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**Rev. Jerald Dulas**

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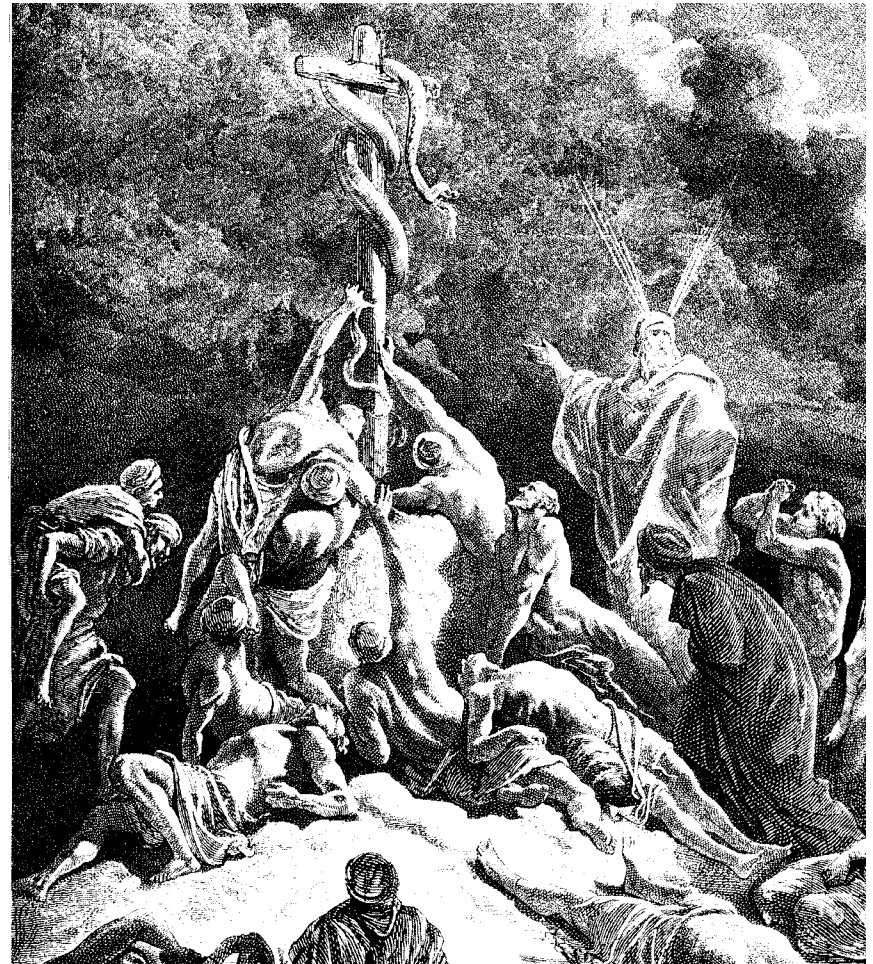
**Rev. Dcn. Anthony Oncken**

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# THE LUTHERAN HERALD



**JULY 28–AUGUST 31 , 2024**

**A PUBLICATION OF  
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN DIOCESE OF NORTH  
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## The Calendar

*The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941): TLH; 2022 Supplement: ASBH

(Monday: M; Tuesday: T; Wednesday: W; Thursday: R; Friday: F; Saturday: S)

July 28	Trinity 9	ASBH 47
July 29 (M)	<i>St. Olaf, King and Martyr</i>	TLH 413/ASBH 97
August 4	Trinity 10	ASBH 48
August 10 (S)	<i>St. Laurence, Deacon and Martyr</i>	ASBH 98 (this issue)
August 11	Trinity 11	ASBH 49
August 15 (R)	<i>St. Mary Theotokos</i>	TLH 475/ASBH 99
August 18	Trinity 12	ASBH 50
August 24 (S)	<i>St. Bartholomew, Apostle</i>	ASBH 100 (this issue)
August 25	Trinity 13	ASBH 51
August 29 (R) <i>The Beheading of St. John the Baptist</i>		ASBH 101 (this issue)

**Note regarding hymn numbers:** *The number for some hymns will change as we prepare for the move from the Supplement to the finished Hymnal. The selection of Office Hymns is now complete as of this year's synod.*

### **ASBH Hymns Added Since Last Issue of the *Lutheran Herald***

"A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing"	TLH #212
"Awake, My Heart, With Gladness"	TLH #192
"Behold a Host, Arrayed in White"	TLH #656
"By Nature Deaf to Things Divine"	Hymnal (1925) #177
"Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken"	CSB (1917) #197
"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"	TLH #94
"I Bind Unto Myself This Day"	text: Brandon Warr (trans.) tune: The English Hymnal (1906) 212 (1st Tune), alt.
"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"	PEH #339
"Lord! Thou Source of All Perfection"	Hymnal (1925) #190
"Yea, as I Live, Jehovah Saith"	Ohio #245

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 31: JEREMIAH 22:13-19 13<sup>TH</sup> S. A. TRINITY**

This week's readings have primarily dealt with the sanctified life of the Christian. Today we have an example of the opposite extreme. Jehoiakim had so much going for him. He had followed one of the best Judean kings in his father Josiah. But because of his weakness, he was put on the throne as a vassal king to Egypt. However, it was not only his weakness, but especially his wickedness that God despised. Jeremiah records God's thoughts: "Yet your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, for shedding innocent blood, and practicing oppression and violence." Jeremiah records later that Jehoiakim even tried to kill God's prophet after destroying his scrolls (Jeremiah 36). But God will not be mocked. While, for a time man may seem in control, God always gets the last word. "He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Sadly, we learn from this story that godly parents do not always raise godly children. Even the best parenting produces no guarantees. However, we do know of many cases where godly parenting results in godly children. Indeed, it is the promise of Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (22:6). Our vocation is to live out our Christian faith, whatever our vocation, and pray that God will use our lips and hands in confirming and extending His kingdom.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

“I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.”

The watchman had to be alert and constantly on his guard. The enemy might appear when he least expected it. Or, a messenger might come with important news, and he had to be ready to receive it. He also had to be patient. If the news the city was waiting for was delayed or didn't come as expected, the watchman still had to stay alert. He had to watch for the messenger and be ready to communicate the news to the rest of the city the minute the messenger came.

But all of this goes against our grain. For sinful man, life centers on the self. To ignore his Creator and rebel against God's will is his sovereign right, or so he claims. He thinks he is accountable to no one but himself. In sharp contrast to the arrogant, boastfully self-reliant Babylonian, the Lord now describes the righteous man of faith. As the text continues: “But the just shall live by his faith.” Although the Hebrew word often means “to act in a faithful or loyal way,” the focus here is not on doing, but on depending. Faith is holding firm to the God who can be trusted. Faith believes the visions and revelations God gives to His prophets, trusts in God's promises, and in the face of trouble finds its assurance in God alone.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

## Lesson from the Book of Concord The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

### **The Seventh Commandment. Thou shalt not steal.**

After our person and wife or husband, temporal property is the nearest good. That also God wishes to have secure, and has commanded that no one shall damage or injure his neighbor in his possessions. For to steal is nothing else than to get another's property wrongfully into our possession. This comprehends all kinds of advantage in all kinds of trade to the disadvantage of our neighbor. This is indeed such a widespread and common crime, but so little regarded and observed, that it exceeds all measure, so that if all thieves—who nevertheless do not wish to be considered such—were to be hanged to the gallows, the world would soon be desolate and would be without both executioners and gallows. For as we have just said to steal is not only to rob our neighbors' coffers and pockets, but to be too far-reaching in the market, in all stores and shops, wine- and beer-cellars, workshops, and in short whenever we trade or take or give money, goods or work.

As, for instance, to explain this somewhat roughly for the common mass of people, so that it may be seen how godly we are: When a man-servant or maid-servant does not serve faithfully, and does damage, or at least allows it to occur when it could be prevented, or otherwise from indolence, idleness or malice neglects the goods entrusted to him, to the spite and vexation of master and mistress. And when this is done purposely (for I do not speak of unavoidable casualties), you can dispose of thirty, forty dollars a year, which if another had taken secretly he would be hung by the rope. But you even bid defiance and make your boast of it, and no one dare call you a thief! ... Likewise also in the market and in common trade this course prevails to the greatest extent, where one openly defrauds another with defective goods, false measures, weights, coins, and by taking advantage by expert arts and uncommon transactions or dexterous inventions, in short by getting the best of the bargain and wantonly oppressing and distressing him. And who indeed can even recount or imagine it all?

—The Large Catechism, ¶223–225, 227

At many times and in various ways, Jesus teaches that our treasure is not of this world. We must always be vigilant lest our proper considerations of our earthly responsibilities to our families and neighbors distract us from our trust in God providing for us. Although this world is what we see and know, we look forward to something far greater—Jesus Christ has promised to return in glory, at some point in the future, like a thief in the night.

Since we do not know what time He will return, we must always be ready for Him. He could come today, or tomorrow, or yet many years from now. We do not know when, but we know we must be ready. We keep our waists girded and oil in our lamps, not by our own efforts, but in hearing and receiving God's means of grace, which He richly provides us in Word and Sacrament. We carry out our daily lives in service to God and each other, trusting that Christ is indeed coming again to take His believers to be with Him in everlasting joy and blessedness. As long as we live on earth, we have good works to do, to serve both God and neighbor. And when Christ returns, we shall be with Him forever. This promise comforts us when we feel small, weak, and insignificant.

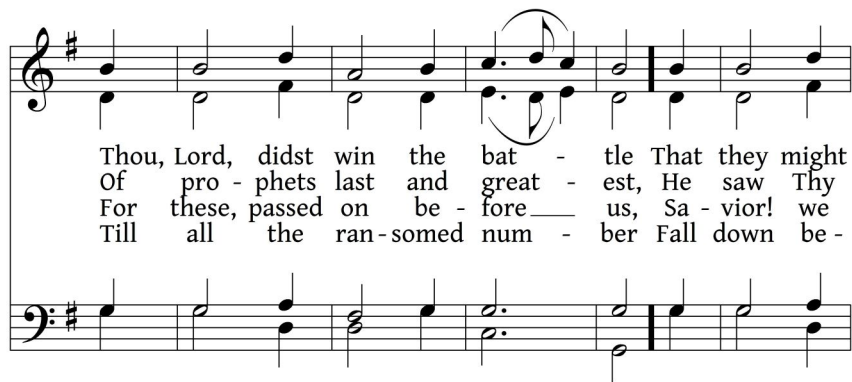
Collect: O Lord, grant steadfastness in a faithful confession to those among the magistracy whom Thou hast gathered into Thy holy Church, and direct the hearts of the faithful to support them in their vocation; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

In addressing the issue of slavery, Christianity did not wait for the proper time for a revolution or an emancipation proclamation. Christianity introduces a new relationship between man and man, not by outward force or decree, but by internal change within.

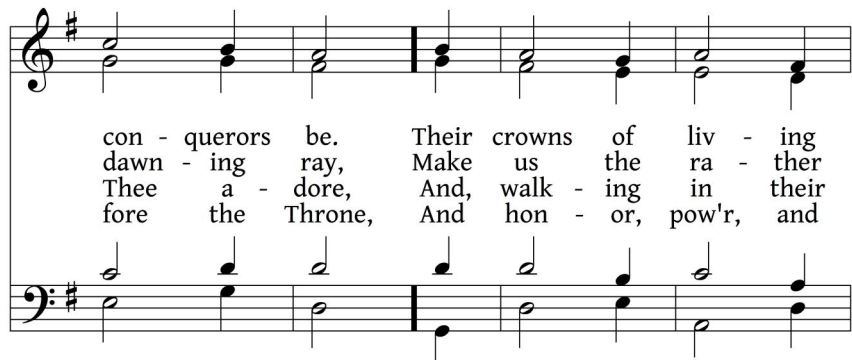
Christians are one Body, whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free (1 Cor. 12:13). So, even though Onesimus was a slave, he now had a higher relationship, a higher calling. Through faith in Christ he became Jesus' beloved brother, a beloved brother of Paul, and now one of Philemon. Social grades and castes do not matter for salvation in Christ. The names "master" and "slave" become matters of love and vocation for God's saints.

In this kind of relationship, both parties win. Christianity didn't give the slave the right to take advantage of his newfound equality. Rather, it makes him a better servant. He does things as if serving Christ Himself. In like manner, Christianity doesn't intend for the master to be soft and easy-going, willing to accept bad workmanship and inferior service. It means he no longer treats a servant as a "thing" or mere commodity, but as a person who was created equal and equally redeemed through the blood of Jesus. Paul's strategy, then, is to elevate the inferior, and abase the superior, by pointing to their relationship in Jesus Christ as the proper context for all relationships.

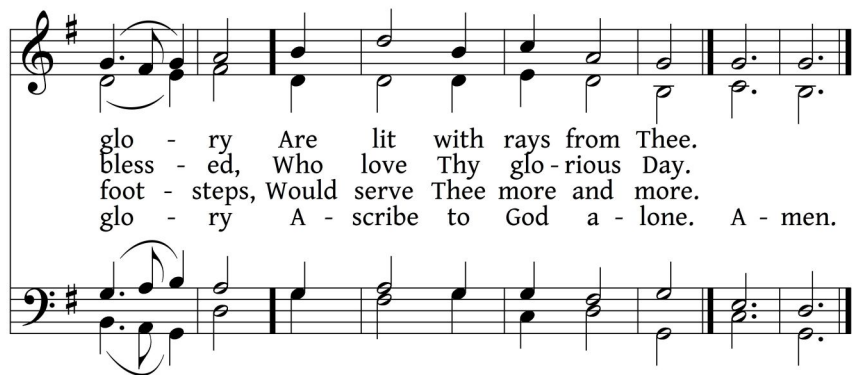
Collect: O Lord, as Thou didst grant unto Thy Forerunner and martyr to proclaim Thy Word before princes and not be ashamed, we pray that Thou wouldst grant to Thy saints a zeal for a faithful confession in all times of persecution, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.



Thou, Lord, didst win the bat - tle That they might  
Of pro - phets last and great - est, He saw Thy  
For these, passed on be - fore us, Sa - vior! we  
Till all the ran - somed num - ber Fall down be -



con - querors be. Their crowns of liv - ing  
dawn - ing ray, Make us the ra - ther  
Thee a - dore, And, walk - ing in their  
fore the Throne, And hon - or, pow'r, and



glo - ry Are lit with rays from Thee.  
bless - ed, Who love Thy glo - rious Day.  
foot - steps, Would serve Thee more and more.  
glo - ry A - scribe to God a - lone. A - men.

We understand from a very young age that there are things that people deserve, and that actions have consequences. We learn to expect to be treated well when we treat other people well, and not to be treated well if we do not. These things are still true, but in this passage our Lord teaches us that we should do more, and be more generous than the world might expect us to be. It is relatively easy for us to love those who love us. It is much harder to love those who do not. Even the world understands that this is how things work.

Here, our Lord teaches that we should love our enemies, do good to those who do harm to us, and lend even when we know we will not be paid back. Why should we do this? Because if God the Father had treated us as our sins deserve, we would have no hope of salvation. But God the Father loved us enough to send His Son into the world to die for the sins of all mankind, and in doing so, showed Himself to be ever merciful. If He could show mercy in this way to us, we too can show mercy to our fellow men in purely secular matters as well.

Collect: Let Thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy humble servants; and, that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please Thee; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Our Lord often warns us against being hypocrites—that is, doing or saying one thing that looks externally righteous, but in reality thinking and behaving unjustly. So it is with these scribes, who enjoy the pomp and circumstance their education and wealth give them. They were privileged to read, learn, and study God’s Word in a time when the number of written copies of Scripture available was quite limited. And yet, rather than being sincere in taking care of earthly possessions, they take advantage of widows. These scribes seize their houses, and try to curry favor among men using long prayers, which they clearly do not believe themselves.

By way of contrast, consider the poor widow in the second part of our reading. She is probably not educated; she certainly does not have the long robes or the exalted social status of the scribes. But what she does have is trust that God has taken care of her so far, and will continue to do so. It is out of this trust that she puts all she has into the treasury. She trusts that God will continue to provide her daily bread. May God bless us all with the faith and trust in Him that this widow showed!

Collect: Let Thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy humble servants; and, that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please Thee; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Beheading of St. John the Baptist

101. From All Thy Saints in Warfare, For All Thy Saints at Rest

The Sarum Hymnal, 1868

Ach Gott vom Himmelreiche

"Musae Sioniae," VII, 1609

1. From all Thy Saints in war - fare,  
 2. We praise Thee for the Bap - tist,  
 3. A - po - stles, Pro - phets, Mar - tyrs,  
 Δ4. Then praise we God the Fa - ther,

For all Thy Saints at rest, To Thee, O  
 Fore - run - ner of the Word, Our true E -  
 And all the sa - cred throng, Who wear the  
 And praise we God the Son, And God the

bles - sed Je - sus, All prais - es be ad - dressed.  
 li - as, ma - king A high - way for the Lord.  
 spot - less rai - ment, Who raise the cease - less song;  
 Ho - ly Spi - rit, E - ter - nal Three in One;

There are those who read today's Scripture lesson and say, "What about the Apostle Paul's statement that we are saved by grace through faith? What about Ephesians 2:8-9?" What's it going to be, faith or works? Paul or James?

The context is all-important. St Paul was writing about those who believed they could work their way into heaven. They thought that, if they maintained their own laws, followed their own script, and did the right things, they would be guaranteed a place with God. Paul was attempting to undo this false belief by emphasizing God's grace, explaining we can do nothing to earn God's favor. When He brings us to faith in His Son Jesus Christ, it is totally His doing.

James, on the other hand, was pointing out that faith and works do not stand in opposition to one another. It is through works that faith proves and demonstrates itself. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that good works are motivated and accomplished. Therefore, Paul and James were preaching to two different audiences. Paul was correcting those who said salvation comes by keeping the works of the Law. James was dealing with a group that said, "I'm already saved, therefore I can live the way I want." It was Martin Luther, another great fighter for "faith alone," who also said: "Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone."

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Our Lord here has a strong and solemn warning for those who would read Scripture and not see Him in it. In our reading, the Jews were seeking to kill Him because He had healed a man on the Sabbath; something their tradition said He should not have done. They overlooked the fact that Jesus had done a miracle, which was ordinarily performed by an angel of God stirring the water at the pool of Bethesda. The fact that He could do this with no angel and no water should have given them pause and made them consider that He was more than a mere man.

The great tragedy here is that those who accused Him claimed to do so using Moses' Law. This meant they thought they understood that Law better than its Author. And yet, the Old Testament Law pointed to Christ, as one of His chief purposes in taking on our flesh was to fulfill that Law on our behalf. Another was to explain what it meant. Rather than be taught by the very Son of God, they sought to kill him.

But our God is merciful and gracious. He does not desire the death of any sinner, but loves us all and desires our salvation. May God the Holy Spirit kindle faith in us to learn, understand, and trust in Him for our salvation, and not to harden our hearts against His kindness and mercy.

Collect: Let Thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy humble servants; and, that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please Thee; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.



Jesus here is telling us that looking at the world is like predicting the weather. When it is cloudy, we expect rain; when the wind comes in from the desert, we expect it to be hot. In a very similar way, we see the evil of the world around us and we should expect not peace and tranquility, but conflict. We should expect conflict because the world hates God and what He has to say to the world. God's message to the world is that it is sinful, and that people can only be saved by trusting in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

The world would have us believe that God will approve of us if we do our best, or at least do better than someone else. But this is a horrible perversion of the Gospel itself. It tramples the sacrifice of Jesus Christ underfoot, because if we can work to save ourselves, it is not His work but ours that saves us. And yet, this is exactly what some people in the world believe. We cannot harmonize this idea with what our Lord and Savior tells us, and so we should expect conflict on this point. May God give us the strength and patience to endure such conflict for His name's sake.

Collect: Let Thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy humble servants; and, that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please Thee; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

In Luther's book, *On the Freedom of the Christian*, he says these famous words: "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." By the use of clever word play Luther defines both our spiritual and physical existence. First, we are justified by grace through faith, and therefore no longer under the yoke of the Law. Second, we are then bound to serve our neighbor. Justification is followed by sanctification.

It is to this sanctified life that Moses appeals in today's reading. "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he need." God provides for the needs of the world, and teaches man to share his abundance with those in need. Let us open our hearts as well as our hands in service to God through sharing with our neighbor.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.



In today's brief reading twice we hear the phrase, "I am the Lord your God." It is a phrase common to Scripture, used over 150 times. In this case, through His servant Moses God reminds the Israelites of His ultimate authority as He addresses the rampant immorality that surrounded them while they were in Egypt. They are also cautioned to shun the immorality of Canaan in the Promised Land.

The Israelites were God's chosen people and were expected to live as such. "According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord."

Note these are not just mandates, but expected responses of sanctified living. God had delivered them from the yoke of Pharaoh, therefore they should live a life of thankfulness in response. God had delivered them from not only the slavery of sin, but from physical bondage. In other words, this is the 'third use of the Law,' where the Commandments serve as a rule or guide for how we should live. God grant us all to live such a life of thankfulness for His many blessings of earth and heaven.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Even in this world we know there can be only one top priority. Without a doubt, when two masters come into conflict, the one whose desires we serve is our top priority, and the one whose desires we ignore or overrule is not.

Jesus is warning us here that we should not deceive ourselves. A person who is untrustworthy in small things will be untrustworthy in large things as well. And why should anyone entrust real riches to someone who has already been found to be untrustworthy in small things? Thus, it is important that when we say that God is our top priority, we should know what that means and act accordingly. For if our real top priority is not God but instead the mammon that this world offers, those things will come into conflict, and woe be to us if we are more loyal to mammon than we are to our Lord and God.

Yet, our God is gracious and merciful. He provides us Word and Sacrament for our spiritual health, and daily provides for our physical needs. May we trust Him to continue to provide us what we need, both here and in eternity, and so show that He is our true master.

Collect: Let Thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy humble servants; and, that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please Thee; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

## Lesson from the Book of Concord The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

### Of Chapters and Cloisters.

That chapters and cloisters were formerly founded with the good intention to educate learned men and chaste and modest women, and ought again to be turned to such use, in order that pastors, preachers, and other ministers of the Churches may be had, and likewise other necessary persons for the administration of the government in cities and governments, and well-educated maidens for mothers and housekeepers, etc.

If they [i.e., chapters and cloisters] will not serve this purpose, it is better that they should be abandoned or altogether destroyed, rather than continued with their blasphemous services invented by men as something better than the ordinary Christian life and the offices and callings appointed by God. For all this also is contrary to the first chief article concerning the redemption made through Jesus Christ. In addition, that they also (as all other human inventions) have not been commanded, are needless and useless, and besides afford occasion for dangerous and vain labor, such services the prophets call Aven, i.e. pain and labor.

—Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article III

## Lesson from the Book of Concord The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

### Article XVIII.

Of the Freedom of the Will, they teach, that man's will has some liberty for the attainment of civil righteousness, and for the choice of things subject to reason. Nevertheless, it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God [1 Cor. 2:14]; but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word. These things are said in as many words by Augustine in his Hypognosticon, book iii: "We grant that all men have a certain freedom of will in judging according to [natural] reason; not such freedom, however, whereby it is capable, without God, either to begin, or much less to complete aught in things pertaining to God, but only in works of this life, whether good or evil. 'Good,' I call those works which spring from the good in Nature, that is, to have a will to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry, to keep cattle, to learn diverse useful arts, or whatsoever good pertains to this life, none of which things are without dependence on the providence of God; yea, of Him and through Him they are and have their beginning. 'Evil,' I call such works as have a will to worship an idol, to commit murder," etc.

They condemn the Pelagians and others who teach that, without the Holy Ghost, by the power of nature alone, we are able to love God above all things; also to do the commandments of God as touching "the substance of the act." For, although nature is able in some sort to do the outward work (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder), yet it cannot work the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc.

—The Augsburg Confession

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 24: ISAIAH 62:6–12 ST. BARTHOLOMEW**

“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.’”

Just as the Lord set up watchers, heralds, and prophets in the ancient times, so in these latter days the Lord has sent His Apostles to build up the highways and to be the pillars of the Church. This is why Lutherans believe in *sola Scriptura*, that is, that the final authority of the Church is the Word of God alone. The Lord has appointed His watchmen, His heralds, His Prophets, and His Apostles. We acknowledge that the Lord has also given authority to bishops, pastors, and deacons. The Lord has given truth through the Church throughout the ages, as faithful teachers and martyrs proclaimed the truth of the Gospel. But all those authorities must give reverence to God’s authority and what He has given in the Scriptures.

Therefore, we are built together in the doctrine of these watchers and heralds: the Apostle and Prophets. This is what it truly means to be catholic, to be Lutheran, and to be raised together in the unity of the true Christian faith.

Collect: O Almighty God, who hast built Thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Head Cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine that we may be made a holy temple acceptable unto Thee; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 5: MATTHEW 11:16–24 10<sup>TH</sup> S. A. TRINITY**

Our Lord Jesus Christ preaches condemnation against the people of these cities because they did not repent. That is the great and terrible sin that mocks God. The ancient story of Sodom’s downfall is widely known, even in our time. Even though their deeds and intentions were horribly evil, our Lord emphasizes that lack of repentance is the worst of all.

If the clear commands of our Lord are proclaimed and the response is, “No thanks, this is fine; there’s nothing wrong here and we don’t want to hear about how we’re wrong,” then there is profound danger. Pride and obstinacy reject the help and blessings that come from God. Rather than listen and submit to the truth, the people to whom Christ was speaking had condemned and slandered John the Baptist, and the Lord Himself!

Even our Lord’s warnings are part of His love and mercy. Our flesh hates to hear rebukes of woe and condemnation, but God sends His servants to call us to repentance and right works because there is still time! Our Savior Jesus Christ most certainly died and rose from the grave to take away the sins of the whole world, but the wrath of God abides on those who resist His Spirit and reject the Son (see John 3). Through His Church He continues to call sinners to repent and have faith in Christ crucified so they may be saved, forgiven, and made true saints in His kingdom.

Collect: O God, Who declarest Thine almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy grace that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

When God calls us to amend our ways He is first of all telling us to repent! If we try to do works that seem good but inwardly we believe we have done nothing wrong, we are liars. The temple would not save the people. They rejected God's Word and the faith that His Spirit would work in them. Good works cannot save anyone, either. The Lord alone gives everlasting life and salvation, through His Word and His power, according to the work of His Spirit.

Those who call themselves "God's people" cannot amend anything if they reject His truth and His work in their midst. In the Old Testament He often called His people to repent and turn from their faithlessness and injustice. Through the prophets He told them to hear and obey His teaching, but many refused. Congregations and church bodies still persist in the same mistake. They say they are faithful and strong, walking together in the Word of Christ, but they insist on tolerating injustice, they make excuses for false doctrine and negligent practice, and they cling to their organization as if it were their best hope for righteousness.

Our merciful God continues to call sinners and hypocrites to repent and amend. He continues to call them to stop resisting His Spirit and stop ignoring His truth. His faithful people continue to hear His Law, repent, try to amend, and faithfully trust in Christ Jesus, who takes away the sin of the world.

Collect: O God, Who declarest Thine almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy grace that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Thou, Lord, didst win the bat - tle That they might  
Like Him may we be guile - less, True Is - rael -  
For these, passed on be - fore — us, Sa - vior! we  
Till all the ran - somed num - ber Fall down be -

con - querors be. Their crowns of liv - ing  
ites in deed; That Thine a - bid - ing  
Thee a - dore, And, walk - ing in their  
fore the Throne, And hon - or, pow'r, and

glo - ry Are lit with rays from Thee.  
Pres - ence Our long - ing souls may feed.  
foot - steps, Would serve Thee more and more.  
glo - ry A - scribe to God a - lone. A - men.

Festival of St. Bartholomew

100. From All Thy Saints in Warfare, For All Thy Saints at Rest

The Sarum Hymnal, 1868

Ach Gott vom Himmelreiche

"Musae Sioniae," VII, 1609

1. From all Thy Saints in war - fare,  
 2. All praise for Thine A - po - stle,  
 3. A - po - stles, Pro - phets, Mar - tyrs,  
 Δ4. Then praise we God the Fa - ther,

For all Thy Saints at rest, To Thee, O  
 The faith - ful, pure, and true, Whom un - der -  
 And all the sa - cred throng, Who wear the  
 And praise we God the Son, And God the

bles - ed Je - sus, All prais - es be ad - dressed.  
 neath the fig - tree, Thine Eye all - see - ing knew.  
 spot - less rai - ment, Who raise the cease - less song;  
 Ho - ly Spi - rit, E - ter - nal Three in One;

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7: I COR. 3:11-17 10<sup>TH</sup> S. A. TRINITY

The Old Testament temple was no longer necessary after our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and risen. He has established His temple in the one holy Christian and Apostolic Church. We don't have to go to one place or one city. However, we do have to hear and observe His Word if we are to abide where His faithful Church is established! His Church is found where faithful people are gathered around His Word, clinging to the wisdom of the Law *and* the forgiveness of the Gospel. It is found where they actually teach, confess, *and* practice according to that holy Word.

God works whenever and wherever He chooses, but His forgiveness and true righteousness are found in the faithful preaching and administration of the Sacraments in His Church. He works through other institutions to provide earthly blessings and spiritual warnings, but these do not provide salvation. Earthly things complete their purpose and time runs out on the warnings, but the sure foundation of Jesus Christ is where we find life and salvation.

He calls His faithful people to observe all His commands and live according to His truth. If we defile ourselves with dishonesty and disobedience, then we fail as members of His holy Church. His discipline and His correction are good, because they call us to always repent and return to the foundation of Christ so that He alone may be glorified as the source of grace and mercy for those who believe.

Collect: O God, Who declarest Thine almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy grace that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus said harsh things. Sometimes sinners need to hear harsh words. Unfortunately, obstinate sinners are sometimes so hardhearted that the harsh words are even more meaningless to them than the gentler warnings that came before. In such cases, harsh words spoken to the unrepentant are more of a benefit for others who hear the rebuke and understand the seriousness of the warning. If the prideful hypocrites won't repent and submit to the Lord, then they serve as an example to others.

Our Savior preached, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). His harsh warning to the hypocrites that "you shall see Me no more till you say, 'BLESSED is HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" is also a warning that their pious-sounding words are empty. The lawlessness of their actions confess their vanity. The multitudes who cried out "Hosanna to the Son of David!" would also be persuaded by the hypocrites to cry out for Barabbas to be freed and Jesus to be crucified.

In Acts 2 some would hear the Apostolic preaching that reminded them of the seriousness of these events and repent. Even if the wicked leaders refused to turn and died in God's condemnation, others would be cut to the heart and learn to fear, love, and trust in God's truth.

Collect: O God, Who declarest Thine almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy grace that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Here we once again see the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies about our Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. The blind see and the mute speak. Jesus heals the sick that are brought to Him, and the Gospel is preached in the towns and synagogues.

This also is fulfilled in your hearing of the Gospel, as the spiritually blind see Christ and the spiritually mute will sing out to God. This is known to the Christian as we have seen in our devotions throughout the week. However, the unbelieving world does not see what the Christian knows.

In response to these miracles, the Pharisees remark, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Notice that they cannot disprove Jesus' works. They cannot show that our Lord is merely using tricks and deception like some carnival magician. Their denial implies that the miracles are true, or else they would have found some evidence showing that the miracles were faked. All they have is accusation against our Lord's divine majesty.

Remember this as you ponder the Lord's work for you. Though the evidence for our Lord's work and life is abundant, the unbelieving world will still reject what is plainly obvious. It is not our job to make them believe, but to simply confess the truth in this world and let the Lord prove Himself true.

Collect: Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service: Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

In yesterday's reading, we read of how the prophet Isaiah, through inspiration, described the saving might of the Lord in redeeming His people, as He once redeemed Abraham. Many of the same concepts are present in this passage, as well, but notice there is a different trajectory with Isaiah's words in today's reading. This passage discusses the way in which the redeemed are guided, and walk through the Kingdom of God. Once the eyes of the spiritually blind are open to the Gospel, they are guided down the highway and the road of the Kingdom of God. Once the spiritually deaf are able to hear, they are able to hear and sing praises to the God who saved them.

The end of verse 8 should especially drive home the point as even "fools" walk this path and do not go astray. Though we are justified by faith in Christ, we are still sinners until we reach glory with Christ. Therefore, the "fools" Isaiah is speaking of here are not fools that have not acknowledged God, but those who, while believing, still struggle with foolishness. Whether it is being unlearned, or simply succumbing to temptation, we who are in Christ walk with Him and, therefore, "shall not go astray."

Collect: Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service: Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

These verses are a sad picture of the consequences that come from pride and disobedience. "She did not consider her destiny." The Lord taught her. He warned her. He spoke gentle words and harsh words, but she still chose her own way. Now her lamentations are a warning to others. To this day, the cities and peoples that were important in the Old Testament and special for the Lord's work are now examples of the chaos and brokenness that comes from man's vanity and rebellion against His truth and mercy in Jesus Christ.

None of us is so clever or so strong that we can ignore His Law and its warnings. No institution is so loved or so ancient that it can justify its negligence toward God's truth. God's Holy Spirit produces humility in His saints. If we are faithful, we see such warnings and repent of our own transgressions and uncleanness. Vanity mourns and laments, even crying to the Lord and blaming Him, but it doesn't repent; it just wallows in the ashes of its consequences. But His Spirit makes us to be members of His true Bride, who obeys His commands, is glorified in humble repentance and His forgiveness, and trusts in His will. Her peace and contentment comes from serving her Lord and remembering her destiny in Christ Jesus.

Collect: O God, Who declarest Thine almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy grace that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.



Festival of St. Laurence

98. I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name

Jeg ved mig en Sövn i Jesu Navn  
Magnus B. Landstad, 1861, ab.  
Tr., composite

Den signede Dag  
Christoph E. F. Weyse, 1826

1. I know of a sleep in Je - sus' name,  
2. I know of a peace - ful e - ven - tide;  
3. I know of a morn - ing bright and fair  
4. Oh, that is a morn - ing dear to me,

A rest from all toil and sor - row;  
And when I am faint and wea - ry,  
When ti - dings of joy shall wake us,  
And oft, o'er the moun - tains stream - ing,

Earth folds in her arms my wea - ry frame  
At times with the jour - ney sore - ly tried,  
When songs from on high shall fill the air  
In spir - it its heav'n - ly light I see,

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21: ISAIAH 29:18-24 12<sup>TH</sup> S. A. TRINITY

This passage rings in the ears and hearts of all who are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For Christians, we see the fulfillment of this passage in the saving work of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The deaf hear the Word. The spiritually blind now see their sin and their need for the Savior. Those who have been humbled before the Law of God have increased their joy because Christ has forgiven them. The world, the flesh, and the devil are defeated. This is the great hope that believers have in Christ. We see these descriptions of what the Lord will accomplish as being fulfilled in Jesus and being received by His baptized people.

It is no wonder that Isaiah describes God as “the LORD, who redeemed Abraham...” Abraham was led by God out of his homeland, where idolatry enslaved the minds of the people, and He brought Abraham to worship the true God. The Lord redeemed Abraham out of idolatry, and likewise the Lord Jesus saves you, dear Christian. He opens your ears, eyes, and mind to receive His grace through faith alone.

Collect: Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service: Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

There is no doubt that every Christian, while contending with the flesh in this life, has experienced what King Hezekiah feels in this reading. Because of his illness he is in distress. He sees his life being cut short in his prime and feels the weight of his own sin and mortality. He not only has pain from his ailments, but mental anguish and bitterness. And yet, Hezekiah recognizes the Lord God as good, since “He has both spoken to me, and He Himself has done it.” Even bitterness is turned into joy as Hezekiah acknowledges, “Indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness; but You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back.”

This passage is a hymn of praise. Though Hezekiah recognizes his own grief, bitterness, and despair, he ends this hymn by stating, “The Lord was ready to save me.” We have many hymns like this in our hymnal. These hymns acknowledge the struggle in this life, which is filled with sorrow and tears, while faithfully looking to the hope we have in God through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Collect: Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service: Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

And shel - ters it till the mor - row;  
Through hours that are long and drear - y,  
And God to His glo - ry are take - us,  
As gold - en the peaks are beam - ing.

My soul is at home with God in heav'n, Her  
Then of - ten I yearn to lay me down And  
When Je - sus shall bid us rise from sleep,— How  
Then sing I for joy like birds at dawn That

sor - rows are past and o - ver.  
sink in - to bliss - ful slum - ber.  
joy - ous that hour of wak - ing!  
car - ol in loft - y lin - dens. A - men.

5. God's Son to our graves then takes His way,  
His voice hear all tribes and nations;  
The portals are rent that guard our clay,  
And moved are the sea's foundation.  
He calls out aloud, "Ye dead, come forth!"  
In glory we rise to meet Him.

6. O Jesus, draw near my dying bed  
And take me into Thy keeping  
And say when my spirit hence is fled,  
"This child is not dead, but sleeping."  
And leave me not, Savior, till I rise  
To praise Thee in life eternal.

St. Laurence was martyred for his faithful service to the Lord's Church and confession of His truth. Laurence was bold before powerful men of faithless intent. Whether one is called to stand against the wicked chief priests and elders as the Apostles were, or against emperors, or popes, or any other corrupt institution, if faithless men seek to silence and attack the truth, we must teach and confess what God says even more.

Divine love, mercy, and pity compel God's saints to warn the wicked rather than agree with them. Even as the Lord works good through all things, He does not ignore evil. Neither does He want men to continue in their wickedness and die in condemnation. The work of God that continues through His Church, even to the end of the age, is the call to repent according to His Law, and the promise of forgiveness according to His Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified. All the faithful saints of His Church are called to confess this truth according to our particular vocations. We do not tolerate evil; we repent of it. We do not silence the truth; we live according to it.

Our everlasting life and salvation in Jesus Christ are more important than any riches of this world. His kingdom and true righteousness are more important than any institution or gaining peace with any antagonists, no matter how powerful they may be.

Collect: Quench in us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the flame of vice, even as Thou didst enable blessed Laurence to overcome his fire of sufferings, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ shows His power over sin and death in His ministry by proving the works of God. Since He is God in the flesh, this is seen throughout the Gospels in His miracles. In today's reading we see two miracles: the raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the woman in the crowd.

The woman, who had suffered from her ailment for twelve years, simply touches Jesus and is healed. This showed the divine power that our Lord Jesus has, while demonstrating that faith is how all who are in the ailment of sin receive Him. Our Lord tells the woman that her faith has made her well. Without the gift of faith, we would not know the divine authority of Christ for us.

The healing of Jairus' daughter then shows us our Lord's authority over death as He tells the young girl to rise, and she does. By proving His divine power over sin and death, our Lord Jesus has given us hope in Him through His Word. The faith that healed the woman is the same faith that you receive by the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus. The same power with which the Lord raised Jairus' daughter will be seen even more when the dead rise on the final day.

Collect: Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service: Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

## Lesson from the Book of Concord The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

### Article XX. Of Good Works.

In the twentieth article they [the Roman Catholics] lay down these words, viz. that they reject and condemn our statement that men do not merit the remission of sins by good works. This article they clearly declare that they reject and condemn. What is to be said on a subject so manifest? Here the framers of the Confutation [the Papists' answer to the Augsburg Confession] openly show by what spirit they are led. For what in the Church is more certain than that the remission of sins occurs freely for Christ's sake, that Christ and not our works is the propitiation for sins, as Peter says (Acts 10:43): "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins"? To this Church of the prophets we would rather assent that to these abandoned writers of the Confutation, who so impudently blaspheme Christ. For although there were writers who held after the remission of sins men are just before God, not by faith, but by works themselves, yet they did not hold this, viz. that the remission of sins itself occurs on account of our works, and not freely for Christ's sake.

Therefore the blasphemy of ascribing Christ's honor to our works is not to be endured. These theologians are now entirely without shame, if they dare to bring such an opinion into the Church. Nor do we doubt that his most excellent imperial majesty and very many of the princes will not allow this passage of the Confutation to remain, if they be admonished of it. On this topic we could cite infinite testimonies from Scripture and from the Fathers. But above we have quoted a sufficient number on this subject. And there is no need to testimonies for one who knows why Christ has been given for us, who knows that Christ is the propitiation for our sins. Isaiah says (53:6): "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The adversaries on the other hand teach that God hath laid our iniquities not on Christ, but on our works. Neither are we disposed to mention here the sort of works which they teach. We see that a horrible decree has been prepared against us, which would terrify us still more if we were contending concerning doubtful or trifling subjects. Now since our consciences understand that by the adversaries the manifest truth is condemned, whose defense is necessary for the Church, and increases the glory of Christ; we easily despise the terrors of the world, and patiently will bear whatever is to be suffered for the glory of Christ and the advantage of the Church.

—The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, §78–82

## Lesson from the Book of Concord The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

### Article XI.

Of Confession, they teach, that Private Absolution ought to be retained in the churches, although in confession an enumeration of all sins is not necessary. For it is impossible, according to the Psalm: "Who can understand his errors?" [Psa. 19:12].

### Article XII.

Of Repentance, they teach, that for those that have fallen after Baptism, there is remission of sins whenever they are converted; and that the Church ought to impart absolution to those thus returning to repentance.

Now repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which, born of the Gospel, or of absolution, believes that, for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost. Also those who contend that some may attain to such perfection in this life that they cannot sin. The Novatians also are condemned, who would not absolve such as had fallen after Baptism, though they returned to repentance. They also are rejected who do not teach that remission of sins cometh through faith, but command us to merit grace through satisfactions of our own.

—Augsburg Confession

This tax collector, Levi, is none other than St. Matthew, the author of the first Gospel (Matt. 9:9-13). Matthew is an example of Jesus' mercy, for Jesus called him when he was a tax collector and made him an apostle of the Gospel of salvation. In this way, Matthew can testify to the forgiveness, peace, and joy that the Gospel brings, because he himself was a sinner saved by grace.

Matthew was not a worse sinner because he was a tax collector. Nor was the office of tax collector in and of itself an evil office. But tax collectors were known for taking more than was due and pocketing the difference (Luke 3:12-13). Matthew was, therefore, a good example of Jesus' mercy because Matthew's sins were public. All men are by nature enemies of God and in need of the Gospel, which promises forgiveness through faith in Jesus. Matthew was seen as a public sinner, so when Jesus publicly forgave and called him, it made the point that Jesus had specifically come to save sinners. Everyone who repents of his sins and believes this is saved. Everyone who thinks he is not a sinner is, like the Pharisees, blind, stubborn, and still unforgiven.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy, forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the mercies and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

As St. Paul writes this, he is in prison (v. 13). He has two goals in mind for the Philippians: first, that they would rejoice with him in his persecution; second, that they would imitate him in steadfastness. They should rejoice because through his sufferings the Gospel is spreading, as he says, "Christ will be magnified in my body." And, so that they might learn from his example, he commands them, "Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ." In this way, he commands every Christian to be steadfast in the pure confession of the Faith, especially in the face of persecution.

We should not confuse persecution with that which is merely resistance. People insulting you on social media is not necessarily persecution. St. Paul was beaten, stoned, imprisoned, and ultimately martyred for preaching the Gospel. That is what persecution looks like, and there is real persecution of Christians in the world today. Those whom God has, till now, protected from violent persecution must prepare for it by holding steadfast to the true Faith in every situation. For how will anyone stand fast in persecution if he does not stand fast during peace?

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy, forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the mercies and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

What is it about children that Jesus praises so highly? Little children are not capable of taking care of themselves. The younger they are, the more they are dependent on the compassion of parents. Good parents love this about their children. This is a reflection of our relationship to God by faith. In spiritual things, we cannot do anything for ourselves, but are completely dependent upon God's compassion for our salvation, knowledge of God, and faith. The more we mature in spiritual things, the more we learn to depend on God; and God loves this about faith. Faith is happy to depend on God, and God is happy to give everything which faith requires. Therefore, the Christian happily seeks what he needs in the Word and Sacraments, which are God's gifts.

In worldly terms, children are the weakest because they are the most dependent. He who seeks worldly greatness cares little for dependent children, because they have nothing to give back. But the Christian, knowing the love of God, will love and protect little children in God's name. Abortion and euthanasia have no place in Christianity, because they destroy those whom God has called us to love. He who loves the weak imitates Jesus, who loves us sinners.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy, forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the mercies and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Jesus could have healed the man with a mere word, so why does He bother with the messy business of clay, saliva, and washing? We may as well ask, "Why did He create clay, saliva, and water in the first place?" One of the things God reveals about Himself is that He loves the physical; He created the physical world and continues to use it, even though He does not have to. God does not *have to* do anything. But when He chooses to do something, it matters. He chooses to heal by means of clay, saliva, and water because He loves the physical world. He has made man a physical being, and He became a physical man that He might redeem not just our souls, but our bodies, also.

Jesus continues to use physical means of grace. He uses ordinary water to give us new life in Baptism. He uses ordinary bread and ordinary wine to give us His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. On the Last Day, He will make a new heaven and a new earth—a perfect physical world. Those who believe in Him will have perfected physical bodies, even as He lives and reigns as perfect God and perfect Man.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy, forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the mercies and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Jesus' forgiveness comes before our love. The woman loved Jesus because she believed that He had forgiven her. Therefore, Jesus does not say, "your love has saved you," but, "your faith has saved you." Forgiveness comes first, received by faith, and love is the fruit that follows.

Was the woman more sinful than the Pharisee? No. They were both sinful and in need of forgiveness. The difference between them was that the woman acknowledged her sin, and the Pharisee did not. The Pharisee, because he denied his sin, did not receive forgiveness (since forgiveness is received through faith), and consequently had no love for Jesus or the woman. But the woman, because she acknowledged her sin, was comforted.

If we know that we are forgiven in Christ through faith, then the Law no longer condemns us. Instead, the better we know our sin, the better we know Jesus' love for us. This is why Christians continue to learn and practice God's Law. The better we know the Law, the better we know Jesus. And the better we know how unlawful we are, the better we know how much Jesus has forgiven us. Once we know Jesus, then we can truly love one another.

Collect: Almighty and Everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy, forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the mercies and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

"Warn those who are unruly," he says. Now, Jesus' mother, Mary, is a saint of God's Church and worthy of all due honor. Yet, this is not because of anything she has done by her own power, but because God (out of pure grace) preserved her in the true faith and chose her to be the mother of the Son of God. If any saint is worthy of honor, Saint Mary is certainly worthy, because of the calling to which God called her, and to which she was faithful. However, there exist unruly men who abuse her name and her reputation, inventing myths about her and demanding that Christians believe them as doctrine. Such men are to be warned and, if they will not repent, cast out.

We give thanks to God for Mary, who truly carried God (in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ) in her womb. Through her, the eternal Son of God became a man so that He might redeem all men in His body. We honor Saint Mary not because of what she has done, but because of what God did through her. Through her He became our incarnate Redeemer, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ—Son of God and Son of Mary.

Collect: Almighty God, who didst show favor to the Blessed Virgin Mary, granting unto her to be the mother of Thine only-begotten Son, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst grant humility and faithfulness unto Thy Church to glorify Thee in the fulfillment of our labors, that we who have been saved by grace through faith in Thy Son might remain steadfast unto the end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.