith in Jesus. By the Means of Grace God takes what Jesus earned on the cross and makes them ours. The means of Grace are the Word of God, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Earned "What Jesus earned on the cross . . ." Forgiveness and salvation is earned once for all.

Distributes ". . . He now distributes." What Jesus earned once on the cross He distributes repeatedly, and in different ways.

Infant Baptism To baptize babies, believing that the Bible says they need the forgiveness Jesus earned for them, and that they can have faith, as John the Baptist did even before he was born.

Household The New Testament tells us that whole households were baptized; because parents have the authority and duty to raise their children with knowledge and faith in God.

Sponsor Someone who is asked to pray for the Baptized and in the case of children, help with their Christian upbringing, especially if they should lose their parents. Sponsors should be of the same confession of faith.

Witness In Baptism, someone who witnesses the Baptism and can remind the baptized person that they were baptized.

John the Baptist He witnessed to his faith in Jesus Christ even before he was born, by leaping for joy in his mother's womb. Then John proclaimed the coming of Jesus, and baptized Jesus.

Womb Where a baby grows within a woman's body before being born.

Right to Life The belief that children are to be protected before they are born and should not be aborted.

Abortion The killing of a baby before it is born.

Daily The words "daily contrition and repentance" and "daily come forth and arise" teach that Christian faith and turning to Jesus is a daily thing and that it is dangerous to neglect God's Word or faith by trusting only in something we did many years ago.

Sinner / Saint That the Christian has both a new nature that loves and believes in God (Saint) and an old sinful nature that fights against faith in God (Sinner). So there is a battle within us.

Feed We are to feed the New Man (that believes in Jesus Christ) with the Word of God, and avoid feeding the Old Adam (that fights against faith) through indulging in sin.

Catechism & Memory Verses – (9) Confession

HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE TAUGHT TO CONFESS

90-a **1. What is the Office of the Keys?**

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent. (46)

90-b *Where is this written?*

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter 20:

The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (John 20:22-23) (39)

90-c **John 20:21-23** Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld." (58)

90-d **2. What do you believe according to these words?**

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself. (69)

90-e **3. What is confession?**

Confession has two parts.

First, that we confess our sins, and

Second, that we receive absolution, that is forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that (((by it / in this way)) our sins are forgiven before God in heaven. (46)

90-f **Galatians 6:1-2** Brothers, if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (40)

90-g **4. What sins should we confess?**

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our heart.

Which are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm? (99)

90-h **Matthew 9:12-13** When He heard it, [Jesus] said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (43)90-i **5. A short Form of Confession (Alternate Wording)**

[Luther intended the following to serve only as an example of private confession for Christians of his time. For a contemporary form of individual confession, see Lutheran Service Book, pp. 292 – 293.]

[I have taken the liberty of substituting "Pastor" for "Confessor," and instead of a confession for a servant or maid writing 3 different ones for: child; employee; and student.]

The penitent says:

Dear ((confessor / *Pastor*)), I ask you please to hear my confession and to pronounce forgiveness in order to fulfill God's will.

I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all sins. In particular I confess before you that:

as a child, I am sad to say, I help my parents unfaithfully. Here and there I have not done what they asked of me; I have provoked them and caused them to curse. I have been wasteful and careless. I have been shameless in word and deed. I have quarreled with my brothers and sisters. I have grumbled against my mother and have been abusive. This is all my fault and I pray for grace; I want to do better.

as an employee, I am sad to say, I serve my employers unfaithfully. Here and there I have not done what they asked of me; I have provoked them and caused them to curse. I have been wasteful and careless. I have been shameless in word and deed. I have quarreled with other employees. I have cursed my superiors and have been abusive. This is all my fault and I pray for grace; I want to do better.

as a student, I am sad to say, I work for my teachers unfaithfully. Here and there I have not done what they asked of me; I have provoked them and caused them to curse. I have been wasteful and careless. I have been shameless in word and deed. I have quarreled with my fellow students. I have spoken badly about my teachers and have been abusive. This is all my fault and I pray for grace; I want to do better.

A husband or wife [or employer]) may say:

In particular I confess before you that I have not faithfully guided my children, workers and wife to the glory of God. I have cursed. I have set a bad example by indecent words and deeds. I have hurt my neighbor and spoken evil of him. I have overcharged, sold inferior merchandise, and given less than was paid for.

(Let the penitent confess whatever else he has done against God's commandments and his own *duties in life*.

If, however, someone does not find himself burdened with these or greater sins, he should not trouble himself or search for or invent other sins, and thereby make confession a torture. Instead, he should mention one or two that he knows: In particular I confess that I cursed; I have used improper words; I have neglected this or that, etc. Let that be enough.

But if you [really] know of nothing, (which hardly seems possible), then mention none in particular, but receive the forgiveness upon the general confession which you make to God before the (confessor / Pastor.)

Then the (confessor / Pastor) shall say:

P: God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.
Amen.

Furthermore:

P: Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness.
R: Yes, dear (confessor / Pastor.)

Then let him say:

P: Let it be done for you as you believe. And I, by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive you your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Go in peace!

A (confessor / Pastor) will know additional passages with which to comfort and to strengthen the faith of those who have great burdens of conscience or are sorrowful and distressed.

This is intended only as a general form of confession.

90-j **Psalm 32:1-2**

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit. (31)

CHAPTER 9 – ABSOLUTION

Small Catechism, Questions # 261 – 284

90. **BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE**

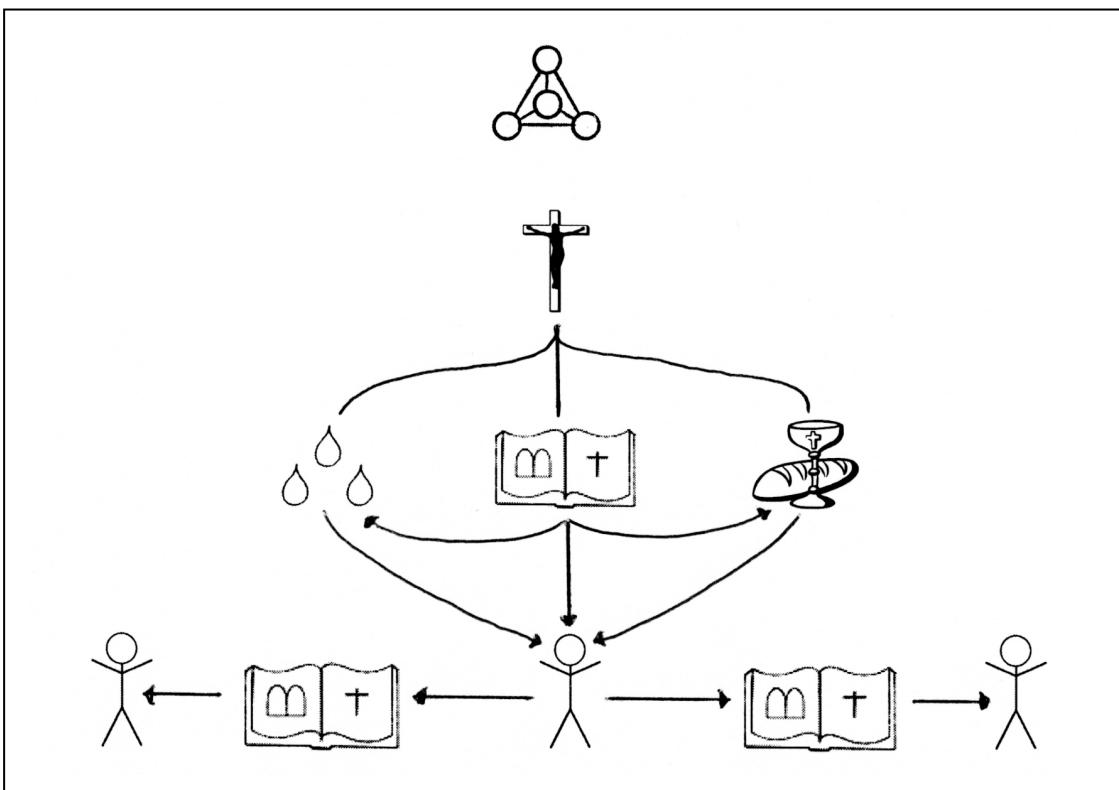
It is not only a Great Teaching from the Bible; it is an amazing idea to send out every Christian through the whole world with the authority to proclaim forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name.

90.1 **MORE DETAILS**

Forgiveness of sins is right at the center of everything the Church is all about. It is (1) **what we receive from God**; it is (2) **what we share with each other**; and it is (3) **what we offer to everyone in the world**.

- (1) Forgiveness is the heart and core of what God does for us in Jesus Christ. Forgiveness of sins is at the center of what God does. It is **the "familiar" work, the favorite work of God** – taking away the sins that separate us from God (and from eternal life, heaven, and joy forever) and bringing us into peace and harmony with God. **It cannot be done except through Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.** "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses". (Ephesians 1:7)
- (2) We share forgiveness with each other. How we do that is **by taking the message of forgiveness from the cross of Jesus and speaking it to each other.** Sometimes the word of forgiveness we speak is **more focused on specific sins**; at **other times** it is **more general**. Paul says, "bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." (Colossians 3:13)
- (3) **We offer forgiveness to everyone in the world.** We do this (a) **individually when we share the Gospel** and tell another person about Jesus. Evangelism, when a Christian shares the Gospel with an unbeliever fits in here. We offer forgiveness (b) **together** as a group, a congregation, or a Church body **when we join together in telling the world** about Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations . . ." (Luke 24:46-47)

Absolution, then is nothing else than **taking the word of the Cross and applying it to other human beings.**



There are specific directions for how to do this.

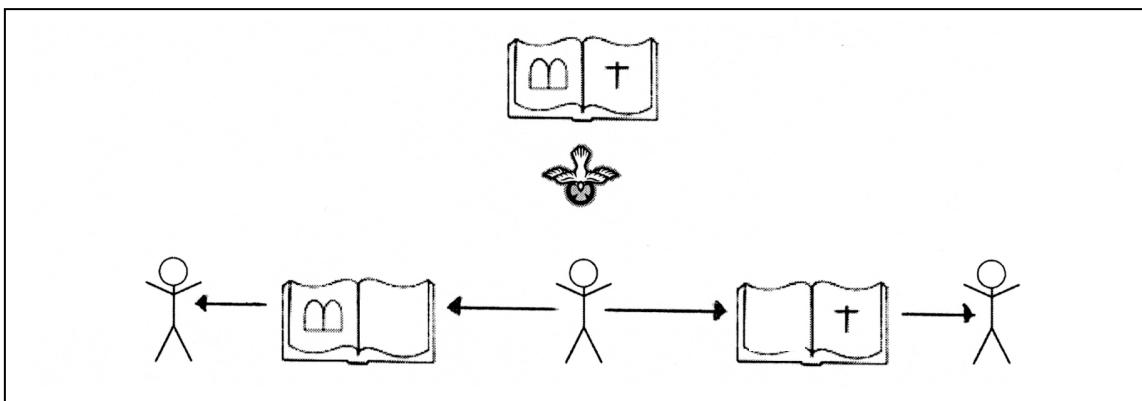
91. **QUESTION # 1 – WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS?**

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

John the Evangelist writes in chapter 20:

The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."



THE COMPLETE PASSAGE READS:

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld." (John 20:21-23)

((Small Catechism Questions # 269 – 276))

91.1 WHO HAS THIS AUTHORITY

Jesus has given this authority to the whole Church. **We are sent into the world** with the Gospel of Jesus. **We carry forgiveness with us, and we give and share it** so others know the forgiveness of sins in Jesus and live forever. What a **Pastor does** is to do **publicly** and in the name of the congregation the **things that every Christian** individually and **all Christians** together **are given** the authority to do by Jesus.

There are some who object to a pastor saying, "**In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**" They say only God can forgive sins, so how does the pastor dare to say this?

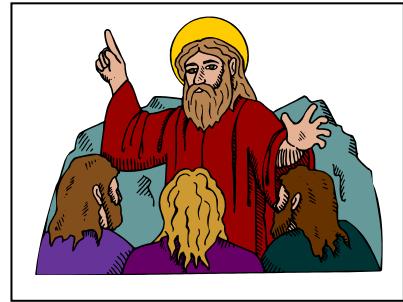
The Pastor often feels the same. It is an intimidating thing to stand up and say those words. But we have **Jesus' words**. He said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive . . . they are forgiven . . ." He has put us together in the Church so we may speak forgiveness to each other.

It is true that only God can forgive sins. And only God can judge an act to be sinful. (These are the two parts of the Office of the Keys.) God has forgiven sins. He did it through Jesus Christ on the Cross. But remember: **What Christ earned on the cross, He now distributes.** Forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation must be given to us and God does that through (1) Baptism, (2) The Word, and (3) The Lord's Supper.

91.2 "JESUS BREATHED ON THEM . . ."

It is an interesting part of the Hebrew language that it is **the same word for breath, spirit and wind**. (The word is "*ruach*".)

If you travel to **the Middle East** you will find that **personal space** is different. People stand a lot closer to each other when talking. It is not uncommon to see an American talking with an Israeli or Arab. The one is uncomfortable with standing so far away (maybe 18 inches) and moves closer. Then the American is uncomfortable with standing so close (maybe 6 inches) and moves away . . . which makes the other uncomfortable with standing so far away . . . and so on. As they talk they can go right down the street, the one walking backwards and the other following him.



In a culture where they stand so close to each other, and where breath and spirit are the same word – **if I want to bless someone** I will want to be close enough that I can "**bathe him in my breath.**" **When you experience this** kind of thing, you find that you are sharing air; sharing breath with each other. So . . .

Did Jesus stand at the other end of the room and breathe toward His disciples; or come close to each of them and speak a much more intimate blessing?

Think of it as being "**breath brothers.**" Yes I know it sounds odd, but . . . since breath and spirit are the same word, you can see Jesus saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" and

He's very close to them. It's a very vivid image. **His breath** is mingled with theirs; **His words are going to be their words**; and His Spirit – **He is giving His Spirit to them and sending them to forgive**.

91.3 SENT TO FORGIVE – HOW?

Where God has forgiven sins it is our part – our task, privilege and joy – to give that forgiveness to others.

How do we do that?

- (1) **In the public worship** service a Pastor is given the duty of speaking those words for everyone and to everyone.
- (2) **Privately** individual Christians informally give forgiveness to each other.
- (3) In a setting of **private confession and absolution** a Pastor is:
 - (a) **to hear the confession of sins and keep that confession secret** (Pastors can be removed from office for divulging the sins that are confessed to them – so we are serious about this);
 - (b) **to speak the forgiveness of sins for the comfort of the conscience**;
 - (c) **to know how to give additional comfort from Scripture**. "A Pastor will know additional passages with which to comfort and to strengthen the faith of those who have great burdens of conscience or are sorrowful and distressed."

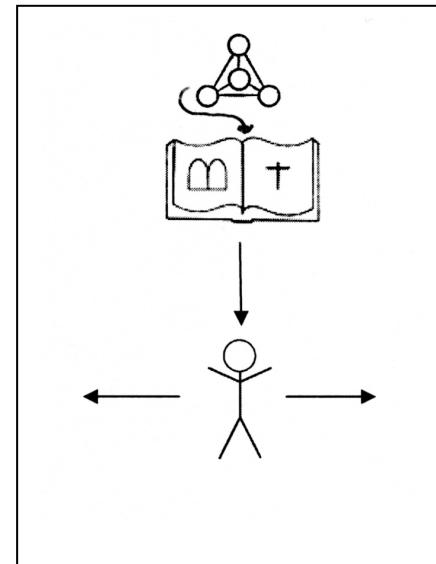
91.4 SHARING SPIRITUAL THINGS

That last part leads us to something important. One of the great opportunities is **the time Christians spend together talking about spiritual things**. Some of the best Pastoral work is done sitting on the Church steps, or on the porch outside the Church office. We spend time talking about prayer, faith, doubt, how we feel about being a Christian, and so on. Christians are given the task of caring for each other and being cared for by each other. We encourage, exhort, and sometimes correct and reprove. The Bible talks about us building each other up in love, and about the brother who falls into sin: "You who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness." (Galatians 6:1), and we are reminded "not to forsake the gathering together of ourselves." (Hebrews 10:25 NIV)

92. QUESTION # 2 – WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ACCORDING TO THESE WORDS?

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is as valid and certain, in heaven also, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

((Small Catechism Questions # 277 – 284))



92.1 GOD'S COMMAND

When forgiveness is given according to God's command it is **sure and certain** and we can trust that it is true.

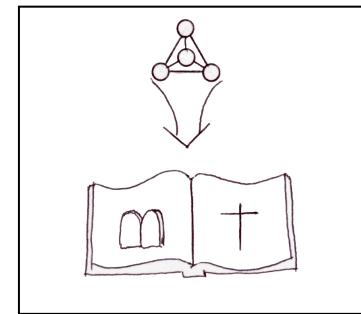
This is because **it all goes back to Jesus and His cross**. It is not the Pastor who came up with the idea of speaking forgiveness in Jesus' name. It is **not the Pastor's idea, his words, his power, or his anything else**. The whole thing belongs to Jesus and no Pastor or any other Christian has the right to change anything about it. Jesus forgives sins and when sins are repented of and confessed they are to be forgiven. So **if the Pastor simply speaks what Jesus has commanded; then those words can be trusted**.

The opposite is true also. If a Pastor withholds forgiveness when there is no repentance, and **if that is clearly according to God's word**, then it is sure and can be trusted that forgiveness is not given. The responsibility is to **apply Law and Gospel**, rebuke and forgiveness according to God's command. That is an awesome thing to be a part of.

One of the guidelines is found in the fourth part of the "Law and Gospel" chart (back in Chapter 2). **The Law is to be preached to:** "All sinners, especially those who do not repent." **The Gospel is to be preached to:** "Sinners who are Troubled by their sins; Fear God's wrath; and Hunger for righteousness."

92.2 "BUT ONLY GOD CAN JUDGE AN ACT TO BE SINFUL."

This is true. It's what we said before. God gets to decide what is right and what is wrong. But this does not mean that we should not dare to speak about a sin we see going on.



Instead, it means that **we have a duty to speak our agreement with God**. We are not to gossip or be busybodies. But when your words could help; when you have a duty to your neighbor; and when you can speak winsomely, not alienating but winning your brother, that is different. **When God has said a thing is wrong** and we do not ever dare to say anything about it **we may end up by our silence denying what God has said**. Even worse, **we may then let souls wander away from God** and into eternal darkness. This is another reason why the Office of the Keys is a responsibility, and a difficult one as well. Listen to James, "My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that **whoever brings back a sinner** from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:19-20) We are given to each other to care for each other.

92.3 WHAT COMES NEXT!

Why do Lutherans have the Confession of Sins at the beginning of the service, and why do we have Confession of sins every Sunday? It's not because we like confessing and feeling guilty. It is because **we know what is coming next – words that our sins are forgiven, and we love to hear those words**. We live in and we share forgiveness.

93. **QUESTION # 3 -- WHAT IS CONFESSION?**

Confession has two parts.

First, that we confess our sins, and Second, that we receive absolution, that is forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that ((by it / in this way)) our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

((Small Catechism Questions # 261, 265 – 268))

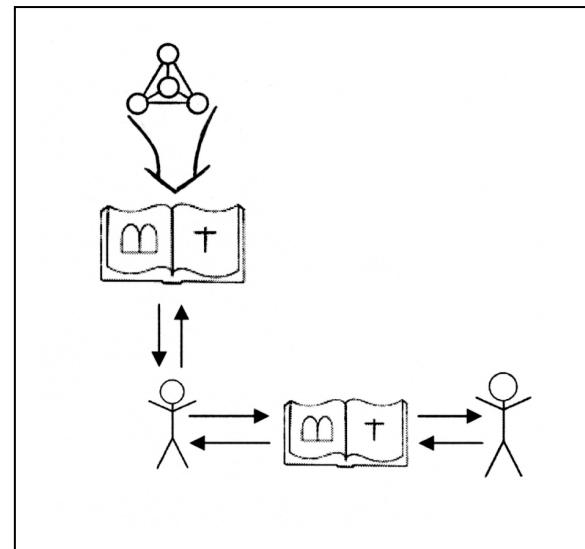
93.1 **WHAT IS CONFESSION?**

"Con-fess" means "speak together."

In confession we "speak together" with God. We agree with God and we follow His word as we learn from God what is true and what is not. This is a very different idea than being sorry.

We use **the word confess** for both:

- (1) **confessing sins** and
- (2) **confessing the Creeds.** Both things have to do with truth. In the one, we agree with God about our sin. In the other, we agree with God about His work creating and saving us.



To confess our sins means:

- (1) **to step away from what is false and wrong, and come into what is true and right.** We say to God, "Your Word is truth." Then
- (2) **we take the truth of God's Word and we apply it to our lives.** It means that you say, "This is true and right because God says so in His Word; and that thing in my life was false and wrong."

When we confess:

- (1) **we start with God's Word.** We begin with what is absolutely true and certain. Then
- (2) **we use His Word as a mirror and look at our lives.** His Word reveals our sins.
- (3) We finish
by speaking about Jesus and how He has earned and won forgiveness.

(Sorting out when we say this publicly, or privately, or in your heart before God is what we will look at in question # 4.)

93.2 **WHAT IS ABSOLUTION?**

Absolution is **to declare that sins have been removed.** As the sins are removed so is the guilt before God, and so are the consequences of eternal death and hell.

Absolution **takes us right back to the cross.** That's where the sins are lifted off of us. So an absolution always must connect us with Jesus suffering on the cross for us.

Here are some phrases from the **absolutions that we hear:**

"May it be unto you according to your faith. And I by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon this your confession forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

"Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. . . ."

"Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. . . ."

"In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. . . ."

Notice how they connect us to Jesus through the word of forgiveness that comes from the cross.

When a sin is forgiven, the forgiveness spoken, and the promise believed; **the sin is taken away completely.** Psalm 103 says, "as far as the east is from the west." Micah talks about God "cast[ing] all our sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19) God says repeatedly that "He will remember our sins no more." God's word teaches us to look at each other the same way, to believe that our neighbor's sin is gone and we can treat each other as "new in Jesus Christ." This is not always easy, so we continue to learn from God's Word how to see each other and live with each other this way.

93.3 WHY CONFESS TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING?

Why would I want to confess to another human being? Wouldn't it be better to confess simply to God and read His Word? Wouldn't an angel be better at understanding how God's Word condemns sin and be able to speak God's Word more clearly than a pastor?

There is something going on when you as a Christian receive absolution from a fellow Christian. It's something that you could not get from an angel, and cannot even get from simply reading the Bible. You have **one sinner, who has experienced the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ, speaking to another sinner, who has been forgiven by God, about the forgiveness that they share in and enjoy together.** That's why Paul talks about forgiveness the way he does, "Brothers, if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1-2) **We share this experience and can encourage each other.**

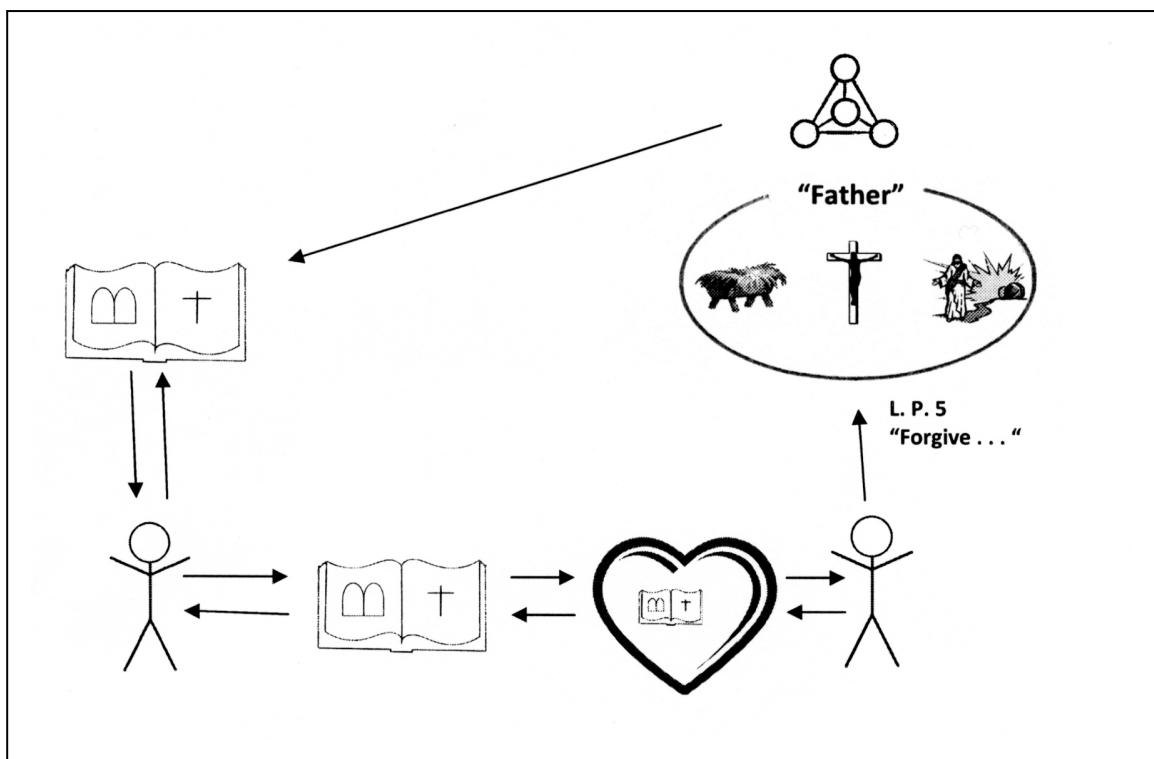


94. **QUESTION # 4 – WHAT SINS SHOULD WE CONFESS?**

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the Pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?



((Small Catechism Questions # 262 – 264))

This tells us the whole purpose for confession. It is so that forgiveness can be given, consciences comforted and people taught how to trust in God's love.

We confess in different ways at different times.

94.1 **BEFORE GOD**

Before God we plead guilty of all sins. Nothing that we have done is good and pure. Even our good works are infected with the sin that is within us. **St. Augustine** said, "The righteous man sins in all his good works." He learned this from **Isaiah 64:6** "All our righteous deeds are like filthy rags." **Our best works** do not measure up to God's demands. **They are mixed with pride.** Or we do them in order to get something or to earn points with God. Even when we are praying the Lord's Prayer we are not completely focused on God's things. Other thoughts, that are sinful and not from God, happen even when we try our best.

Our confession is **guided by God's Commandments**. Even if we have not broken a specific commandment by actually doing the act that God forbids, still, we have said things, or thought and desired things, that break the commandment.

And remember that James says, "***He who keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point, has become guilty of all.***" (James 2:10) We are guilty of breaking all of God's Law.

So when we confess "**before God**" we **plead guilty of everything**. We pray about sins that we know. And we simply admit that we are sinners and have sinned. It's called a "general confession." That's what we do when we pray "Forgive us our trespasses."

God has invited us to come to Him and confess our sins. He promises, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins". (1 John 1:9 NIV)

94.2 THE GENERAL CONFESSION

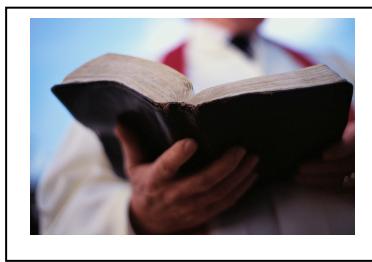
In a General Confession **in Church**, we **join with other sinners in confessing**. There are many general confessions in our hymnals. As we use them we may confess sins of thought, word and deed. We may confess what we have done that we should not have and what we should have done that we did not do. We may confess hidden sins and unknown sins. We do not know our sins perfectly so the Psalms mention these sins too.

In one confession we confess that we are "by nature sinful and unclean". That is a good example of a general confession. In a general confession we don't name specific sins. Instead we speak a confession that can include all our sins. We ask God to forgive our sins for the sake of Jesus. And then we listen to hear the Gospel that we are forgiven because of Jesus.

94.3 PRIVATE CONFESSION

Private Confession is **when you go to (usually) the Pastor to confess specific sins**. These are **the sins that are eating at you and troubling your conscience**. You might be struggling with them and can't seem to shake them. Or you might be having trouble – **believing that God can forgive other sins but not those**.

Those are the times when you might want to hear that sin named and forgiven. This can be a huge comfort and relief. Our Pastors are trained to share the Gospel, to tell you about Jesus, in order to comfort your conscience and help you to look to Jesus in faith. They are also often able to help in your struggle against specific sins.



In each of these kinds of confession we abandon what is false and wrong; and then we hold to what is true. We take God's truth into our heart and soul; and we speak it with our mouth. Romans 10:9-10 says that you believe with your heart and you confess with your mouth. By holding to God's truth we hold on to life. That is the point with these first three kinds of confession and it is also the point with the next one.

94.4 PUBLIC CONFESSION

Occasionally there is a need to have a public confession of a particular sin. **When a sin has been done publicly in front of everyone it may need to be confessed publicly also.**

This is especially true when God's Word is absolutely clear that it is a sin and the person involved has said that God's Word does not matter to them.

This is not as much to maintain discipline in the Church, as it is **for the sake of the souls involved**. We are souls created in the image of God, and called to know the difference between right and wrong. **As moral beings we need to abandon the false and wrong and hold to the right and good.**

For the person confessing it is **the opportunity to publicly proclaim the truth through turning away from a public error**. Jesus said, "*whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven.*" (Matthew 10:32)

For the other members of the Church it is an opportunity to hear the truth proclaimed and rejoice together in the truth.

For those who are not Christians it is important for us to take away the offense. **When Christians disregard right and wrong it can lead others to believe that those things really don't matter, and that can be dangerous for their souls and for ours.** (When Nathan rebuked David about his sin he said, "*by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt,*" 2 Samuel 12:14 NIV.) We want to remove anything that could block another soul from coming to faith in Jesus.

94.5 ONE CHRISTIAN TO ANOTHER

An organization named "Ambassadors of Reconciliation" has suggestions for how Christians can confess and hear forgiveness from each other. The confession includes:

I have not honored my Lord's name as I should . . . There are those whom I have hurt, and those whom I failed to help.

For confessing to the one you have hurt,

I have not only sinned against God, but I have also sinned against you and seek your personal forgiveness.

In announcing forgiveness they may say:

Do you believe that God's promises of forgiveness given in the Holy Scripture are written for all God's children, including you?

I do.

Then listen to God's Word and let it be done for you as you believe.

[1 John 1:9; Jeremiah 31:34; and 1 Peter 2:24 are quoted.]

Therefore, _____(name), believe this Good News: For Jesus' sake, God forgives you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

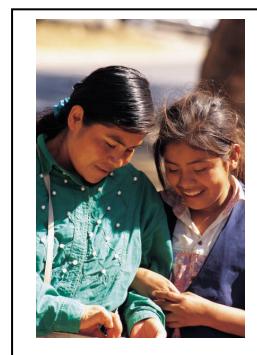
Amen.

(If the person confessing has also asked for forgiveness from the one hearing the confession, these words should also be spoken:)

As God through Christ has forgiven both you and me, I also forgive you your sins against me.

Amen.

Note: The pamphlet "Announcing God's Grace through Confession and Forgiveness" is available through "Ambassadors of Reconciliation" www.HisAoR.org and is worth having.



95. **QUESTION # 5 -- PLEASE TELL ME A SHORT WAY TO CONFESS.**

In this part the catechism gives some sample confessions.

The penitent says:

Dear ((confessor / Pastor)), I ask you please to hear my confession and to pronounce forgiveness in order to fulfill God's will.

I have taken the liberty of giving several free translations, applying the confession to (1) a child, (2) an employee, and (3) a student. Luther follows by giving (4) a confession for a husband, wife, or employer. Read through the ones that apply to you and see if they do not name some of your sins.

I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all sins. In particular I confess before you that:

AS A CHILD,	AS AN EMPLOYEE,	AS A STUDENT,
<i>I am sad to say, I help my parents unfaithfully. Here and there I have not done what they asked of me; I have provoked them and caused them to curse. I have been wasteful and careless. I have been shameless in word and deed. I have quarreled with my brothers and sisters. I have grumbled against my mother and have been abusive. This is all my fault and I pray for grace; I want to do better.</i>	<i>I am sad to say, I serve my employers unfaithfully. Here and there I have not done what they asked of me; I have provoked them and caused them to curse. I have been wasteful and careless. I have been shameless in word and deed. I have quarreled with other employees. I have cursed my superiors and have been abusive. This is all my fault and I pray for grace; I want to do better.</i>	<i>I am sad to say, I work for my teachers unfaithfully. Here and there I have not done what they asked of me; I have provoked them and caused them to curse. I have been wasteful and careless. I have been shameless in word and deed. I have quarreled with my fellow students. I have spoken badly about my teachers and have been abusive. This is all my fault and I pray for grace; I want to do better.</i>

A HUSBAND OR WIFE [OR EMPLOYER] MAY SAY:

In particular I confess before you that I have not faithfully guided my children, workers and wife to the glory of God. I have cursed. I have set a bad example by indecent words and deeds. I have hurt my neighbor and spoken evil of him. I have overcharged, sold inferior merchandise, and given less than was paid for.

(Let the penitent confess whatever else he has done against God's commandments and his own duties in life.)

The purpose of these confessions is twofold.

- (1) **Confession and Absolution are one of the ways we speak God's word to each other so that our consciences are comforted.** That does not happen when someone tells us: "It's OK everybody does it," or "Relax, don't feel guilty," or "try better next time," but only when we hear that our sins are forgiven.

(2) There is also the time we spend encouraging each other and talking about spiritual matters. (As we said above, Section 91.4.) We share in spiritual things. We encourage and care for each other, and sometimes we call each other to repent. We build each other up in the Word of God and God uses us to strengthen each other in faith. That's why the Bible says, "not to forsake the gathering together of ourselves." (Hebrews 10:25)

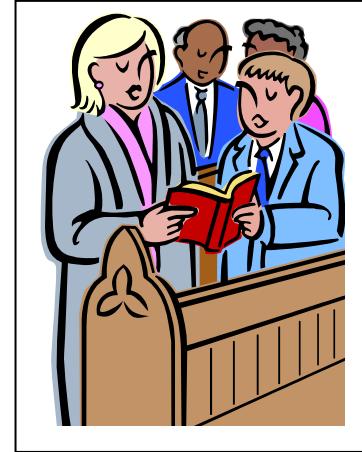
96. **HOW DO WE PRACTICE THIS?**

Read through the different confessions and absolutions that are in our hymnals.

Discuss these phrases and sentences:

"We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone."
(Divine Service 1, P. 151)

"We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves." (DS 1, P. 151)



"Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways . . ." (DS 1, P. 151)

"I . . . confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment." (DS 3, P. 184)

"I pray You of your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, . . ." (DS 3, P. 184)

"We poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean . . ." (DS 3, P. 184)

". . . we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy" (DS 3, P. 184)

"If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared." (Psalm 130:3-4 -- DS 4, P. 203)

"Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you . . ." (DS 1, P. 151)

". . . for His sake God forgives us all our sins." (DS 1, P. 151)

". . . in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (DS 3, P. 185)

"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all." (DS 3, P. 185)

96.1 FORGIVENESS IS SHARED IN OTHER PLACES IN OUR WORSHIP:

Many of our hymns are all about the forgiveness we have in Jesus.

The **Invocation** reminds us of the words of Baptism -- where forgiveness is given as we have the name "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" spoken over us. The same words will be repeated in the Absolution.

We are to hear forgiveness in the words of the Gospel and in the sermon.

Then we sing the **Offertory**, "Create in me a clean heart, O God . . ." Those words come from Psalm 51, David's great psalm of confession and forgiveness.

We pray the **Lord's Prayer** and include the Fifth Petition, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

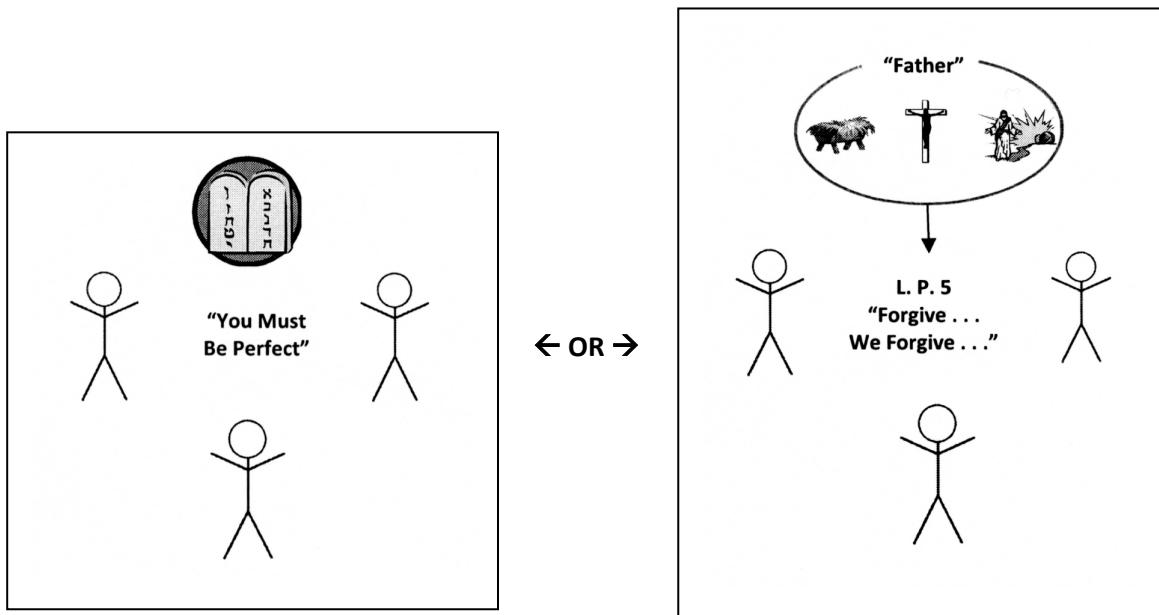
We receive the **Lord's Supper** with the words, "Shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

And we hear the **Benediction** where the middle phrase talks about "The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you." Grace is God's Riches At Christ's Expense."

When we come to worship God we come as sinners, and He gives us the forgiveness we need. Time after time in our services we rejoice in and celebrate that forgiveness.

97. THE "COMMUNITY OF THE FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING"

There are only two options in life; and those are (1) to seek to be righteous, and (2) to be part of the forgiven and forgiving. In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus told the parable about the Pharisee and the Tax Collector who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not like other men. The tax collector prayed, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Read the whole passage.



To seek to be part of the "community of the righteous" can only end in failure. We do not measure up to God's standards of righteousness, so this is a dead end, literally.

To be a part of the "community of the forgiven and forgiving" is completely different.

Jesus taught us to pray the 5th Petition of the Lord's Prayer, "**Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.**" These words do not mean that we make our forgiveness of others a way of earning God's forgiveness. Instead the phrasing and tenses of the words could be translated in this way, "**Forgive us our trespasses as we here and now forgive those who have sinned against us.**"

In fact that matches the wording of the other time Jesus taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer. We use the version from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:9-13. But at another time the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (**Luke 11:2-4**). Jesus used most of the same words. But the fifth petition there reads "**forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.**"

It is the words and the acts of God that prompt our forgiveness. It all comes from Jesus. ("We love because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19)

When a congregation joins in praying the Lord's Prayer that congregation is declaring a forgiveness of all sins that have been committed against any of them. It is a general amnesty. That forgiveness is given and shared by all who are gathered there for worship – and is supposed to result in a community of the forgiven and forgiving.



Secondly the forgiveness is given to all outsiders. The congregation is to act toward those in the community and all other outsiders in a way that is guided by the forgiveness that we are given.

98. **WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF THE FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING**

There are things we do **to celebrate forgiveness.** Among them are:

(1) **The sharing of the peace.** If it is done before the beginning of the service we simply say, "Let's take a few moments to greet one another with the peace of the Lord. If it is done during the service I usually place it after the absolution, and introduce it in this way, As we have received peace from God so we share that peace with one another. Let's take a few moments to greet one another with the peace of the Lord."

(2) There are several **optional forms for confession** included in "Lutheran Worship," in "Lutheran Service Book" and in our other worship resources.

One of the most interesting is found in LSB on page 254 (and in LW on page 264). It has **the Leader speaking words of confession** before the congregation, **and they respond** with "The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins. Amen." The Congregation then speaks the words of confession and the Leader speaks the response. **Our congregation has even varied that**

pattern by having Pulpit and Lectern sides of the congregation speak the two parts, led by Pastor and Vicar. So we all join in speaking forgiveness to each other.

These things are the celebration of forgiveness given to us by God and then through us to one another.

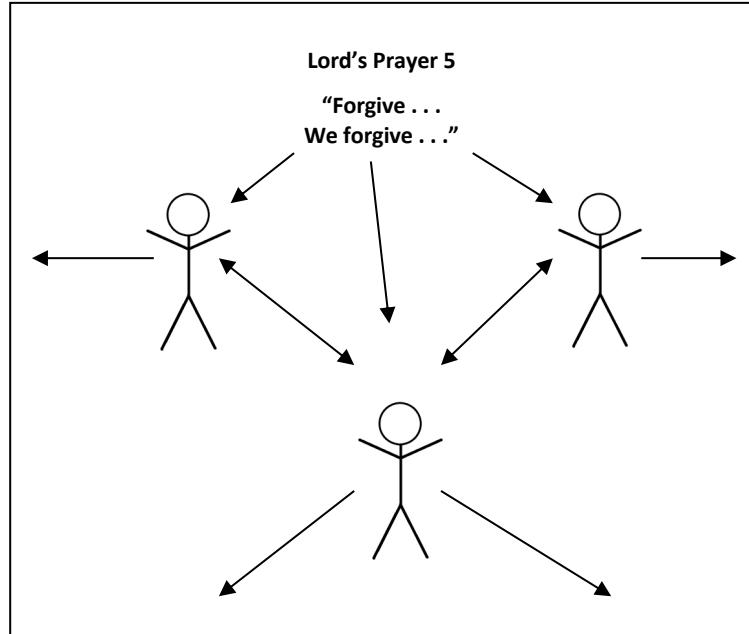
(Note: while we are free to have a variety of ways we confess and receive God's forgiveness we do have a very normal and standard pattern that we usually follow. There is also a clear line limiting what we will do.)

99.

IN OUR LIFE

The whole idea of being part of "the forgiven and forgiving" can change all our relationships. It is to be a part of our marriages. It is a part of our relationships with our children (and parents too).

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, *"If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother; and then come and offer your gift."* (Matthew 5:23-24)



Reconciliation and true forgiveness is a very powerful thing that helps to call others to faith in Jesus Christ. **The refusal to forgive** says that we do not believe that God forgives either.

**So, who in your life could you go and be reconciled to?
Who could you begin to show the forgiveness from God that you enjoy?
Who could you show God's love and peace and call them closer to God?**

I know this might just be the hardest thing in the world. But bringing somebody to God and into eternal life is the most important thing you could ever possibly do. **"Whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins."** (James 5:20)

BETWEEN CHAPTERS

The challenge is to carefully read Luke 22:1-38; Exodus 12; and Isaiah 25:6-9

99.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 9. Absolution

Keys What opens and shuts. "The Keys" are the proclaiming of the Law that shuts; and the proclaiming of the Gospel that opens heaven through forgiving sins.

Office of the Keys The authority to forgive or retain sins; and so to open or close heaven.

Authority (3) The power to command or decide, which has been delegated to another.

Repentant Feeling or expressing sorrow for a sin, and the desire to turn from that sin.

Unrepentant Not sorry for your sins; either saying that they are not sins or that you don't care.

Penitent Repentant for your sins and willing to undo the harm you have caused.

Impenitent Not repentant about your sins and uncaring about the results of them.

Exhort To advise, caution or warn someone away from doing wrong and to the good.

Reprove To disapprove, to condemn an action and warn of its consequences.

Rebuke To speak sharp and severe disapproval of sinful actions or of sinful faults in a person's life.

Priesthood of All Believers That all Christians are sent by God to tell about Jesus; to pray for others and tell them that their sins are forgiven by Jesus; and can baptize when needed.

Ordained To put a man in place as a Pastor in the Christian Church and place him in a congregation.

Stead [To act] in the place of another and by their authority.

Public (1) Acting officially; open to all, as in public preaching or public absolution.
 (2) done in front of others, as in public confession.

Individual For a single person. (Individual confession and absolution.)

Private Not public; not for others to know about.

Confession The root word means speak together, agree.

- (1) To admit your sins, agreeing with God about them.
- (2) To speak your faith, agreeing with God about the teachings of the Bible.

Divulge To tell something that is private and should not be told. (Pastors are not to divulge sins confessed privately.)

Burdens of Conscience Sins about which you have a hard time believing that God can forgive them.

Distressed Troubled by burdens of conscience.

Exclude Refuse to admit (For example, to exclude an unrepentant sinner from taking part in spiritual things that would bring judgment on him).

Excommunicate To exclude someone from communion and other privileges of Church membership.

Valid To have legal force; to be effective and true.

Absolution The declaration that a person is free from their sin and the eternal consequences of it.

Pardon To forgive sin and release from punishment.

Remission of Sins To forgive sin and do away with its effects.

Assurance To make someone sure of spiritual things, such as the forgiveness of their sins and their relationship with God.

Community of the Righteous Gathering of religious people around the idea that either they are morally upright and virtuous, or that they must be in order to deserve eternal life.

Community of the Forgiven and Forgiving Gathering of Christians who know that they have been freely forgiven by God; so they also forgive each other and all other people.

Catechism & Memory Verses

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

100-a 1. WHAT IS THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, ((instituted / put there))* by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and drink. (28)

100-b *Where is this written?*

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and Saint Paul write:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. (116)

* (the word "instituted" in both German and Latin has a double meaning: 1. to begin or establish a thing, and 2. to put a thing in a particular place.)

100-c 1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? (32)

100-d 2. WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF SUCH EATING AND DRINKING?

These words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation. (44)

100-e 3. HOW CAN BODILY EATING AND DRINKING DO SUCH GREAT THINGS?

Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: "forgiveness of sins." (52)

100-f 4. WHO THEN RECEIVES THIS SACRAMENT WORTHILY?

Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared; for the words, "for you" ((require / *call for*)) all hearts to believe. (59)

100-g 1 Corinthians 11:26-29 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. (81)

100-h 1 Corinthians 12:21-23, 26-27 (NIV) The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. . . . If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (88)

100-i 1 Corinthians 13

CHAPTER 10 – COMMUNION
 Small Catechism, Questions # 285 – 306

100. BASIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

In the Lord's Supper Jesus gives us His body and His blood, together with the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and drink. He joins the promise of forgiveness of sins together with that meal and so strengthens our faith. All of this is based on the Words of Jesus, just as they are written.

101. QUESTION # 1 – WHAT IS THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, ((instituted / put there)) by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and drink.

((Small Catechism Questions # 285 – 295))

In teaching this I have found it helpful to divide the first question into four parts. We ask: What is it? Where is it? How did it get there? What is it there for?

101.1 Question # 1 – Part 1 – What is it?

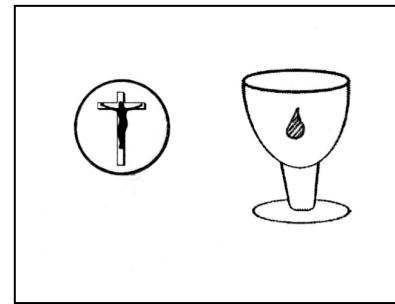
It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . .

We begin with the words of Jesus:

*“Take, eat; this is my body,
 which is given for you.
 This do in remembrance of me.”*

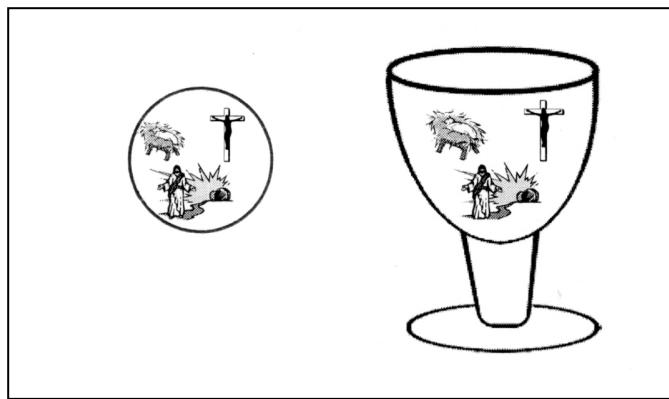
*“Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood of the new testament,
 which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.*

This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”



The words are reported in Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:19-20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25. There are some variations in the wording, but they are all consistent in that Jesus said, “This is My body” and either “this is My blood” or “this cup is the new testament in My blood.” **The plain meaning of the words** is that we are to believe that Jesus’ body and blood are put there by Jesus, and that we are to eat and drink them believing His words.

Let's be specific. What we receive in the Lord's Supper is **the same body that was born for us, was laid in the manger, knelt in the garden, suffered on the cross, was laid in the tomb and that rose from the dead. It is the living {Easter morning / risen from the dead / state of exaltation / using the power of God always & in every way} body & blood of Jesus with the power of Easter and the resurrection that Jesus gives us.** It is this living body & blood of Jesus that is joined with the bread & wine.



So we commit ourselves to taking the words of Jesus as they are written. This is the easy part – understanding the plain meaning and hearing the promises in the Lord's Supper. The harder part is what to do when Jesus' words call us to lives of discipleship.

101.2 Question # 1 – Part 2 – Where is it?

... under the bread and the wine, ...

What exactly do we receive in the Lord's Supper?

Different denominations teach different things:

Lutherans teach that we really do receive **the body & blood of Jesus Christ, together with the bread & wine.**

Reformed Churches teach that we receive **only the bread & wine (or grape juice);** that Jesus' words must be symbolic; and that it cannot possibly be the actual body & blood of Jesus that we receive.

Roman Catholic teaching is the bread & wine are no longer there but **only the body and blood of Jesus** under the appearance of bread & wine.

Other churches teach that everything is optional. **They say, "believe whatever you want about the Lord's Supper;** what's really important is loving each other." Many who believe this way also believe that all Christians should be allowed to commune anywhere.

First, we believe that **it is important** whether Jesus' body and blood are in the Lord's Supper. **It does not make sense to say it does not matter.**

Second, what does the Bible say? Jesus' words seem pretty clear and plain. There are other verses as well:

1 Corinthians 10:16 "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? . . ." [If it is a participation in the blood of Christ then His blood really is there. It is not simply symbolic.]

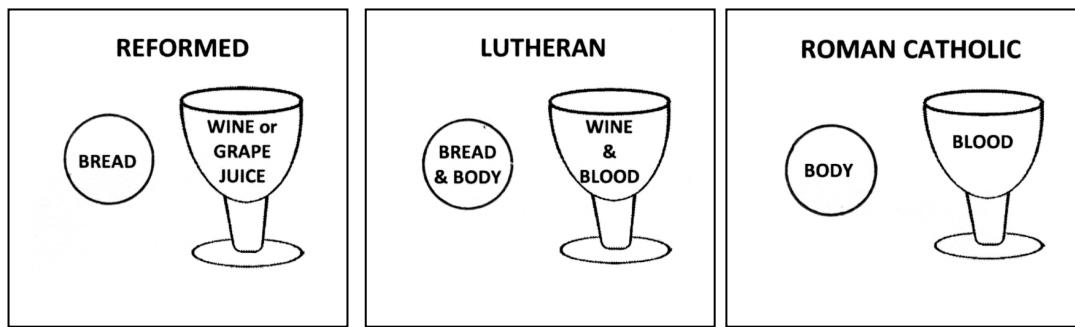
1 Corinthians 10:16 ". . . The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" [It is bread that we break, and Paul talks about both the bread and the body of Christ.]

1 Corinthians 11:27 “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.” [The body and blood of Jesus really are there in the Lord’s Supper. Otherwise it would not be possible to sin against them.]

1 Corinthians 11:29 “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.” [It is possible to take the Lord’s Supper to your harm. Paul talks about taking the Lord’s Supper while denying what Jesus says about His body and His blood being there. This brings judgment. So it is very important what we believe.]

When Jesus says, “This is My Body” He calls us to believe that His body is there. Lutherans believe this is **not simply symbolic**. We sometimes use the words that the bread is **the carrier of** the body of Christ, and the wine the carrier of His blood.

What we teach is this. **We receive four things with our mouths and lips when we take communion: Bread, Wine, Body, and Blood.** We call this “**the Sacramental Union.**”



101.21 UNIONS

This is only the beginning of the unions. **There is a tremendous number of things that come together in Communion.**

Jesus joins **His words** to the bread, wine, body & blood.

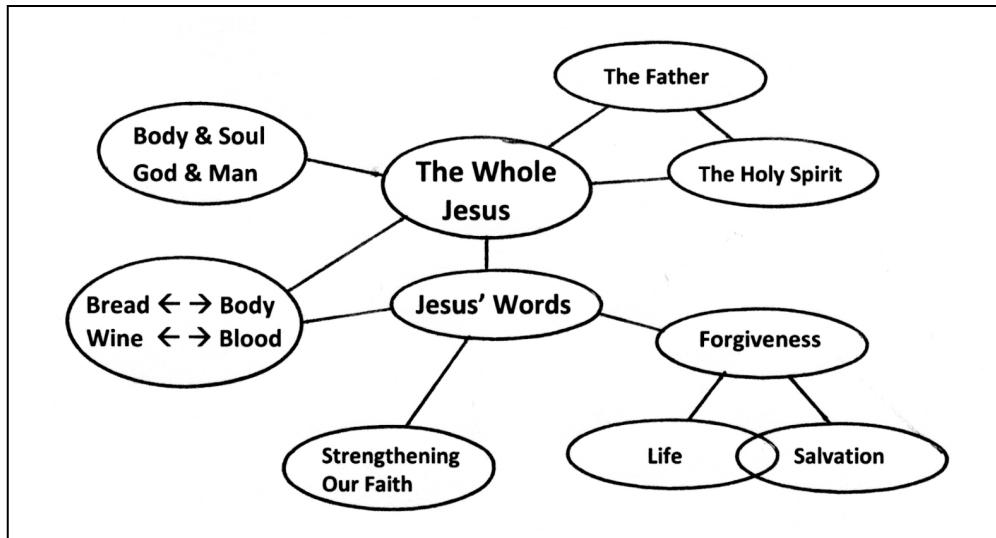
With His words comes **forgiveness of sins.**

With forgiveness comes **life & salvation.**

Where His **words & promises** are, Jesus gives **strengthening of faith.**

With His body & blood Jesus gives us **Himself completely; body & soul; God & Man.** He is with us, literally and just as He promised (Matthew 28:20 and Matthew 18:20). **He guides our thoughts, emotions and will; leads our prayers; and shepherds our lives and our souls.**

Where Jesus is present in our lives, **God the Father** is there also, and **the Holy Spirit** as well (John 14:21-26).

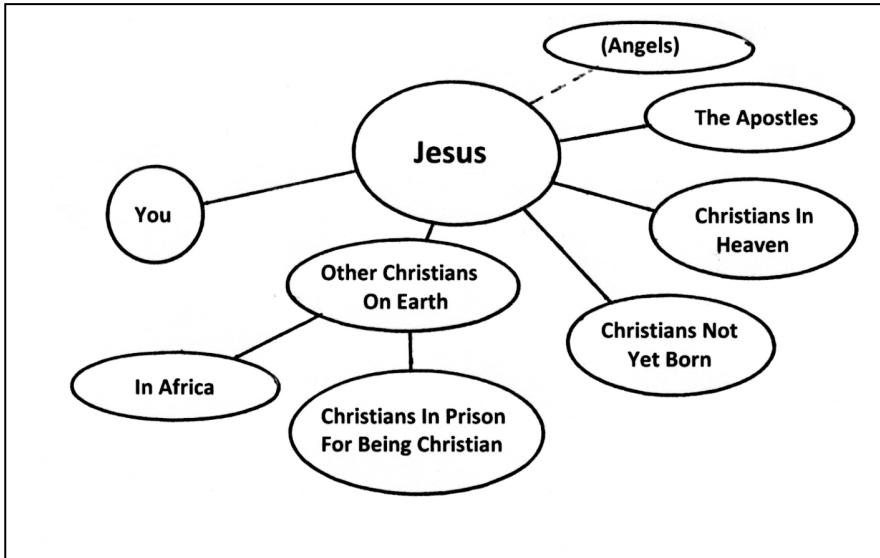


101.22 "SYSOMOS" – BODY TOGETHER

When we take communion . . . as we are united with Jesus we are united with others who also are united with Jesus. We actually do become one with each other in the Lord's Supper. Paul comes up with a word for that. He says we are "*sysomos*" literally we are "body together." Paul then explains what it means to be "body together." We need each other and strengthen each other. When one member suffers all suffer together, when one member rejoices all rejoice together so we may grow together and mature spiritually (1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4).

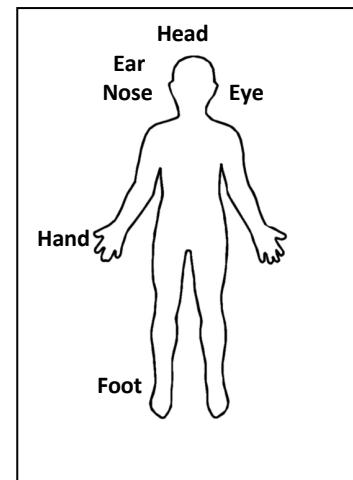
(Notice please that all this comes very naturally from the plain and simple reading of the words of Jesus. But it is not nearly so powerfully taught by a symbolic reading of Jesus' words.)

When we are joined in this one body we are united with Christians from every part of the world, and Christians now in heaven. We pray in part of our Communion service, "Together with angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name . . ." We are united in this one meal with Christians through the centuries, back to the Apostles in the Upper Room on Maundy Thursday, and with those who are still not yet born, because we are being united in the one meal that Jesus gives.



When you follow the teaching that Jesus' body & blood are truly in the Lord's Supper, then:

1. **"Discerning the body"** of Christ in the Lord's Supper includes treating one another with the love, care, honor, respect and kindness that is appropriate to those who are **"sysomos"** one body with each other and with Jesus. Understand that as you are joined with Jesus you are joined with your fellow Christians.
2. That's why it was at the Lord's Supper in **John 13** but after Judas had left that Jesus said, **"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."**
3. That's also why, after Paul has been talking about the Lord's Supper, in the next chapter Paul talks about the Church as being one body. Read **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**.



101.23 "IN, WITH & UNDER"

Sometimes Lutherans use the phrase, "In, with and under." We know that Jesus body and blood are there in the Lord's Supper. But the Bible has not told us the exact manner.

At the time of the Reformation there were three theories:

Impanation – that the body & blood of Jesus were to be found **within the bread and wine**;

Consubstantiation – that the body & blood of Jesus were **alongside or together with the bread and wine**; and

Transubstantiation – that the body & blood of Jesus were there **under the forms of bread and wine**; in other words that the form (taste, texture, appearance, etc.) of bread and wine was there but the substance (the thing itself) was no longer bread but body and no longer wine but blood.

The phrase **"in, with, and under"** borrows one word from each of these theories. But . .

There is a wonderful Lutheran doctrine that says:

God has revealed everything we need to know for salvation. Everything we need to know to get to heaven is there in the Bible. That is guaranteed. But there are things we do not need to know to be saved. Those things God does not promise to tell us.

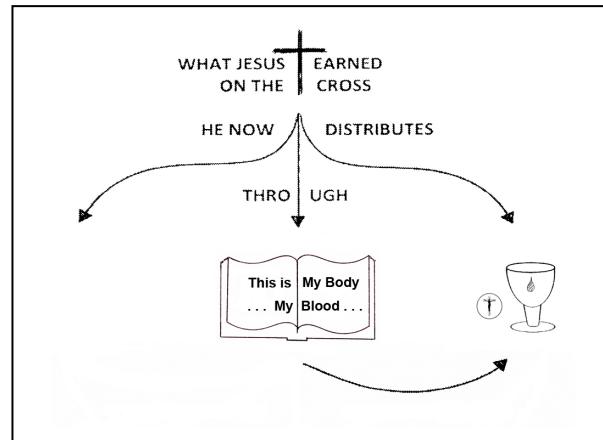
You can draw a line between the two, and there are times it really helps to know which side of the line something is on.

The actual Lutheran teaching about how the body and blood of Jesus are present in the Lord's Supper is this: We refuse to say what God has not revealed. We will follow the Word of God where it leads us, but we will not go beyond that point, where it is not revealed. Jesus' body and blood are there but the manner and way we will leave to God. He knows better than we do.

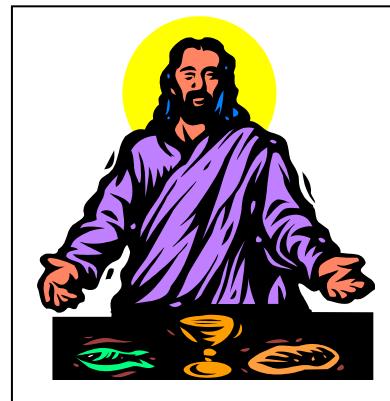
101.3 **Question # 1 – Part 3 – How did it get there?**

... put there by Christ Himself ...

This is a thing Jesus does. He puts His body and His blood there in the Lord's Supper. **The Pastor does not** make it happen. It is not the Pastor's words, idea, abilities or anything else. **It is not the Church's** words, idea, abilities or anything else. The Pastor only speaks the words that Jesus gives. **Jesus consecrates, and puts His body & blood into the Supper. So we are not free to change the words of Jesus, or to omit them.** The fellow back in the 1960's who decided to substitute popcorn and cola was not giving the Lord's Supper. The pastor who did not use the words of Jesus and told the congregation that it is not Jesus' body & blood; but instead told the congregation that it is a meal of love, so they should simply love each other as they ate and drank – was also not giving people the Lord's Supper.



This is very important. **The words of Jesus make the Lord's Supper what it is.** His words make things happen, not our faith. It's always His word. **So if a person does not believe and takes Communion** he still receives Jesus' body and blood. **If another person believes** that it is the Lord's Supper **but Jesus' words are not used** . . . he does not receive Jesus' body & blood.

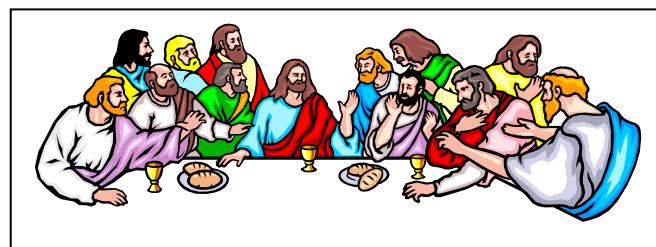


The second one puts his faith in the wrong place. **The first one** does not receive the blessings. But he still receives what Jesus says is there. By not believing the words he rejects God's offer of blessings. He rejects forgiveness of sins. He rejects life. And he rejects salvation. Instead he calls God's judgment on himself.

101.4 **Question # 1 – Part 4 – What it is there for?**

... for us Christians to eat and drink.

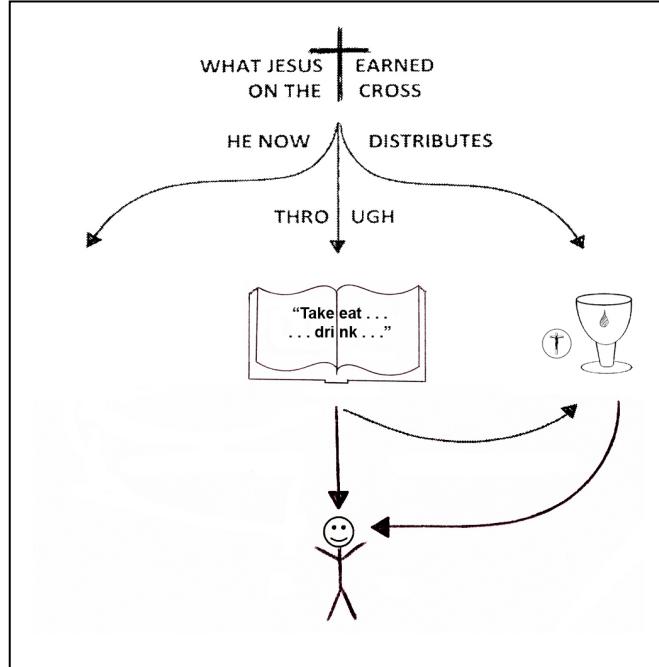
There is a purpose. Jesus gives His body and blood **for us to eat and drink, and invites us to believe in Him and in His words.** The Lord's Supper is not there for us to worship,



or pray to; but eat and drink. **Jesus has the right to tell us what kind of worship and obedience He expects of us.** Of course He does. **What He has said about the Lord's Supper is "eat" and "drink."**

So Lutherans do not believe in "reserving" the bread – keeping consecrated bread on the altar where members may come and pray to Jesus, still present under the form of the bread. We say, "this is not what Jesus said to do with it." What did He tell us to do?

It is also an unsure thing. **When the Supper is used in any other way than what Jesus has commanded, it is at the very least a doubtful thing;** and it does not have His promise connected to it.



Bottom line, **the promise is the thing.** We want the Words & Promises of God. Luther says, God is there in many places, but He is not there "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins" unless He has joined himself with words of promise in that place. **Where God does bind Himself to things with words & promises** (and He does this only in and through Jesus) – where He gives His words & promises that's where **we can find Him in His grace and mercy.** That's why it is so important to find and come to Him in **the places where He gives the promises.**

This combines with and leads right into the next question.

((By the way – Notice that each question (# 2-4) quotes the words of Jesus, "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."))

101.5 WHERE IS THIS WRITTEN?

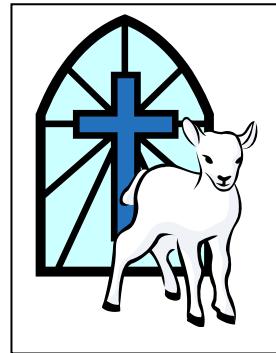
The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and Saint Paul write:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

101.51 "... ON THE NIGHT WHEN HE WAS BETRAYED ..."

The Lord's Supper comes out of the **Old Testament background of the Passover**. Jesus said to His disciples "*I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*" (Luke 22:15) Paul relates the Passover to Jesus when he says, "**For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.**" (1 Corinthians 5:7) There are numerous ways the Passover tells us about Jesus . . . and there are numerous ways the Passover customs increase our understanding of what went on that night and what it all means. That is a whole study itself. Here are only a few points.



101.52 THE CALENDAR

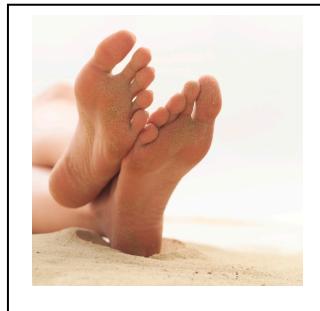
We read in Exodus that the people of Israel were to bring the Passover Lamb into town **on the 10th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan**. They were to wait until **the 14th day** of the month and then at sundown (the Hebrew day changed at sundown) they were to slaughter the lambs and eat the Passover. (Exodus 12:3-7)

Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem on **the 10th day** of the month (**Palm Sunday**). On **the 14th (Maundy Thursday)** the disciples prepared to eat the Passover. That evening after sundown (the 15th by Jewish figuring) Jesus and the disciples ate the Passover. As the next day came Jesus went to the cross. Both the eating on Thursday evening and the events of Good Friday would be the 15th of the month, the day of Passover. So Jesus is our Passover Lamb. And like the Passover Lamb in Exodus **His blood marks our door** and protects us from death and hell.



101.53 HE WASHED THEIR FEET (John 13:2-15)

We read how Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. He took the place of a servant, and cared for them. He said, "*I am among you as one who serves.*" (Luke 22:27) In the same way **He serves us, meeting every spiritual need and hearing every prayer**. As we commune together we come to a meal where Jesus serves. He invites us to His table, and comes to serve us. Then Jesus calls us to serve one another and care for each other.



101.54 THE SOP (John 13:21-26)

Jesus showed **care and love even for the disciple who would betray Him**. It is a custom that the host of the Passover meal makes, dips, and gives a special morsel to one of the guests that he wants to show special favor and friendship to. When Jesus gave "the sop" to Judas He was telling Judas of the love of God.

101.55 THE BREAD

The rabbis were very particular about the bread to be used for the Passover. It was to be unleavened, made without yeast. **It was also supposed to be pierced – having holes through it. And it was to be baked in such a way that it was to have brown stripes from the baking.** They based this on Isaiah 53:5, ***“He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.”***

To a Christian this verse obviously refers to Jesus. The Rabbis insisted on this because of the prophecy – without knowing why.



THE AFIKOMEN

The *Afikomen* became a part of the Passover celebration before New Testament times. What happened was that **three pieces** of the Passover Bread (*Matzahs*) were placed in a fabric container before the meal. During the meal **the middle one** was taken out, **wrapped in a special cloth** and hidden somewhere. Later in the meal the children were to search for the hidden bread, the *Afikomen*. **When they found it** they brought it out and everyone celebrated. Then it was broken and shared with everyone there.

The practice looks an awful lot like a picture, **acting out how Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, was hidden in the tomb for three days, wrapped in the burial cloth, was searched for by the disciples, and when they saw Him risen on Easter they celebrated.**

101.56 THE FOUR CUPS

In the Passover there were traditionally four cups of wine:

1. The cup of **Sanctification** (or **separation** because that is part of the meaning of the Hebrew word)
2. The cup of **Praise**
3. The cup of **Blessing**
4. The cup of **Elijah**



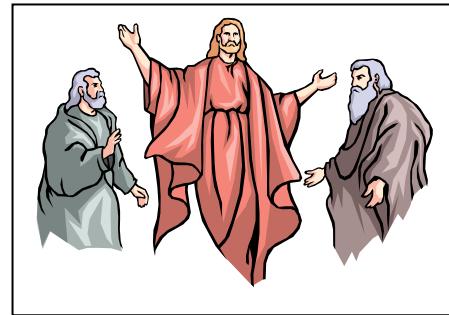
Paul identifies the cup of Blessing as the one Jesus used to institute the Lord's Supper. We could say that we are still at that point in the Passover, and the meal continues on. It is a part of Jewish tradition at the time of **the 4th cup** to have a child look outside to see if Elijah is coming. **The coming of Elijah** is an end of the world event. He will be coming back with Jesus. So the Supper points to the end of the world and will continue on until the end.

Jesus said, ***“I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”*** (Matthew 26:29) We wait for the fulfilling of the promises and the completion of the meal, when Jesus returns.

101.57 THE THANKSGIVING

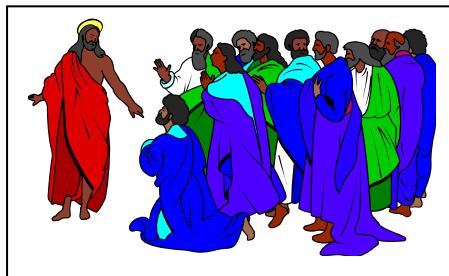
In the TLH P. 15 service and in LSB Divine Service Setting Three (P. 184 ff), after communion has been distributed and received the Pastor says, ***O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good*** and the congregation responds, ***and His mercy endureth forever.***

This is a verse taken from the ends of two sections of the Psalms known as the Greater Hallel (Psalms 119-136) and Lesser Hallel (Psalms 113-118). Those were psalms used for the Passover meal and were to be sung. So when Matthew and Mark report ***When they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives*** this is what they were doing. The last thing Jesus and the disciples did before going out was to finish the singing of the Hallel. Psalm 118 begins and ends with the verse, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; and His mercy endureth forever.” Psalm 136 begins with that verse and continues with each verse ending “His mercy endureth forever.” **When we sing this verse, we are remembering how Jesus went from the Lord’s Supper to Gethsemane and then to the cross.**



101.58 CONVERSATION (John 13:31-17:26)

Part of the Passover meal went on **after the eating was all done**. Those gathered would share the words and promises of God from the Old Testament. The Gospel of John records long discussions between Jesus and the disciples. John 13:31-14:31 was part of that discussion – apparently this part happened in the Upper Room. It ends with Jesus saying that it was time to leave the room where they had eaten the Passover.



As Jesus went out with His disciples they continued to talk about the Words and promises of God. Read John 15-17 to discover what they may have discussed as they walked along. And then read Jesus’ great High Priestly Prayer for us in John 17.

101.59 UNTIL THE LAST PERSON FALLS ASLEEP

It is a part of the Passover tradition that **the meal is not finished until the last person falls asleep**. Talking about God and about faith can continue all night and into the next day. It is still counted as being part of the supper.

When Jesus and His disciples went out to **the Garden of Gethsemane and the disciples fell asleep**, but it was still part of the Passover because **Jesus had not**. So the Passover continued on into the next day, all the way **through Jesus’ arrest; through the trials before the**



Sanhedron, Pilate, Herod, and Pilate again. It continued through **the scourging**; through **carrying the cross** to Calvary; **through Jesus suffering on the cross**; and on **until Jesus said, "It is finished,"** and **"Father into Your hands I commend My spirit."** Then He **owed His head and gave up His spirit** and the Passover was complete.

From the beginning of the meal until the end of the crucifixion **it is all one event – the Passover of Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

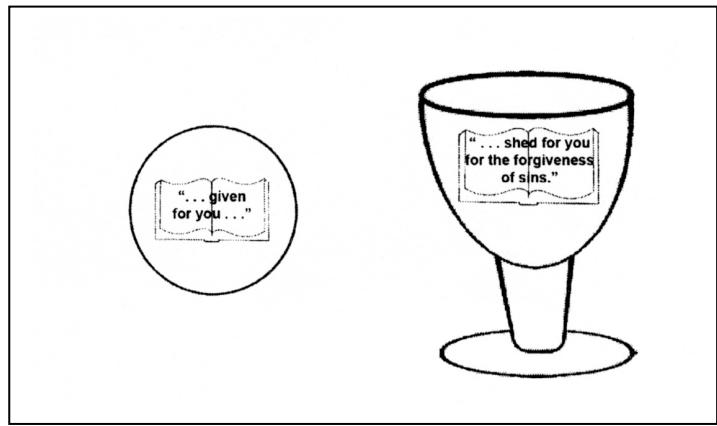


102. **QUESTION # 2 – WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF SUCH EATING AND DRINKING?**

These words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation.

((Small Catechism Question # 296))

We receive **forgiveness of sins** in the Lord's Supper. Together with forgiveness of sins comes **life and salvation**. Where the one is the others must also be. We could add a long list of **additional blessings** such as heaven, eternity, to be children of God, the privilege of prayer, etc. All blessings are bound up in this meal. Remember the diagram, "What Christ earned on the cross, He now distributes." All the blessings earned on the cross are put into this meal.



Remember, we said that **it is the living {Easter morning / risen from the dead / state of exaltation} body & blood of Jesus** that we receive. What is going to happen **when you take the living body & blood of Jesus with all the power of the Easter resurrection into yourself.**

At one point Luther compared the Lord's Supper to a meal **where a pack of wolves** fell on a lamb and devoured it. In this illustration **Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God**, and we are the wolves. But, Luther says, **the flesh of this Lamb of God** is more powerful than the flesh of the wolves. So the wolves do not digest the lamb and make it into wolf flesh. Instead, **from within, the lamb transforms the wolves** and makes them into sheep.

So it is with Jesus and us. When He gives us His body and blood **He makes us His own.** The Lamb of God transforms us into His sheep.

We say this verse at funerals, He *“will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.”* (Philippians 3:21)

103. **QUESTION # 3 – HOW CAN BODILY EATING AND DRINKING DO SUCH GREAT THINGS?**

Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: “forgiveness of sins.”

((Small Catechism Question # 297))

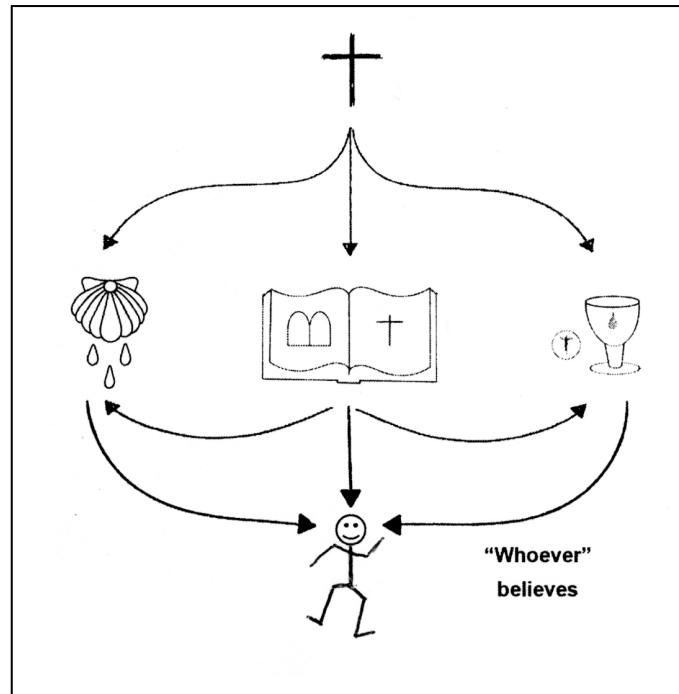
It is not the eating and drinking, but the words. **The Word of God always carries the power.** Just like Baptism is not Baptism without the Word of God; this is not the Lord’s Supper without the Word of God.

The blessings also come through the Word of God. As Luther says, it has to be the words written here, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” Without Jesus’ words we would not receive the blessings.

Jesus combined His Words together with the Bread & Wine and Body & Blood that He gives us in Communion. **The words are joined together with the bodily eating and drinking and together they are the Lord’s Supper.** We come to the Lord’s Supper and Jesus gives us both: (1) His living, risen-from-the-dead, body and blood; and (2) His Words and promises. So we are blessed in our bodies and blessed in our souls.

“Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say”. The blessings are given through the words, and the words are received by faith. So whoever believes what Jesus says, has what Jesus promises. **Forgiveness, Life and Salvation are just the beginning of a list that could go on for pages.** So when I draw the little man at the bottom of the diagram I have him dancing for joy. **Whoever believes . . . has everything!**

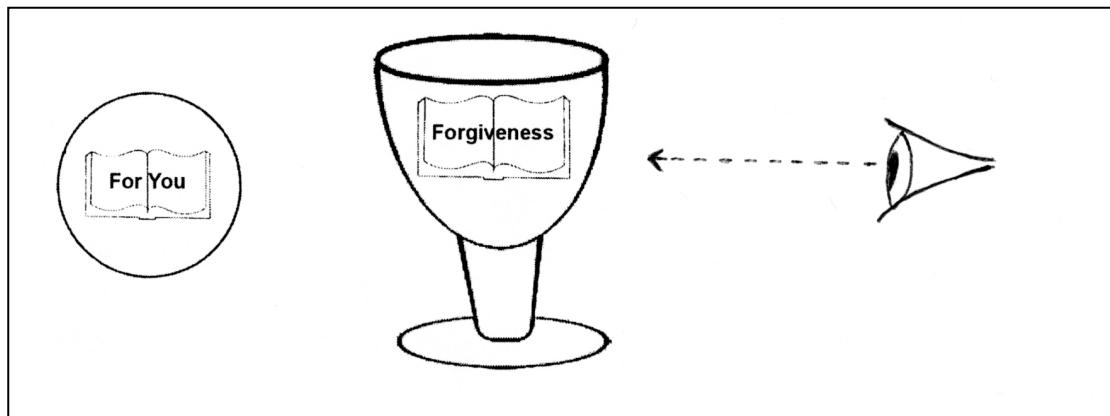
GIVEN	RECEIVED
BREAD, WINE BODY, BLOOD	WITH THE BODY
WORDS, FORGIVENESS, LIFE, SALVATION, STRENGTHENING FAITH	WITH THE SOUL



104. QUESTION # 4 – WHO THEN RECEIVES THIS SACRAMENT WORTHILY?

Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared; for the words, “for you” ((require / call for)) all hearts to believe.



((Small Catechism Questions # 298 – 303))

104.1 WHOEVER BELIEVES THESE WORDS # 1

Honestly, is there any way you can hope to be truly worthy enough to receive the body & blood of the sinless Son of God? The simple answer is: No. There is no way we can make ourselves worthy to receive Jesus' body & blood. No amount of good works can do it. No confession of sins, no matter how complete or how heartfelt can make me worthy enough. There is **only one thing I can do and that is come as a sinner**. But that is exactly **how Jesus meets me**. He says, **“given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”** And there in His words **I am invited**. The Lord's Supper was given **for sinners and for those weak in faith**. It's not there for the holy and sinless. It is for sinners who remain sinners even after they confess and are absolved. This is the amazing grace of God! In the Lord's Supper **Jesus gives Himself to the sinful, the unclean, and the weak in faith**. He is there for me!

The person who comes as a sinner because he has heard the invitation “for you” and “for the forgiveness of sins,” who then comes as a sinner to receive Jesus' body, and blood, and words of forgiveness; that person is ready.



People have tried to be worthy. In Luther's time it was a practice to fast on Sunday mornings, so that the first thing you would eat would be the Lord's Supper. Luther said that was fine, but it was going too far when people would come to Church, falling asleep

from hunger, and be unable to pay attention to either the sermon, or the words of the Lord's Supper. Then the fasting had gotten in the way of Jesus' words.

Bodily preparation includes all the respectful things we do as we prepare to worship. That's a **good part** of our Christian faith. But in the hospital, or coming straight from work a person may not be able to dress the way they want, or make other preparations. In that case it is better to **come to the Lord's Supper as best you can.** Better than refusing to come because you are not as finely dressed as you would like. (This is **not an excuse** to be deliberately slovenly. It simply reminds us of what is most important.)



104.2 WHOEVER BELIEVES THESE WORDS # 2

(1) Paul has a warning: *"Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself."* (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

For that reason we do have some cautions. **We do not commune anyone and everyone.** We do not commune infants, or the uninstructed. We do not commune the unconscious. To do those things would be acting carelessly with God's things, and with other people's souls.

In the same way we do not commune Christians who have a different confession of faith. **(This is the practice all over the world among Christians who believe in the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Lord's Supper.)**

(2) This is a part of our life as disciples:

- (A) When we commune together **we are saying to the world that we are united in faith. We have a responsibility to watch over each other and encourage each other in the faith that we share.**
- (B) **When a person communes at a congregation he asks the pastor there to be a shepherd and guide for his faith.** This is a serious relationship – caring for another person's soul; and it is a good and beautiful thing.
- (C) **To commune at several places where there are different confessions of faith** is to either (1) try to believe several contradictory things and so get confused, or (2) to ask the Pastor and congregation to not bother about your faith or your soul.



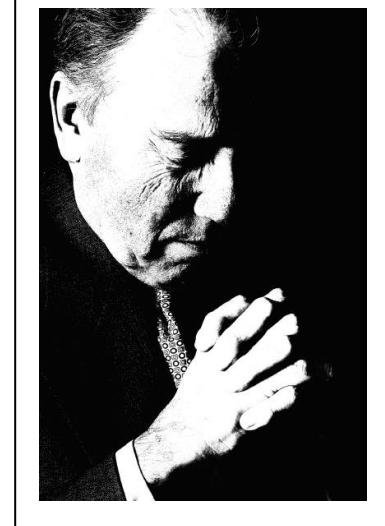
(3) We are to call people to prepare for the Lord's Supper. Preparing involves **repenting and turning in faith to God**. So we are to call the unrepentant to repent, those who are living in an ungodly manner; and those who are unforgiving, refusing to be reconciled with their fellow Christians. The Catechism says, "They show thereby that they do not really believe that God forgives them either."

104.3 WHAT ABOUT SOMEONE WHO IS WEAK IN FAITH?

((Small Catechism Questions # 304 – 305))

Another part of believing the words of Jesus is **to believe the words "for you."** Martin Chemnitz (a generation after Martin Luther) said that being properly prepared includes **not only believing that Jesus is there but also that He is there for you; that Jesus Christ calls you personally to His table to give you personally the forgiveness of sins.** That is why I try to always include and emphasize the words "for you" as I share the Lord's Supper with you.

The Lord's Supper was given **for sinners and for those weak in faith.** Its whole purpose is **to promise forgiveness of sins and strengthen our faith;** so of course it is there for the weak in faith. Luther said at one time, **if you do not feel a hunger for the Lord's Supper you should realize how far gone you are and how close to spiritual death,** and then you should **run to the Supper with prayer for God to have mercy on you and strengthen your faith.**



If you are in Church but do not have the proper attitude toward God, what do you do? If your mind and heart are not properly focused, can you take communion? Be concerned about the welfare of your soul. Be very concerned. But then hear the words of Jesus in the Lord's Supper. He says, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." If you are a sinner He is calling you. Seize His words and hold onto them. They can be trusted. They do not change. Do not come because your faith is strong. Come because you are a sinner, and this meal is for sinners. Put your faith in His words, not in anything within yourself.

105. IN OUR WORSHIP

The Lord's Supper is the high point of our time together. It is the part of our worship that is the greatest celebration. **It is a regular encounter with the Living Lord Jesus.**

Running through Lutheran theology there is what is called a **"Sacramental Piety."** That means **we treasure the places where God has given special promises and joined them together with visible things.** That's why we have hymns about the Lord's Supper, and some of the singing we do with the most feeling and emotion is in those hymns.

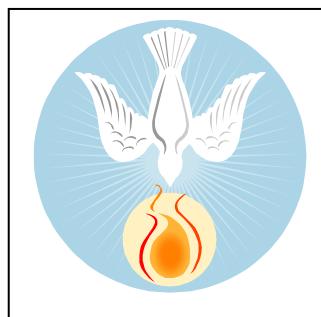
The Lord's Supper is a time of **receiving and appreciating God's GRACE**. To help teach that we distinguish between "Sacrament" and "Sacrifice." **A Sacrifice is what we offer to God; a Sacrament is what God gives to us.** In the Lord's Supper we receive, and we learn to come as sinners who are ministered to and served by Jesus.

The Lord's Supper brings together **all the parts of our life and everything in our heart and soul.** I have seen people come to the Lord's Supper with tears, and I have seen them come dancing. We bring **everything in our lives, all our hopes, doubts, joys and sins; and we meet with Jesus Christ there.**



106. IN OUR LIFE

Dale Meyer (former Lutheran Hour speaker and current president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis) described his first communion. The Pastor had talked so highly of it that he expected to see heaven open and hear angels. He returned to the pew and asked the boy next to him, "Did you get zapped." But then went on and said that **after 20 or 30 years of communing he understood. It had changed him deeply inside and if anything was more important to him now than all those years ago.**



We can add more. **God works deeply inside us, so deeply that we often don't see His working.** David talked about "*my inmost being*" in Psalm 103. There is where God does His work, because that deeply inside is where we need the work. From there God works into the rest of our lives, our thoughts and awareness, our wills and emotions, and then all the way into the things we do, our behavior. That is the pattern we learned in the chapter on Conversion. So we should not be surprised that God begins His work in that way.

Communing regularly, taking time to come close to God where He calls us, feeds and strengthens our spiritual life.

106.1 SOME DRAMATIC THINGS HAPPEN

I think every Lutheran Pastor could tell dramatic stories of Christians in the hospital or on their death beds responding to the Lord's Supper. I have seen these things time and again, a Christian who I will bring Communion to, who is not clear or coherent for much of anything else, being absolutely clear minded for the time of communion, speaking, responding, knowing what is happening.

The most dramatic story I can share is of Neal, who had a brain tumor. I was called out of the dentist's chair to see him before he died. I brought along communion. He had not been able to speak clearly for several months. But when I arrived and asked and

asked if he wanted communion, he said “Yes!” absolutely clearly. I got things ready and we began. **Neal responded in the confession of sins clearly. He listened attentively to the Word of God and the meditation. He joined in the Lord’s Prayer, clearly, the whole way through. He received Communion, and we finished.** Within 10 minutes his clear mind and speech began to fade. Later that day he died.

There are other stories that are much the same. Again and again I see how the Lord’s Supper calls to us and how God gives very special blessings there.

106.2 FROM MY OWN LIFE

I can tell you stories about **times of tremendous hunger for the Lord’s Supper**; and I can tell you about specific individual times receiving communion, **times that are very vivid in my memory**. It was at one such time of communion that my life changed direction sharply and I was then headed toward being a pastor. **Sunday after Sunday I continue to be amazed by what happens among us as Jesus meets us in His Supper.**

((Read through: Small Catechism Question # 306))



109.99 THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

Chapter 10. Communion

Eucharist The word means “thanksgiving.” It is one of the names for the Lord’s Supper.

Sacrament of the Altar One of the names for the Lord’s Supper, it focuses on the place in Church where the bread and wine are set up. The altar reminds us of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.

Cup of Blessing The term refers either to the wine and the cup, or to the whole Lord’s Supper. The term “cup of blessing” refers to one of the cups of the Passover celebration.

Fruit of the Vine The wine of the Lord’s Supper.

Testament (2) Testament refers to the words of the Lord’s Supper; the words of Jesus give us the blessings of the cross and of His death in the Lord’s Supper. So we receive forgiveness of sins as Jesus said.

Remembrance The act of remembering. In the Lord’s Supper “in remembrance” of Jesus means to bring to mind all that Jesus has done for us, especially His death and resurrection.

Maundy Thursday The evening when Jesus began and instituted the Lord’s Supper.

Living Body What we receive in the Lord's Supper is the true body of Jesus, risen from the dead and living, with all the power of God.

Living Blood What we receive in the Lord's Supper is the true blood of Jesus, risen from the dead and living, with all the power of God.

Sacramental Union In the Lord's Supper the bread is joined with the body of Jesus and the wine is joined with the blood of Jesus.

Participation To have a share in. As we have participation in the body of Christ we have a share in all that Jesus has earned and won.

Real Presence When Jesus says His body is in the Lord's Supper, His real, actual, living body is really there; not symbolically but actually there.

Physical Reception What we receive with our physical body in the Lord's Supper is the actual body and blood of Jesus.

Spiritual Eating We also receive Jesus spiritually as we receive Him by faith. We believe His words and promises and so receive Him within our souls.

Plain Meaning The words of Jesus "This is My body" are to be understood in the plainest and simplest way – what is there is exactly what Jesus says is there.

Symbolic The belief that we should not understand Jesus' words in their plain sense because "He couldn't possibly mean that."

"In, With and Under" A traditional Lutheran phrase talking about the body and blood of Christ in relationship to the bread and wine. We believe Jesus' body and blood are there although we do not know the exact manner.

Transubstantiation The roman Catholic teaching that in the Lord's Supper the bread and wine are not there anymore, but only the body and blood of Jesus; that it looks and tastes like bread but is not bread; like wine but it is not wine.

"Sysomos" A Greek word made up by Paul that means literally "body together." *Sysomos* teaches us that we are joined with Jesus and so are one with each other.

Consecrate To set aside for God's use.

Words of Institution The words of Jesus spoken by the pastor over the bread and wine in the service of the Sacrament. (SC)

Fasting To go without food in order to devote time to spiritual things, such as prayer; or as an expression of grief, sorrow or repentance.

Bodily Preparation To get ready for communion by dressing and behaving in a way that is respectful to God.

Salutary Salvation-bringing.

Respectful To look at and act toward God with honor and reverence.

Slovenly Sloppy, careless and disrespectful.

Unworthy Undeserving.

Worthy Able to receive (the Lord's Supper) properly, through hearing Jesus' words with faith.

Eat and Drink Judgment Paul warns that taking the Lord's Supper without faith in Jesus and believing His words about Communion is disrespectful and deserves judgment.

Strengthening Faith As Jesus teaches us about His grace in the Lord's Supper, His words strengthen our faith.

Spiritual Death To be without faith and separated from God, either in this world or in eternity.

"For You" The words of Jesus in the Words of Institution that the Small Catechism repeats 6 times. They show that what Jesus does in the Lord's Supper is for us.

Passover The Old Testament celebration of God bringing His people out of Egypt.

Passover Lamb The lamb sacrificed, who's blood (in Egypt) marked the Israelites' doors with the sign of the cross; that was then eaten with the hope that God would send "the Lamb of God" (Jesus) to take away the sin of the world.

Greater Hallel (Lesser Hallel) Two sections of Psalms (Greater – 119-136; Lesser – 113-118) used during Passover celebrations. Each end with the words, "Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good; and His mercy endures forever."

Mount of Olives The area where Jesus went to pray after celebrating the Lord's Supper with His disciples.

Gethsemane The garden where Jesus prayed after the Lord's Supper and where He was arrested.

Sacramental Piety A Lutheran attitude of finding God's grace and blessings in those places and acts where God has said His forgiveness is there for us -- Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Confirmation After being instructed in the Christian faith we reaffirm the faith we were baptized into and the blessings of our baptism. We say, "this is my faith, and Jesus is my Savior."

Catechism & Memory Verses
SECTION IV

CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS WITH THEIR ANSWERS

Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who Intend to Go to the Sacrament.

After Confession and instruction in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the pastor may ask, or Christians may ask themselves these questions:

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?
Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.
2. How do you know this?
From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.
3. Are you sorry for your sins?
Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.
4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?
His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See Romans 6:21,23.
5. Do you hope to be saved?
Yes, that is my hope.
6. In whom, then, do you trust?
In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Who is Christ?
The Son of God, true God and man.
8. How many Gods are there?
Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?
He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.
10. Did the Father also die for you?
He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.
11. How do you know this?
From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.
12. What are the words of institution?
Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?
Yes, I believe it.

14. What convinces you to believe that?
The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?
We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?
First, so we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?
His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2 and Ephesians 5.

18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?
That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?
First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and feel no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?
To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7.
Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15-16 and in 1 John 2 and 5.
Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

Note: *These questions and answers are no child's play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter; for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."*

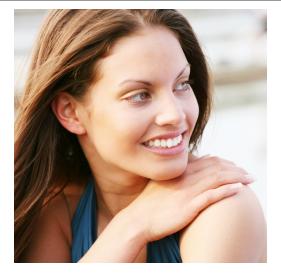
111. WHAT, THEN, IS CONFIRMATION?

It is to confirm the faith that you have been given by God; to speak what you have learned from God's word; to say that Jesus is your Savior; that He has called you to follow Him; and that you will.

What does this mean? There are at least five parts.

111.1 It's a looking back.

One of the questions in the confirmation service asks, "Do you . . . acknowledge the gifts that God gave you in your baptism?" You look back over your life. And then in faith you say: Yes, God has been with me. He called me to be His. He brought me to faith in Jesus. He did it through baptism and putting His word in my soul. Every part of my religious life is a gift from God through Jesus.



In fact this is a pattern in the Bible. It goes all the way back to Isaac, who learned about God from his father and mother. In the New Testament we hear about Timothy. Paul reminds him of how Timothy's faith "dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well." (2 Timothy 1:5)

This is why we recite the Creed in confirmation services. What you claim as your own is something that is given by God; but something that came to you through other Christians who told you about Jesus. That chain of telling and hearing goes back generation to generation all the way back to the beginning.

111.2 It's a looking forward.

Other questions in the confirmation service ask, "Do you intend . . . ?"

Do you intend to: "hear the Word of God"; "receive the Lord's Supper faithfully"; "live according to the Word of God"; "remain true to God"; "continue steadfast"; and "suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?" Those are huge promises! How do we know what the future will bring?



The promises are huge and there are all kinds of questions about the future. But God is inviting you into the greatest adventure there can ever be. It is to live your life with God and share in what He is doing forever. Remember what Jesus said to Nathaniel, "You will see greater things than these. . . . You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending . . ." (John 1:50-51)

Abraham went, looking forward to a city made by God. (Hebrews 11:10) Many others have followed his example.

Jesus calls you to step out in faith. The road might be rough. In fact it will be rough. Part of confirmation is preparing for that walk. As you confirm your faith you confess Christ before the world. But we are following Jesus and He promised not to leave or forsake us. And He promised that one day He will stand before the whole world and tell everyone that we are His and we are blessed.

111.3 It is looking up.

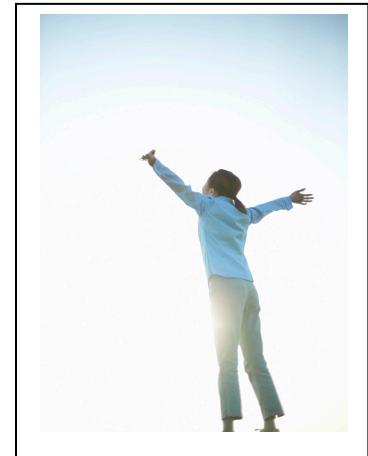
There is a prayer that comes around every year in our cycle of Sunday prayers. We pray that “we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not the things eternal . . .”

Everything you see in this world will pass away. It will be gone. The only thing that will last is your relationship with God. Without that relationship we would be lost, doomed, and have no hope. The richest man in the world must still die, and if he dies without knowing Jesus Christ he loses everything. It’s gone with nothing left.

In Jesus, God gives us everything. He came to be one of us, to forgive our sins and give us life. We talk about the “Means of Grace.” They are our lifelines. The word tells us about Jesus. Baptism marks us with the name of God. And in the Lord’s Supper Jesus gives us Himself, His body and His blood. In a world that is passing away these things take hold of us and connect us to eternal life.

So, look up and smile! You belong to God and He’s got ahold of you.

But also, look up and treasure! Treasure God as your God. Treasure His Word. Treasure Baptism. And treasure the Supper Jesus gives you.



111.4 It is looking inside.

Question: Which is the more important part of your life? Is it the outward, or the inner? Is it the things you do, the things you have; or the things in your soul?

The inner life is who you are. It is your character; and it is where you stand before God. He sees right through all the outward things and knows you. Remember, that is how Jesus talked to people. (John 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, etc.) Part of confirmation happens deep within you as you stand before God, speak your faith in Jesus, and within your soul ask Him to lead you in this life and forever.



There is a poem “If” by Rudyard Kipling where he calls success and failure “those two imitators.” No matter what happens in life; no matter how rich, famous and successful; or how poor and unknown you may become, you are still one person, one soul known by God. That is how God chooses to know you. Nothing can take that away.

Part of confirmation is learning how to examine ourselves. Look inside at the condition of your soul. Look at how your inner life shows itself in what you do. And day after day turn to God.

The Word of God is food for your soul. Take it into your soul day by day and you will grow in faith and grow in good character.

111.5 It is looking around.

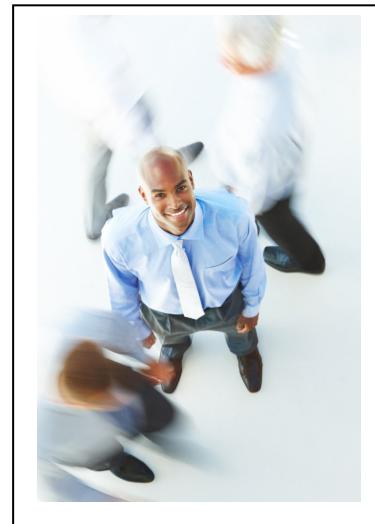
When you “make your confirmation” you speak your faith in Jesus; and dedicate yourself to follow Him. That is the life of a disciple. It means that you will see the world in different ways.

When you look around in this world you see fellow Christians, fellow believers in Jesus whom God has included in your life. We share God's word and promises with each other and so we strengthen each other. God calls us to be His church. What we do as the church is: We bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2); we pray for and care for each other; and we grow together in Christ (Ephesians 4:15). Being confirmed is being confirmed within a worshipping community.

But we do not stay off by ourselves. Look around you and you will see many who do not know God. Remember what the early Christians did when they were scattered out from Jerusalem? Acts 8:4 says they brought the news about Jesus dying and rising wherever they went. Wherever God sends you, He sends you with life-giving words.

All through your life there will be endless ways that you can live out your faith. It is true now and it will be true to the end of your life, no matter how old or weak you may become.

So then, what do we do? We live for Jesus who lived, who lives, and who will live forever for you.



111.6 **My prayer for you**

is the traditional confirmation blessing:

May "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give you His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and prayer, of power and strength, of sanctification and the fear of God." (Isaiah 11:2)

Connected to Jesus, blessed by the Father and guided by the Spirit may God lead you into great and wonderful things.