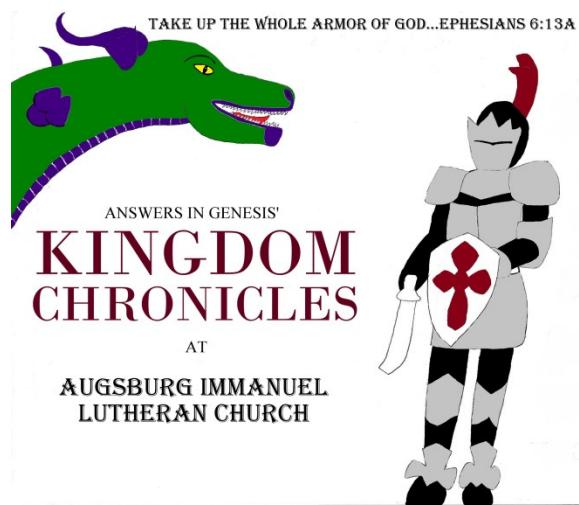


Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! This summer's just cruisin' by! LYF has had their day at the lake; the Fourth of July has come and gone; and now we're wrapping up Vacation Bible School. It won't be too long before school starts back up. In the meantime, here's the continuation of our study on the Introduction to Luther's Large Catechism from the Book of Concord.



Luther had been writing that God has given us His Word as a weapon against the schemes of the devil. He continues this thought as he writes “(w)ithout doubt, you will offer up no more powerful incense or savor against the devil than to occupy yourself with God’s commandments and words and to speak, sing, or think about them (BoC, p.381).” That sounds a lot like what we’re telling our vacation bible school students! We’re singing a song this year that says “There’s a verse for every season/ Always be ready to give a reason/ Hide ‘em in your heart/ Put ‘em in your brain/ Pick a verse, learn the words, that’s the way you train (“The Sharpest Blade” from Answers in Genesis’ Kingdom Chronicles).” Our Heavenly Father has not only won the battle against Satan, but He continues to foil the Evil One’s plots by giving us His Word as the sword of the Spirit Paul mentions in Ephesians.

Studying the Word, yes, even singing the Word, are powerful weapons against our enemy. I don't know about you, but, personally, I don't like the smell of incense. Working as a vicar/apprentice at Zion Lutheran in Staunton, I was asked to participate in a service as the servant who got to enter swinging the incense. That stuff has such a strong scent—enough to drive me away! That's how it is when we read and sing God's Word for Satan. He can't stand it! He has to flee!

"For this reason alone you should gladly read, recite, ponder, and practice the catechism, even if the only benefit you obtain from it is to drive away the devil and evil thoughts...Why should I waste words? If I were to tell all the benefits and advantages that God's Word accomplishes, where would I find the paper and time? The devil is called the master of a thousand arts. What then can we call God's Word that routs and destroys such a master of a thousand arts...? Indeed, it must be a master of more than a hundred thousand arts. And should we so flippantly despise such might, benefits, power and fruit...(BoC, p.381)?" In the words of Paul, "By no means!"

As you can tell from the citations, we didn't even leave this one page of Luther's introduction. If you desire to learn more on this topic before next month, I encourage you to read ahead—read the whole of Luther's Large Catechism, or even the whole of the Book of Concord if you can find the time! It is always worth the time to find out more about God's Word—that Word which is the only place we find Jesus Christ crucified and risen for you and me. In Jesus' Name. Amen!

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh