

# *Believing Hearts, Confessing Mouths: Adult Catechesis in the Lutheran Faith through the Lutheran Liturgy*

*“For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Romans 10:10).*



A course prepared by Pastor Wade R. Johnston for Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wisconsin Synod, Saginaw MI

Small Catechism quotations from Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord, published by Concordia Publishing House.

Bible quotations from the New International Version unless otherwise specified.

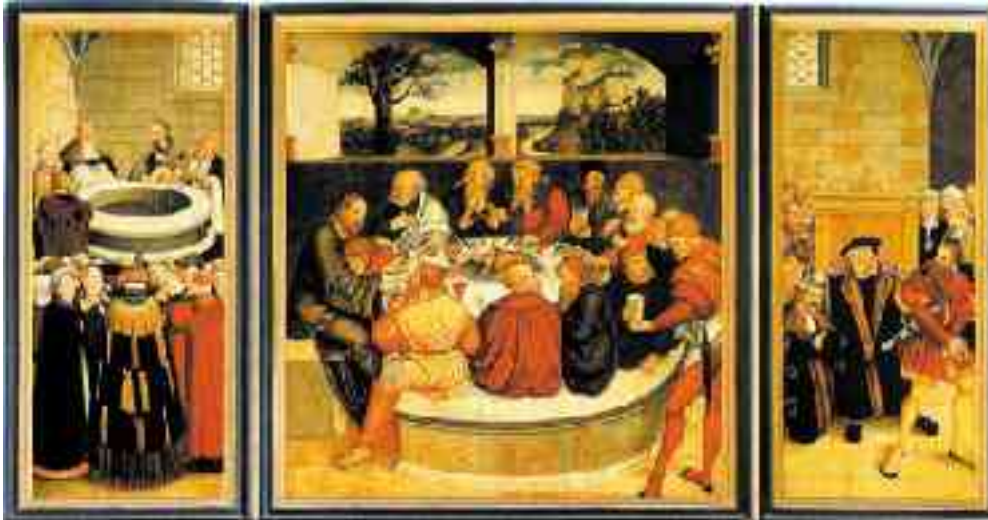
Woodcuts from WELS World Mission Collection at [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net).

Reformation art from <http://www.angelfire.com/ny4/djw/lutherantheology.html>.

Clipart from Microsoft Word and Microsoft clips online available through it.

# I. The Church Gathers

*"I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth" (1 Timothy 3:14,15).*



## **Bible Story – Acts 2:37-45**

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.



*St. Peter had just preached the law (the fact that all have sinned and deserve God's judgment) and the gospel (the good news that Christ died under God's judgment for us for the forgiveness of our sins), to the crowd gathered at Pentecost.*

*What was the reaction of those who received his message in faith?*

*What did the early church do when it gathered?*

## **What is the Church?**

The word "church" means "assembly" or "ones called out" in the original Greek in which the New Testament was written. While, in English, the word "church" can be used in a variety of ways, for instance, "I am going to church," or, "When church is over..." the word "church" literally refers to the people who gather in the building. The building is only a church so long as the Church gathers there. The Church, capital "c," is comprised of all believers in Christ. Churches, small "c," are the church bodies in which the Church gathers. Because false teaching has arisen in the Church, as Jesus warned us it would, there are many churches. While we don't rejoice in our divisions, they are necessary and God-pleasing when they result from a desire to maintain the truth, pass it on to our children and to share it with our neighbors.

## **How does someone become part of the Church?**

Someone becomes part of the Church through faith, created by God's Word and by the Sacrament of Baptism. In the early church, many were instructed as adults, before they were baptized. When they were baptized, their children were as well. As more and more Christian families developed, infant Baptism became more common than adult Baptism. Most often, then, a person enters the Church through Baptism when God's Word, connected with water, works faith in an infant's heart. Many, however,



still enter the Church later in life through instruction in the Word. One becomes part of churches by examining the teachings of that church body in the light of God's Word and making a formal confession of agreement with the teachings of that church body. This is an important decision, and that is why we stress catechetical instruction so much here at Christ Lutheran. One's confession of faith is a serious matter, which God does not take lightly, and, therefore, which we should not take lightly. We want you to know what the Evangelical Lutheran church believes so you can decide if you agree that it is the biblical Faith, as we are convinced it is.

## **Why does the Church gather?**

The Church gathers to hear God's Word, receive Christ's Body and Blood in the Sacrament, to encourage one another in the Faith and in good works, and to respond to God's grace with praise and thanks. Knowing that one's faith is only as strong as its connection to Christ, this is a natural thing for the Christian to desire to do. Jesus tells us in the Gospel according to St. John, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (15:5-7 ESV). The writer to the Hebrews writes, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not

neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24,25 ESV).

### **Why the Lutheran Liturgy**

The Lutheran reformation was a doctrinal reformation that cleansed churches of error. It was not a revolution. It was very conservative in matters of worship. The Western Rite, that is, the liturgy as we know it, was retained because it was useful for instruction, good order, and as a testimony to the unity of the Church throughout the ages. The Church throughout the ages has always proven wiser than a church of any one age, and, for this reason, while some changes have been made to the Lutheran Liturgy over the years, and the Western Rite since its formation, these changes are always made in the context of this treasure as a whole, which we've received from our fathers and mothers in the Faith. When the liturgy is appreciated, Word and Sacrament are appreciated, for they are the sum and substance of the Lutheran Liturgy. As you will see, all of what we say and do in God's service is rooted in Scripture and soaked in meaning. The goal of this course is to help demonstrate that.

### **From the Small Catechism**

#### **What is Baptism?**

"Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water included in God's command with God's word."

#### **Which is the Word of God?**

"Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew, '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'" (Matthew 28:19).

#### **What does Baptism give or profit?**

"It works forgiveness of sins, delivers 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).

#### **How can water do such great things?**

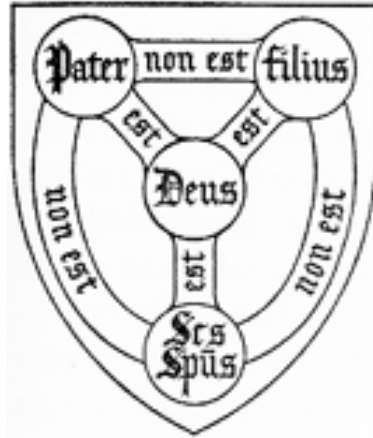
"It is not the water indeed that does them, but the Word of God, which is in and with the water, and faith, which trusts this Word of God in the water. For without the Word of God the water is simple water and no Baptism. But with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit. As St. Paul says in Titus chapter three, 'He saved us...by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy'" (verses 5-8).

It is important to remember that God's service is the gathering of the Church, that is, of the baptized, to receive God's gracious Gifts, to encourage one another in their common Faith, and respond to God's grace in faith. For this reason, what we do in God's service is primarily aimed at the saints, that is, believers. We want to do everything possible to make visitors comfortable, to help them follow along, to instruct them in why we do what we do, but God's service is the gathering of the saints, that is, those declared righteous before God in Christ through faith, and, for that reason, it is a hospital where God's medicine is applied to those struggling with sin, not a salesroom, where Jesus is bought or sold. Because God's service is where Jesus comes to us in the Word, preached and applied by a called pastor, and the Sacraments, administered to us in the way Christ instituted them, it is the heart and core of our week and our Christian life. That is why this course will teach the Faith in the context of the liturgy in which the Faith is most often nurtured and expressed as the Body of Christ.

## II. The Invocation

+In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit+

*"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"*  
(Matthew 28:19,20).



### **Bible Story – Genesis 1:26-31**

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

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

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.



*The writer to the Hebrews (1:1-3) says that everything was created through the Son.*

*How do we see Father, Son, and Holy Spirit active in creation?*

## **Bible Story – Matthew 3:13-17**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."



*Jesus had to receive a sinner's Baptism as He took the place of sinners. As He began His public ministry at His Baptism, we see the same Father, Son, and Holy Spirit active in creation active in our redemption.*

*What is the significance of the activity of each person of the Trinity in these events?*

### **Trinity**

The word "trinity" is not in the Bible. It is a Latin word (the New Testament was written in Greek) that means "three in one." While the word "trinity" is not in the Bible, the teaching is. There is one God in three persons. The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. But the Father is not the Son or Spirit. The Son is not the Father or the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Father or the Son. The Church came up with the word "trinity" to describe this unexplainable mystery as best it could for our human minds.

### **What if that doesn't make sense to me?**

There is a story told of St. Augustine, that he was walking along the ocean, contemplating the Trinity, when he saw a boy digging a hole in the sand and running back and forth between the hole and the ocean with a bucket. St. Augustine asked him what he was doing. The boy said he was going to put the ocean in his hole. St. Augustine drew the connection between the boy's actions and his own.

Siegbert Becker once wrote, "It is not Christianity that needs to be made reasonable. It is reason that needs to be made Christian."

*What do we do when the Faith presents something that reason cannot understand?*

*What do you think Siegbert Becker meant?*

### **Where does the Bible say any of this?**

**Deuteronomy 6:4** (the earliest Old Testament creed)—Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

**Numbers 6:24-26** (the Old Testament Aaronic Benediction, or Blessing)— The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

**2 Corinthians 13:14** (the Apostolic Blessing)—May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

There are many other passages that teach the truth of the Holy Trinity. More important than trying to wrap our head around the incomprehensible mystery of how the Trinity is possible, it is better to meditate upon the amazing fact that all three persons of the Trinity have worked together in love to create us, redeem us, and preserve us. "Invocation" is a big word we don't use every day, but it is an important word. The invocation reminds us and declares to our visitors into whose presence we have come and in whose name we gather. We are the sons and daughters of the only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who has created, redeemed, and preserved us. The invocation is also a reminder of Holy Baptism, when the name of God was placed upon us, together with water, to wash away our sins and set us apart as members of the one holy, Christian, and apostolic Church. We don't "begin" in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We already began in that name in Baptism. We now exist, live, breath, gather, and endure in that name. It is who we are. It is why we are here.



### III. Confession & Absolution (and Kyrie)

*"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10).*



#### **Bible Story – Genesis 3:1-17**

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

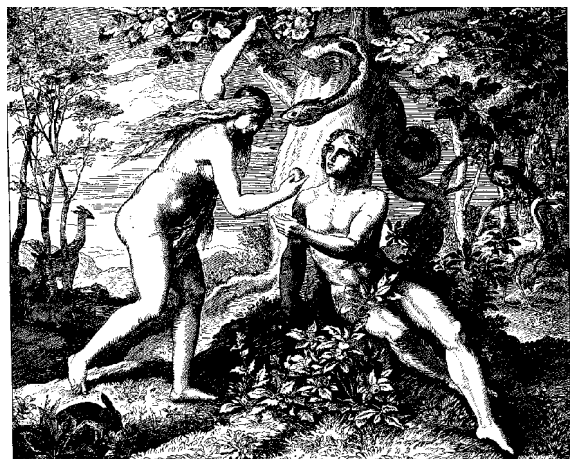
He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."



So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

*How did the serpent deceive Adam and Eve?*

*What was Adam and Eve's reaction to sin?*

*What were the consequences of sin?*

*What was God's reaction?*

**Bible Story—Exodus 19:23-20:21**

Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, 'Put limits around the mountain and set it apart as holy.' "

The LORD replied, "Go down and bring Aaron up with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through to come up to the LORD, or he will break out against them."



So Moses went down to the people and told them.

And God spoke all these words:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for 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.

"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 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, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

"You shall not murder.

"You shall not commit adultery.

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

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

When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."

The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

*What was the reaction of the people to God's presence and the giving of the law?*

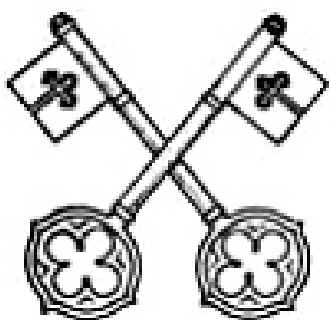
*Why is that reaction natural?*

*The first three commandments are called the first table of the law. What relationship do they address?*

*The last seven commandments are called the second table of the law. What relationship do they address?*

*How is every sin a sin against the first commandment?*

### **Bible Story-John 20:19-23**



On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them 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."

*How is the forgiveness a pastor offers connected to Christ's forgiveness here?*

*What is the connection to the Holy Spirit?*

*How is the call into Christian ministry like the Father's sending of the Son?*

*What should be the basis for forgiveness?*

### **Bible Story-Luke 18:9-14**

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'



"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

*What is the point of this parable?*

*What does it mean that the tax collector went home justified?*

*Did that mean he was a/the better person in the eyes of the world?*

*How does this apply to confession and absolution in God's service?*

### **Kyrie**

Martin Luther said on his deathbed, "We are all beggars." At this point in God's service, we sing *Kyrie eleison*, that is, "Lord have mercy." How is that fitting, especially in connection with the Bible story we just read? Why "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord, have mercy"? How does the Kyrie tell us who we are and what we need, who our Lord is, and what He gives?

### **The Sign of the Cross**

One of the oldest of Christian symbols, dating back to the second century by some estimates, the sign of the cross is a powerful reminder of our Lord Jesus' love. It was on a cross He died for our sins. It was on a cross that He first gave His body and blood, which we receive in Holy Communion. It was by Christ's cross that God's anger was turned to compassion. This cross was placed upon our head and our hearts at our Baptism. The sign of the cross is also a confession of the Holy Trinity. All that is true about the invocation is true of this sign as well. We remember our Baptism, we call upon God's power to save and comfort, and we remember that we are His and He is ours. The connection of the pastor's absolution with the sign of the cross is especially appropriate since repentance and forgiveness is really a daily reliving of our Baptism where we first died to sin and rose to life. See Galatians 6:14; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:14, 15.



### **Original Sin**

The sinful nature inherited from Adam and Eve is called original sin. This means that all, even babies, are born separated from God by nature and in need of grace, as well as inclined to sin. The reason we baptize babies is because of this fact. All are born spiritually dead and, therefore, need the Lord to make them alive.

### **Where does the Bible say that?**

**Romans 5:12**—Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned

**John 3:6**—Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

**Psalms 51:5**—Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

### **Sins of Commission**

A sin of commission is a sin I commit when I do something God forbids.

### **Sins of Omission**

A sin of omission is a sin I commit when I don't do something God commands.

## **From the Small Catechism**

### **What is Confession?**

Confession has two parts: the one is that we confess our sins; the other is that we receive Absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor, as from God Himself, and in no way doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are forgiven before God in heaven by this.



### **What sins should we confess?**

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even of those that we do not know, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the confessor we should confess only those sins that we know and feel in our hearts.

### **Which are these?**

Here consider your calling according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, a manservant or maidservant.

Consider whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, or slothful. Consider whether you have grieved anyone by words or deeds, whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted, or done other harm.

*Confession and Absolution is the reliving of Baptism, as our sins are again washed away through God's mercy, now through the announcement of God's Word by God's minister, as in Baptism through the water connected with the Word. Thus, it is appropriate to include here the Fourth part of Baptism from the Small Catechism:*

### **What does such baptizing with water signify?**

It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts. And also it shows that a new man should daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

### **Where is this written?**

St. Paul says in Romans chapter 6, "We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (v. 4).

Our entire lives as Christians is one of confession and Absolution. As men and women at the same time sinful and also declared saints by God, we constantly must battle our sinful nature, the temptations of the world, and Satan. Yet confession is not a burden for the Christian. It is a joy and a relief. That is why we call Private Confession and Absolution "Private Absolution" more often than "Confession," as it is called in the Roman Church. We know that our Father is eager to forgive through the Son and by the Spirit. God knows our sins whether we confess or not. We cannot hide them. Nor do we want to. We go to the Father in prayer to confess and, when burdened, to the pastor who speaks for the Father and the Son, called by the Spirit, knowing that we are only telling God what He knows and that He will then tell us what is our in Christ: forgiveness and new life.

## IV. Gloria in Excelsis

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:13,14).*



### **Bible Story—Luke 1:26-**

**56**

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found



favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the

holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.



At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—  
holy is his name.

His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
from generation to generation.

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
but has lifted up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things  
but has sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,  
remembering to be merciful  
to Abraham and his descendants forever,  
even as he said to our fathers."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

In the Church Year, this is the reading for the Annunciation, that is, the day the angel announced that Mary would give birth to the Savior, the day He was conceived by the promise of God in her womb. We, therefore, celebrate Jesus' conception and incarnation, which means "to come into the flesh" on that day.

Describe how Jesus' incarnation came about?

Who was His Father?

Who was His mother?

Why Mary?

How is God's promise to Eve fulfilled through Mary?

Why is it important that Jesus be true God and true Man?

Mary's song is called the Magnificat. We sing it in Vespers. What stands out to you in Mary's actions, words, and song?

### **Bible Story—Luke 2**

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.



And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to

you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.



*How is the angels message, "Do not be afraid," a summary of the gospel, that is, the good news of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness and life He brings?*

*Christ is called the Lord, yet is a helpless infant. How is this a comfort for the Christian, as well as a great paradox?*

*What is the peace and the favor mentioned?*

**Look at the Gloria in your hymnal. Let's go through it and discuss its various parts:**

What does it mean that God is "almighty"?

Why is Christ called "only begotten" and not "created"?

Why "Lamb of God"? (Look at Exodus 12:1-13)

What does Christ do as the Lamb of God and why the repetition?

What does it mean that Christ sits at the "right hand" of the Father?

What does it mean to be holy?

What does it mean to be "Lord"? (Look at Exodus 3:1-14 and John 8:58)

There is no better example, perhaps, of a good Christian song than this one. While it has been, and can be, sung to many fitting melodies that adorn and emphasize these words without distracting our minds or drowning out the message, its content is timeless. It is a confession of faith, a song of praise, an expression of gratitude, and a prayer for mercy all in one. Here we see Christ clearly doing what He has promised to do. Here we see Christ clearly described as the Bible describes Him.

## V. The Word

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me" (John 5:39).



### **Bible Story—Luke 16:19-31**

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

"'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "



*Sometimes people think if we just find the ark, or some other proof of what the Bible says, then more people will believe. What is Jesus' point here?*

*How do we come to faith?*

*Where do we learn to recognize God as He has been made known to us in Christ?*

## **Bible Story—Matthew 2:1-12**

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:



"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

*Apply this to the verse at the top of our lesson. Was Christ an unexpected surprise?*

*How does this encourage us to be in the Scriptures to know the Christ and the things to come as well?*

*How do the prophecies read in Advent and the Christmas season encourage and embolden Christians in the antiquity of the Faith, all the way back to Eden?*

*The early church often said the New Testament had always been hidden in the Old Testament. What do you think the early church meant?*

## **Bible Story—Matthew 4:1-11**

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.



*What use did Jesus make of the Scriptures?*

*How does this apply to our need to study and, if possible, memorize Scripture?*

*How does this show the importance of knowing the context of a verse? Think back to how Satan used Scripture with Eve.*

### **The Inspiration of Scripture**

That Scripture is inspired means that it has been given us by God through the direction of the Holy Spirit. The apostles and prophets were not mere pens in the writing of Scripture. Their style and perspective is noticeable in their writings. The Holy Spirit, however, used their style and perspective to convey, in a clear, reliable, and infallible manner God's will and promises to and for the human race. God breathed His truth into these men.

### **Where does the Bible say that?**

**2 Timothy 3:16,17**—All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**John 10:35**— The Scripture cannot be broken.

The Word of God is just that: God's message to us, for us. His message takes many forms: historical accounts in the Books of Moses, blunt and urgent pleading in the prophets, beautiful songs in the Psalms, personal and prophesied words and deeds of our Savior in the Gospels, careful exhortation, correction, and encouragement in the Epistles, visions of hope in Revelation. God used men to record His revelation to us, that we might see and know His Son, using the life and personality and method of these men to convey His law and gospel. These words deserve our attention and reverence. As a sign of this, we rise for the reading of the Holy Gospel, which records Jesus' own words and actions. So also, we follow appointed readings, called pericopes, or lectionaries, to ensure we study the whole counsel of God as presented in Scripture and the life of Christ.

## VI. The Creed

“What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 1:13).



### **Bible Story—Exodus 12:1-20**

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must



slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt,

your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

"On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

"This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD -a lasting ordinance. For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat—that is all you may do.

"Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day. For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born. Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread."



Why commemorate the Passover? It happened, so what?

What is the purpose of recounting God's sacred acts, both for the past and future?

Bible Story—Joshua 4:1-9

When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight."



So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."



So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.

Why leave the stones?

Why note that they still stood at the time this was recorded?

Why have set answers for questions yet to come? Why not just have people explain things in their own words from their own memory? Apply this to the creeds.

#### Bible Story—Acts 7

So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?"

To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'

"So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his

descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. God spoke to him in this way: 'Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.' Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

"Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

"Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our fathers could not find food. When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on their first visit. On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our fathers died. Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

"As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased. Then another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became ruler of Egypt. He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our forefathers by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

"At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for in his father's house. When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

"When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?'

"But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

"After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.



"Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.'

"This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in

the bush. He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the desert.

"This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.' He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.

"But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don't know what has happened to him!' That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made. But God turned away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

" 'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings  
forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?  
You have lifted up the shrine of Molech  
and the star of your god Rephan,  
the idols you made to worship.

Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.

"Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built the house for him.

"However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:

" 'Heaven is my throne,  
and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord.

Or where will my resting place be?  
Has not my hand made all these things?'

"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."

When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Stephen was about to get killed. Why would he say all that he said?

The word "creed" comes from "credo," a Latin word that means, "I believe." Any application to this event?

How does all this apply to the confirmation oath to hold to the Faith even unto death?

Creeds as Acknowledgment of our Savior  
Matthew 10:31-33—So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.



Creeds and the Great Commission

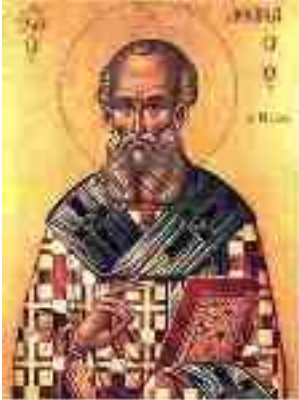
Jesus says in Matthew 28:19,20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." How do the creeds serve to that end?

Apostles Creed

Based on apostolic teaching, this was a baptismal creed, spoken when an adult catechumen was baptized. This creed is used in services without the Sacrament of the Altar.

## Nicene Creed

Formulated after the Council of Nicea, this creed confessed the biblical faith again for the fourth century concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. This creed is used in services with the Sacrament of the Altar.



## Athanasian Creed

The longest creed, this summarizes the results of a controversy over the person of Christ Jesus and the nature of the Trinity, as correctly taught by St. Athanasius. He did not write the creed, but it presented what he fought for at a great expense, including numerous exiles and cruel slander. We confess this creed on Holy Trinity Sunday. Notice how all the creeds repeat and build on the earlier one.

The Christian is called, not only to believe, but to confess the Faith, in what he or she says and does. The early church refused to sacrifice to the Emperor when he claimed to be a god. Those Christians paid the price for such a confession of faith, but, in so doing, confessed the importance of the issue.

Jesus studied in the Temple, as all young Jewish children learned the Faith from their elders in worship forms and words passed down from God and by parents. The creeds serve the same purpose, summarizing the Bible in succinct forms and providing a resource by which to explain the Faith to others. Reciting the creeds in worship helps us commit these truths to memory and provides a framework for our gathering, detailing who our God is, what He has done, who we are, and why we gather.

## From the Small Catechism

### First Article

“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. He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them. In addition, He has given me clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods. He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life. He protects me from all danger and guards me and preserves me from all evil. He does all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this I ought to thank Him, praise Him, serve Him, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

### Second Article

I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. He did this not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, so that I may be His own, 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.

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.

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 up me and all the dead and will give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

## VII. The Sermon

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20).



### Bible Story—Acts 2:14-47

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

"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.

I will show wonders in the heaven above

and signs on the earth below,

blood and fire and billows of smoke.

The sun will be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood

before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

And everyone who calls

on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of

death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him:

"I saw the Lord always before me.  
Because he is at my right hand,  
I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
my body also will live in hope,  
because you will not abandon me to the grave,  
nor will you let your Holy One see decay.  
You have made known to me the paths of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was



buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we

are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

"The Lord said to my Lord:  
"Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet."

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."



With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

This is St. Peter's Pentecost sermon, after Christ's ascension in to heaven. What were St. Peter's main points in the message?

What was the result of the message (people had two reactions)?

To where did his preaching lead believers?

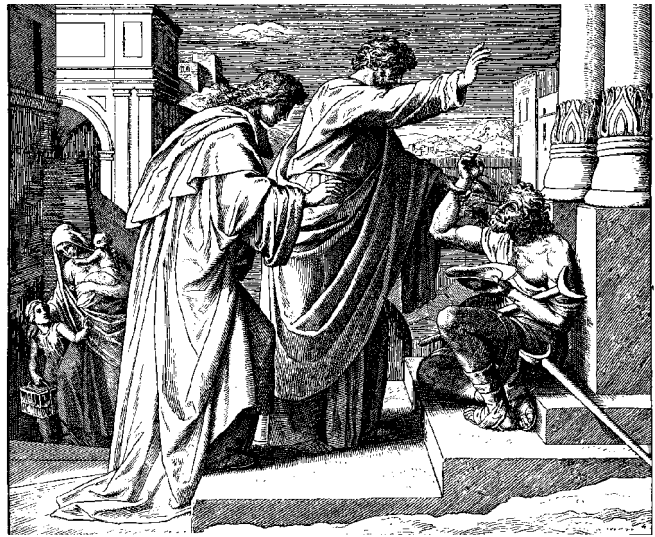
In what was his preaching grounded?

Who/What was the heart and core of his message?

Bible Story—Acts 3:11-26

While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

"Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'



"Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

St. Peter preached this just after healing a beggar. Analyze this sermon as you did the Pentecost sermon.

### Law

The law is God's unchanging will for our lives. It is the standard by which our thoughts, words, and deeds are judged. The law knows no forgiveness, grace, or peace for the conscience. The law kills, since no one is able to keep it perfectly, and the wages of sin is death.

### Uses of the Law

The law has three uses. The first two are for all people, the third for Christians alone. Its first use is as a curb, curbing blatant immorality by its threats of punishment, like a parent threatening punishment to keep a child from misbehaving. The second use is as a mirror, showing us our sin, that is, our failure to perfectly keep the law in what we have done and failed to do and, therefore, our need for forgiveness, which comes only through Christ. The third use is as a guide, showing the redeemed Christian what is pleasing to God as he or she seeks to live out the faith with a life of gratitude, not to earn salvation, but because salvation has already been given. The preacher may try to stress one use of the law at a certain time, but the preacher cannot determine what use the law will have when it reaches the hearer's ear. What the preacher might think is law as a guide might serve as a

mirror for the troubled conscience. The preacher must be careful never to leave the contrite heart in sorrow, but comfort it with the sweet salve of the gospel.



### Gospel

The gospel is God's unchanging promise of forgiveness, life, and salvation for those who are in Christ. This forgiveness, life, and salvation has been purchased and won for the entire world through Christ's birth, life, Baptism, suffering, and crucifixion, and is applied to individuals through the Means of Grace (Word, Baptism, Lord's Supper, Absolution), received through faith, which acts as a beggars hand, into which God's mercy is placed. The word "gospel" means good news.

This good news is the news of Jesus Christ, the promised Savior, and his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming for the benefit of His Church.

### Preaching Law and Gospel

St. Paul exhorts, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The preacher must take care to rightly handle, or divide, God's Word, applying it to his hearers with a knowledge of who they are and their spiritual condition. Those confident in their own righteousness and impenitent in their sin must be crushed with the law. Those who despair of their own righteousness and sorrow over their sin must be consoled with the gospel. As in medicine, the disease, and not only the symptoms, must be addressed. As in medicine, healing is the desired outcome, with, in this case, healing being the announcement of God's grace in Christ. It is impossible to do this without preaching Christ and Him crucified. A Christian sermon is a sermon centered in Christ, just as the Scriptures are.

### Motivation for Christian Living

The gospel motivates the Christian life as it is lived out in gratitude, not the preacher, and most certainly not the law. Biblical preaching is always redemptive, not rehabilitative. Preachers are ambassadors, preaching a message that is not their own. St. Augustine put it well, "What matters in the church is not, 'This I say,' 'This you say,' but 'Thus says the Lord.'" The gospel motivates the Christian life as it is lived out in gratitude, not the preacher, not rhetorical tricks of hand, and most certainly not the law as a club.

### What Happens When the Sermon Is Over?

The preacher must always fight the temptation to expect immediate results, or to manufacture results on his own, or to "help" the gospel along by supplementing it

with human methods and wisdom. Such is folly. The preacher's task is to sow the seed of the gospel. God grants the growth. When one believes, God gets the credit. When one rejects God's grace, he or she alone is responsible. St. Paul explains, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6). Jesus also told the following parable to illustrate this point:



That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell

among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear."

The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" (Matthew 13:1-9,18-23).

Martin Franzmann puts it beautifully in his hymn, Preach You the Word:

Though some be snatched and some be scorched  
And some be choked and matted flat,  
The sower sows; his heart cries out,  
"Oh what of that, and what of that" (CW, 544).

The sermon is the eyes of the liturgy. Week after week the liturgy faithfully declares law and gospel to us through its Ordinaries (the parts that stay the same) and its Propers (the parts that vary from week to week), but it cannot do what the sermon can. The sermon takes the truth of the day and applies it specifically and appropriately to the people in the pews. It takes the universal, unchanging, life-changing truths of Word and Sacrament—of the liturgy itself—and drives it home for the people. A good sermon, like the liturgical traditions we have inherited, will contain both law and gospel, properly distinguished and appropriately applied. A good sermon may not always be what we want to hear, but must be what we need to hear; not what the current world thought has to say, but what God has said. Feel free to talk to pastor about his sermons and how he has done bringing God's truth home to you.

## VIII. The Create in Me

*"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1).*



### **Bible Story—2 Samuel 12:1-14**

The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

"Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

"This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.' "

Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."

*David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and then attempted to cover it up by conspiring against her husband and marrying her. Did marrying her somehow make the sin right, or at least less wrong?*

*Why would David still need to confess the prior sins?*

*How was David moved to do so?*

*How does this apply to our hidden sins?*



### **Psalm 51 (Create in Me)**

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are proved right when you speak  
and justified when you judge.  
Surely I was sinful at birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.  
Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;  
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.  
Cleans me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.  
Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will turn back to you.  
Save me from bloodguilt, O God,  
the God who saves me,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.  
O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.  
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart,  
O God, you will not despise.  
In your good pleasure make Zion prosper;  
build up the walls of Jerusalem.  
Then there will be righteous sacrifices,  
whole burnt offerings to delight you;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

*Why sing this penitential psalm after the sermon?*

*Look through the psalm and underline all the word pictures David uses. How do these describe law and gospel and how God acts with respect to law and gospel in our regard?*

*What does each picture of forgiveness add to the concept?*

### **Psalm 32**

Blessed is he  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.  
Blessed is the man  
whose sin the LORD does not count against him  
and in whose spirit is no deceit.  
When I kept silent,  
my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night  
your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was sapped  
as in the heat of summer.  
Selah  
Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
and did not cover up my iniquity.  
I said, "I will confess  
my transgressions to the LORD"—  
and you forgave  
the guilt of my sin.  
Selah





Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you  
while you may be found;  
surely when the mighty waters rise,  
they will not reach him.

You are my hiding place;  
you will protect me from trouble  
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Selah

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you and watch over you.

Do not be like the horse or the mule,  
which have no understanding  
but must be controlled by bit and bridle  
or they will not come to you.

Many are the woes of the wicked,  
but the LORD's unfailing love  
surrounds the man who trusts in him.

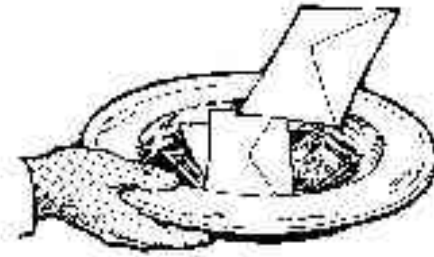
Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;  
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

*This also is a penitential psalm of David. Analyze it as you did Psalm 51.*

*What is the difference between the believer and unbeliever, St. Peter and Judas, when it comes to sorrow over sin?*

## IX. The Offering

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).



Bible Story—Genesis 22:1-19

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.



When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

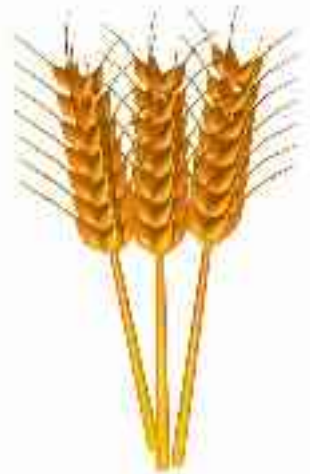
What did God really want from Abraham?

How was this really a First Commandment test?

How has God done for us what he did not require of Abraham?

Bible Story—Deuteronomy 26:1-11

When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our forefathers to give us." The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God. Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, putting us to hard labor. Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, O LORD, have given me." Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. And you and the Levites and the aliens among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.



Why were the Israelites to bring these gifts?

Why the firstfruits?

How were they really returning to the LORD what He Himself had given them?

How was this offering a teaching tool? Why was the offering a grounds for rejoicing?

**Bible Story—Luke 21:1-4**

As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

*Why did Jesus praise the widow's offering?*

*Does this mean we should give all we have to the church?*

*What is Jesus' main point?*

*How is the offering an act of faith and of gratefulness?*



**Bible Story—Luke 18: 18-27**

A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"



"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'"

"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!

Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"

Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

*Why was Jesus so hard on this man?*

*Does Jesus mean to say that we cannot be saved if we don't give everything away?*

*Was Jesus trying to tell this man to be saved by the law and good works?*

*How was this really a First Commandment issue?*

*Why were those who heard troubled?*

*How does Jesus' last statement show the necessity of grace?*

*What does Jesus here teach us, then, about how we view our possessions?*

### **Stewardship**

Stewardship is a word that describes how the Christian handles the resources entrusted to him or her by God. We are stewards, that is, we manage what belongs to our Master. We cannot keep what we have forever.

God does not need our money, yet He urges us to return our offerings to Him as a show of love and to benefit our brother and sister in the Faith through the support of the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and our neighbor through evangelism and missions. While the Old Testament prescribed a tithe of ten percent for the believer, the New Testament makes our offerings a matter of Christian freedom. Since there is no law in place regarding the amount we return to the Lord (we are commanded to give; how much is left open), it takes careful prayer and study.

No one can set another's tithe. God wants cheerful giving spurred by the gospel and not by pressure from others, a desire to outdo another, or fear of the threats of the law. While this freedom is a great blessing, it also then places a great responsibility upon us to be wise and faithful in living out this freedom.

## X. Prayer of the Church

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession 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, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1



Bible Story—Genesis 18:22-23

The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?"

"If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it."

Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?"

He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it."

Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?"

He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?"

He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it."

Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?"

He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

Why did Abraham pray for Sodom?

What lesson about prayer do we learn from Abraham's approach?

What kind of prayers are commended to us in this account?

Bible Story—2 Kings 20:1-6

In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.'"

What type of prayer is commended to us in this account?

Does God promise healing in every case?

In what spirit, then, do we pray such prayers (consider Jesus prayer in the next account)?

Bible Story—Matthew 26:36-44



Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

What do we learn from Jesus' prayer in this most desperate time of need?

As God, Jesus knew all, but taking our place under the law, He did not make use of His divine powers at this time and faced the uncertainty we often face. How did Jesus react to that?

What comfort is there for us in knowing our Lord too has faced such times?

Bible Story—Acts 4:23-31

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

"Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth take their stand

and the rulers gather together

against the Lord

and against his Anointed One.' Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

*What type of prayer is commended to us here?*

*How did the disciples respond to the deliverance of these apostles from danger?*

### **Consider Psalm 51 again in Lesson VIII**

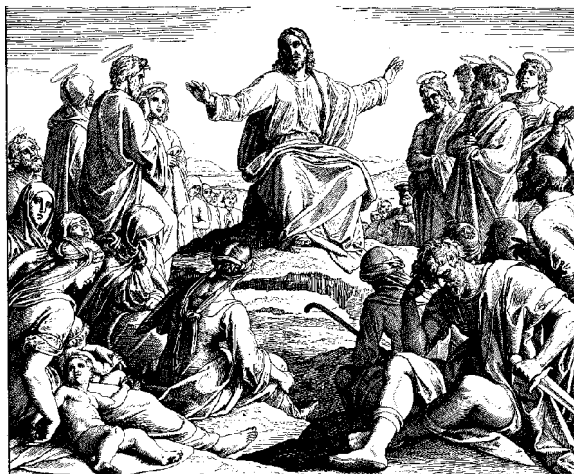
What type of prayer does this psalm commend to us? How does David approach asking the Lord's forgiveness? Does he claim in by right, or on the basis of his person?

Prayer is a unique privilege of Christians. No one comes to the Father, including in prayer, apart from Christ, yet, for us, who pray through Christ, God's ear is open with a loving concern in our well being. God speaks to us in Scripture and we speak back in prayer. May we always seek to have a balanced prayer life, not only going to God in need, like a spoiled child, but, breathing in God's grace and love, breathing out gratefulness and love for our neighbor.



## XI. The Lord's Prayer

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples'"  
(Luke 11:1).



Bible Story—Matthew 6:5-15

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But 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.

"This, then, is how you should pray:

" 'Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.' For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

*What does Jesus teach us about prayer before teaching us the Lord's Prayer?*

*How many of the seven petitions in the Lord's prayer are physical, and how many spiritual?*

*What does this mean for us?*

*Is spontaneous prayer better than prepared prayer?*

*How does the Lord's Prayer serve as a model even for our spontaneous prayers?*

### **From the Small Catechism**

The Address

"Our Father who art in heaven."

What does this mean?

By these words God would tenderly encourage us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him confidently with all assurance, as dear children ask their Father.

The First Petition

"Hallowed be Thy name."

What does this mean?

God's name is indeed holy in itself. But we pray in this petition that it may become holy among us also.

How is this done?

When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity and we as the children of God also lead holy lives in accordance with it. To this end, help us, dear Father in heaven. But anyone who teaches and lives other than by what God's Word teaches profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, heavenly Father.

The Second Petition

"Thy kingdom come."

What does this mean?

The kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself. But we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How is this done?

When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life here in time and there in eternity.

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 indeed without our prayer. But we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is this done?

When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will that would not let us hallow the name of our God nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh. Instead, He strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith until we die. This is His gracious good will.

#### The Fourth Petition

"Give us this day our daily bread."

What does this mean?

God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all wicked people; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Everything that belongs to the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

#### 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 upon our sins nor deny such petition on account of them. We are not worthy of any of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them. But we pray that He would grant them all to us by grace. For we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. So will we truly, on our part, also heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us.

#### The Sixth Petition

"And lead us not into temptation."

What does this mean?

God indeed tempts no one. But we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us nor seduce us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Though we are attacked by these things, we pray that still we may finally overcome them and gain the victory.

#### The Seventh Petition

"But deliver us from evil."

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from all kinds of evil, of body and soul, property and honor. And finally, when our last hour shall come, we pray that He would grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven.

#### The Conclusion

"Amen."

What does this mean?

I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by Him. For He Himself has commanded us to pray this way and has promised that He will hear us. Amen, Amen; that is, "Yes, yes, it shall be so."

## XII. Sanctus and Benedictus

"And they were calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3).

# Holy, Holy, Holy!

Bible Story—Isaiah 6:1-7

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory."

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For 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."

# Woe to me!

Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his

# Your sin is atoned for.

hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your

sin atoned for."

*What was Isaiah's initial reaction to this situation? Why?*

*How does that compare with our next lesson on examining ourselves before receiving Christ's Body and Blood?*

*What did the LORD cause to happen to comfort Isaiah?*

*How does this relate to where we sing the Sanctus in God's service?*

*This is our second song of the angels, together with the Gloria. What is the significance of the placement of both?*

**Bible Story—Mathew 21:1-11**

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you,

and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

"Say to the Daughter of Zion,  
'See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"



The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Hosanna in the highest!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

*What is this day most often referred to as in the Church Year?*

*What is special about the reaction of the people (both words and actions)? What is ironic and tragic about the whole thing?*

*What is the less often used name for this day in the Church Year?*

*How are both appropriate?*

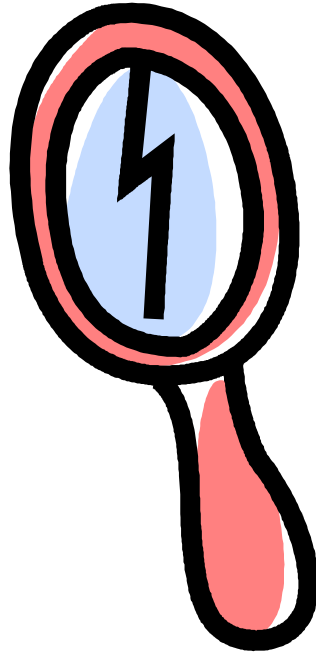
*Why sing the words of the crowd here in God's service?*

*Why is Isaiah's cleansing connected with this event (the beginning of our Lord's passion)?*

Luther suggested that the Holy Gospel and the Lord's Supper be chanted in the same tone. In both, the Lord is made present with His Word. As we prepare for the Words of Institution, which effect the presence of our Lord's Body and Blood, as well as His saving power, we welcome Him as the Messiah and our King. This event is the second pillar of God's service, with the preached Word being the first. It works cleansing and opens our lips (as we sing in Matins) to speak of our Lord's grace in our home and in the world. Thus, these ancient songs prove an excellent precursor and herald of the sacramental presence of our crucified and risen Son of David.

## XIII. Examination

*"Therefore, whoever 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. 28A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:27,28).*



### **Bible Story—1 Corinthians 10:14-22**

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

*What is St. Paul's point?*

*How is Holy Communion a communion, not only with God, but with our fellow communicants and the church body to which that altar belongs according to St. Paul's words here?*

### **Bible Story—1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt

there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!



For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Therefore, whoever 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. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions.  
Why no factions?

How is that out of line with the Sacrament?

How is Communion a confession of faith because it is done in remembrance of Christ?

What do we proclaim at the altar?

What is the danger to an unworthy communicant?

What is the loving thing to do when someone unwittingly faces danger?

What makes someone an unworthy communicant?



Why, then, is the pastor's relationship with the communicants so important, especially in this regard? Consider 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (ESV).

How do I examine myself?

The Lord has provided us an excellent means for examining ourselves in the Ten Commandments. Have we kept each? If not, how have we fallen short of the Lord's standard? Aware of our unworthiness, we are then worthy communicants, aware of our sin and our need for the Savior's cross-won forgiveness.

### From the Small Catechism

First Commandment

"You shall have no other Gods."

What does this mean?

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

Second 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 may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by his name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Third Commandment

"You shall sanctify the holy day."

What does this mean?

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

Fourth Commandment

"You shall honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you and you may live long upon the earth."

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we may not despise or anger our parents and masters, but give them honor, serve them, obey them, and hold them in love and esteem.

Fifth Commandment

"You shall not murder."

What does this mean?

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

### Sixth Commandment

"You shall not commit adultery."

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we may lead a pure and decent life in words and deeds, and each love and honor his spouse.

### Seventh Commandment

"You shall not steal."

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that so that we may not take our neighbor's money or property, nor get them with bad products or deals, but help him to improve and protect his property and business.

### Eighth Commandment

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but defend him, think and speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

### Ninth Commandment

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house."

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we may not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or obtain it by a show of justice and right, or any other means, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

### Tenth Commandment

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his cattle, or anything that is his."

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we may not turn, force, or entice away our neighbor's wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and carefully do their duty.



What does God say about all these Commandments?

He says, "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." (Exodus 20:5-6)

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who sin against these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not act contrary to these commandments. 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.

## XIV. Words of Institution

"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?"  
(1 Corinthians 10:16).



### Bible Story—John 18-19

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the

Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it.



Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)  
When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go." This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

"You are not one of his disciples, are you?" the girl at the door asked Peter.

He replied, "I am not."

It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

"I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."

When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded.





"If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.

As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "I am not."

One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?" Again Peter denied it, and at that

moment a rooster began to crow.

Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

"If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in a rebellion.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face.



Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.

Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him,



and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."

Pilate answered, "What I have

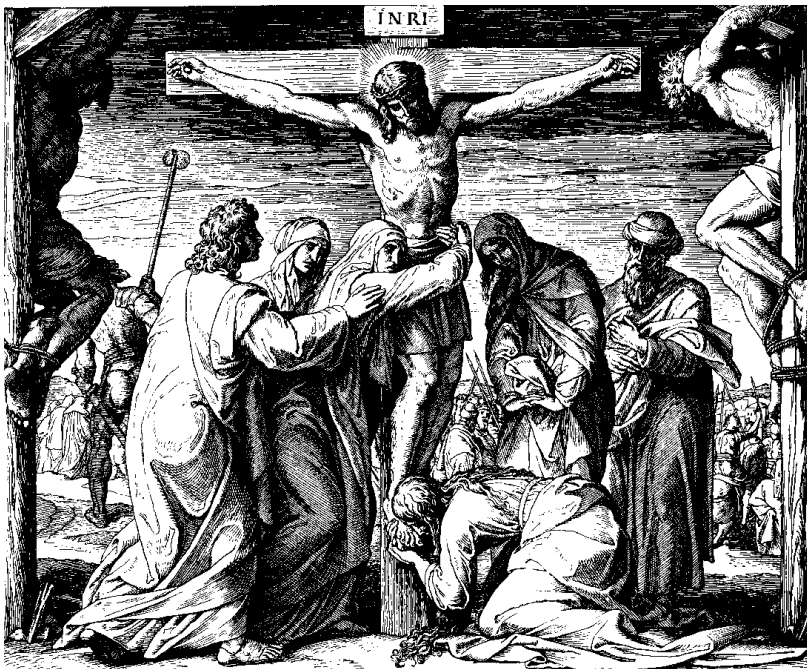
written, I have written."

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it."

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.



Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want



the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

What is the connection between the suffering and death of our Lord and the Holy Supper He instituted?

How does an understanding of one lend help in understanding the other?

### Justification

Justification is a biblical word that means that God has declared us not guilty. Christ paid the punishment for our sin so that this verdict is just and right. His righteousness is now ours, just as our sin became His. Justification is a one-time event. We are now righteous in God's sight through Christ. We are spared from eternal punishment for Christ's sake just as He was forsaken by God for the sins of the world for our sake. We play absolutely no active (doer) role in justification. St. Paul says it well in Ephesians 2, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (8,9). Just as we are passive in the Lord's Supper, as Christ's mercy-laden Body and Blood are placed in our mouth, so also we are passive in our justification as, through Christ and by grace, salvation is placed into the beggarly hand of faith, which is the gift of God as well.

### Sanctification

Sanctification is a biblical word used to describe the living out of our faith in the Christian life. Declared righteous and set apart as holy vessels for God, we now grow in holiness of life. This, too, is by grace and through faith, as Christ lives in and works through us. Unlike justification, however, which is a one-time event,

sanctification is a process. To an extent, we cooperate in this process as we make use of the Means of Grace to strengthen our faith and attempt to live as what God has called us to be. Even in this, however, we are by far the lesser partner. Christ is the main worker as He empowers our Christian life with Word and Sacrament and molds our life in His image. While justification and sanctification must be separated to properly understand them, they both begin at the same time, as, the moment faith receives salvation, it seeks to live a life of gratitude. We are saved by faith alone, but faith is never alone. It is a living, breathing force, seeking to reflect for others the love God has shown for us in Christ. Both justification and sanctification are rooted in the death and resurrection of our Lord, into which we have been baptized, and impossible apart from it. St. Paul sums it all up well in the same passage from Ephesians 2 quoted above, this time with the addition of verse 10, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

#### Bible Story—Matthew 26:17-29

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

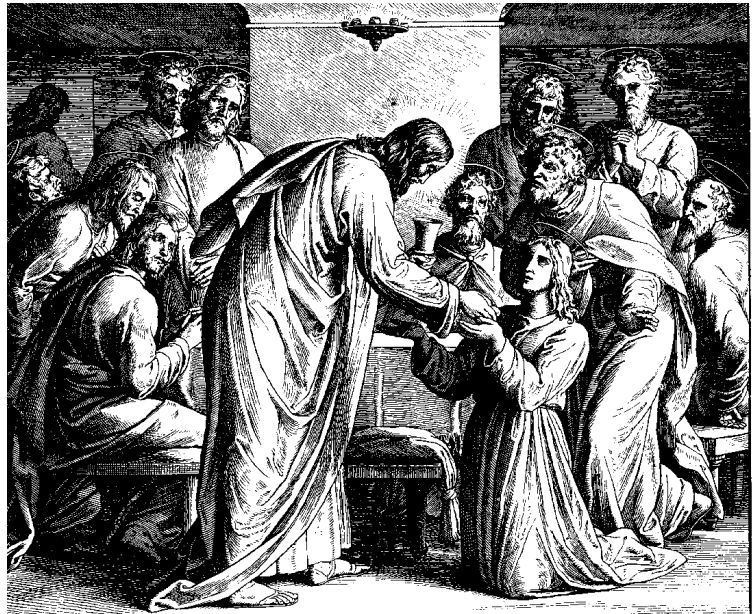
He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."

They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."



While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

With whom was Jesus gathered?

What is the significance of that, especially in connection with the previous lesson?

What is important about when Jesus instituted the Lord' Supper?

What kind of language does one use at such a time, or, for instance, in a last will and testament?

#### Bible Story—Luke 24:13-35

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.



He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

"What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests

and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

What is the significance of how they recognized Jesus?

How do we too recognize the resurrected Lord in the Lord's Supper?

What is the connection between Easter and the Lord's Supper?

When Jesus came to the apostles after He rose, He entered through the wall. How does His glorified state prove further His ability to be bodily present in the Sacrament, just as His divinity does?

The Lord's Day

In the early church, and for almost all of church history, including much of the history of the Lutheran Church, the Lord's Supper was celebrated every Lord's Day. Word and Supper fit together as the two pillars of God's service. Lord willing, this practice will be recovered in more of Lutheranism in our own day. The early church adopted Sunday as the Lord's Day as a celebration of the resurrection. Every Sunday is, in a way, a little Easter. Every celebration of the Lord's Supper is, in the same way, a victory feast, a celebration of the resurrected and glorified Body and Blood of our Lord, and of our own resurrection to come.

From the Small Catechism

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

*It is the true Body and Blood  
of our Lord Jesus Christ...*

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, write:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night 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 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.'"

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

That is shown us in these words, "Given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." This means that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words, which are given here, "Given... and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins." These words are, besides the bodily eating and drinking, the chief thing in the Sacrament. The person who believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

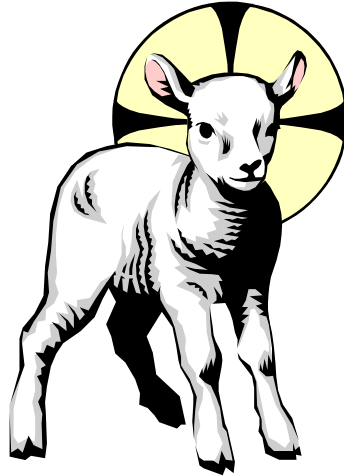
Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training. But a 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, is unworthy and unfit. For the words "for you" require hearts that truly believe.

## XV. Agnus Dei

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)



### Bible Story—Exodus 12:1-16

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

"On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.



"This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance. For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat—that is all you may do.

What is the connection between the Passover and the Lord's Supper?

Note how an understanding of the Passover enhances a correct understanding of the Supper.

Bible Story—John 1:19-34

Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ."

They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

Now some Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

"I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."



Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who

sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

What was St. John the Baptist's role?

How was this the role all the prophets played?

How did St. John the Baptist, however, do this in a more direct manner than previous prophets?

Why call Jesus the "Lamb of God"?

What does this Lamb do?

How?

For whom?

What is the significance and comfort in this?

Why sing this at this point in God's service?

In many old church orders, the pastor would, after the Words of Institution and before the Agnus Dei, hold the consecrated host over the consecrated chalice and say, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Christ is our sacrificial meal and, as His sacrifice on Calvary did, this meal brings us forgiveness, life, and salvation. Forgiveness was won on the cross, but we receive it here. Here we meet Jesus in a real, tangible, and miraculous way. It is personal, and it is powerful.



## XVI. Song of Simeon and Aaronic Benediction

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace"(Numbers 6:24-26).



Bible Story—Luke 2:22-35

When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:



"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you now dismiss your servant in peace.  
For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the sight of all people,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel."

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Why was Simeon so excited?

What do his words to Mary mean?

How is Jesus always crucified Jesus, even as an infant?

Why sing his words at this point in God's service?

How do we have a similar situation to Simeon's at this point in God's service?

How do the Sacraments, as visual Word, connect our ears and our eyes in a unique and beautiful way?



Bible Story—Numbers 6:22-27

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 turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.""

"So they will put my name on the  
Israelites, and I will bless them."

What does it mean to have the Lord's name put upon us?

Why LORD in all capital letters?

How do we in that way end God's service in a similar manner to how we began it?

Why "LORD" three times?

What does each line of the blessing emphasize?

How is Jesus' Ascension to the right hand of God a special comfort for us in connection with this blessing? Consider Ephesians 1:19-23 for further thought.

God's service is, first and foremost, His service to us. He serves us with a rich feast of grace in Word and Sacrament. The service even ends with His promise to serve us with His blessing. As we, in turn, served Him with praise and thanks throughout the service, we now leave to do so in the world, telling of all we have received and living out our faith in our vocations.

# Glossary

“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 1:13).

**Absolve** – To wipe away sin, announcing God’s forgiveness. The pastor absolves penitents, that is, those who are sorry for their sin and trust in Christ’s forgiveness.

**Atonement** – To restore a relationship. We have made been made at one (at / one / ment) again with the Father through the Son and by the Spirit.

**Blessing** – Promises or gifts given by God.

**Call** – Christ calls men as pastors through the Church by the Spirit. On the basis of this call, pastors baptize, absolve, preach, teach, and administer the Lord’s Supper.

**Catechesis** – Instruction in the Christian faith, often by questions and answers.

**Catholic** – Universal, presenting the whole Christ in accordance with the teachings of the apostles and prophets. The Lutheran Church is catholic in the true sense.

**Church** – An assembly of believers in a congregation and throughout the world. Small “c” churches are congregations and denominations. The capital “C” Church is the hidden body of all believers, divided by denominations, but united in Christ through Faith. Denominations are necessary, since St. Paul says there must be divisions to show what is true, but Christ, and not a denomination, saves.

**Creed** – A statement of belief belonging to a community of faith in a established, standardized form, by which a common faith is confessed.

**Communicant** – Someone desiring to receive the Sacrament.

**Confessions** – Summaries of Christian teaching upon which unity, or a lack of unity, is acknowledged. The best confessions present the Faith in a clear, open manner, and preserve a pattern of sound words for the future.

**Contrition** – Sorrow over sin. Godly contrition, or sorrow, leads to repentance, which includes trust in Christ’s forgiveness.

**Denomination** – Meaning value, it is a group of Christians who value a specific confession of the Scriptures, whether wrong or right. Non-denominational churches must necessarily water down their confession of the faith to achieve an outward unity, and, therefore, value less the entire content of the Scriptures.

Doctrine – The teachings of Scripture, centered in the good news (gospel) of Jesus Christ.

Evangelical – Pertaining to the gospel. The Lutherans were first called Evangelicals, because the gospel predominated in their preaching and teaching. “Lutheran” was a pejorative used for the Evangelicals in ridicule, which was eventually accepted by the Evangelicals. Lutherans are evangelical catholics, in that they teach the faith of the apostles and prophets, which applies universally to all people, and makes manifest the whole Christ through the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Excommunicate – To refuse the Sacrament of the Altar and fellowship with the congregation to an impenitent in open sin.

Faith – The gift of God into which salvation is placed, as money into the undeserving hand of a beggar. Faith is created and strengthened only through the Word and the Sacraments.

False Teacher – Anyone who, whether intentionally or unintentionally, teaches contrary to the revealed Word of God. When a false teacher refuses correction they become a persistent errorist and must be avoided. Those who support such men by association participate in their sin and are accountable for their error.

Fellowship – The acknowledgement of agreement on the doctrine of the gospel in all its points through joint communion, worship, and corporate ministry as churches. Fellowship is recognized through common confession, not created through compromise.

Flesh – Physical body or, often, the sinful nature. The body is not sinful (Christ redeemed body and soul), but the Bible often uses the word flesh to describe the sinful nature.

Forgiveness – The “sending away” of sin, which has been laid upon Christ.

Gospel – The good news of the saving work of Jesus Christ, which is announced and applied to us in Baptism, the Word, Absolution, and the Lord’s Supper. The gospel is the Means of Grace and each of the Means of Grace is the Gospel.

Grace – God’s undeserved love. (Grace is getting what you don’t deserve; mercy is not getting what you do deserve.)

Holy – Consecrated and set aside for a godly purpose. Without sin and perfect.

Impenitent – A false Christian not sorry for his or her sin, and/or unwilling to amend his or her life, and/or unwilling to trust in Christ for forgiveness.

Incarnation – The event by which Christ, true God, became true man (at His conception) to serve as our substitute.

Justification – Declared righteous, or not punishable, for Christ's sake, because Christ became guilty of our sin, and was held accountable for it, so that we are now innocent in Him.

Keys – The power given to the Church as a whole, and exercised by pastors most specifically, when they absolve, or forgive, sin, and when they retain, or do not forgive, sin, in accordance with the guidance of Holy Scripture and the command of Christ.

Law – God's unchanging will for our lives, which curbs gross immorality by threats, shows us our sin and need for a Savior, and, for Christians alone, serves as a guide for God-pleasing lives of gratitude. The law, even when used as a guide, always accuses and kills, even while it points out God-pleasing behavior. It cannot make alive. Only the gospel can do that. What use of the law is at work often is determined more in the ear of the hearer than by the tongue of the preacher.

Mass – God's service with the Sacrament.

Means of Grace – The means by which the benefits of Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection are applied to us (the Word, Absolution, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper).

Mercy – Not receiving what one rightly deserves to receive in punishment for wrongdoing.

Minister – To serve one with law and gospel as a called servant of Christ.

Office of the Holy Ministry – The position and responsibility into which men are called to exercise the keys, preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments, for the benefit of God's people and on God's behalf.

Pastor – A shepherd who oversees God's people as a doctor of souls, rebuking the impenitent with the law and comforting the penitent with the gospel.

Penitent – A Christian who is sorry for his or her sin and, with Christ's help, wishes to amend his or her life, trusting in Christ for forgiveness and continual aid in the Christian life.

Original Sin – The punishable guilt inherited from Adam as a result of his sin, which inclines all born of the flesh to sin. We baptize infants because they are born with this punishable guilt.

Orthodox – Right teaching and praise in line with God’s revealed Word. This applies to doctrine (teaching) and practice (how we carry out God’s work).

Redeem – Buy back. Jesus redeemed us with the offering of His Body and Blood on the cross.

Repentance – Sorrow over sin and trust in God’s forgiveness for Christ’s sake.

Righteousness – Perfection in accordance with God’s law and person, which alone makes one able to dwell with Him. Christ’s righteousness has become ours through His death and resurrection, received through the gift of faith. God has “righted us” with him through faith and for Christ’s sake.

Sacrament – Visible word (an earthly element joined with God’s promise) instituted by Christ to work faith in us.

Sin – Anything, done or not done, contrary to God’s will (sins of commission and omission), or a state that separates us from God (original sin) and predisposes us to sinful thoughts, words, and deeds.

Testament – A promise, or covenant, between God and man.

Vicarious Atonement – Christ’s sacrifice in our place to reconcile us to the Father. A vicar is a substitute.

Vocation – One’s callings and roles in life, whether as an employer or employee, as a father or mother, a parent or child, etc. We best serve and please our God when we serve in our vocations according to His commands and for the benefit of our neighbor and society as a whole.

Word – Revelation of God to man in Christ and in the Scriptures.

Work Righteousness – Any attempt to be justified to any extent, or earn grace in any way, by the law.

Worship – Receiving God’s Gifts and responding to those Gifts. The highest worship we offer God is to retell and rejoice in what He has promised and done for us.