

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! Well it's just about time to see who's right and who's wrong in their predictions and guesses concerning this winter. We've had one snow already, but it didn't last too long, thankfully. I still think snow is pretty, but having run off the road twice last year, I'm ready to have it on the ground and not the roads, or not at all this year. Oh well; whatever happens, we'll just have to take what God gives us. (But I still hope and pray it's not as bad as last year!)

Welcome to a New Church Year!!!

This month we continue our look at the original brief preface Martin Luther wrote in 1529. We're at the Third part, discussing The Prayer, or Our Father, Which Christ Taught. You'll note that he does not include the words which had been later: "For Thine is the kingdom..." This is because he was taking the prayer from the source, or sources, in this case; he took them from Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. Luther encouraged the learning of this prayer and the previous two parts (the Ten Commandments and the Chief Articles of Faith) so much so that he recommended that children "should be taught the habit of reciting them daily, when they arise in morning, when they go to their meals, and when they go to bed at night...For in these three parts everything contained in the Scriptures is comprehended in short, plain, and simple terms. (And indeed, the dear Fathers or apostles (or whoever they were) thus summed up the teaching, life, wisdom, and learning that constituted the Christian's conversation, conduct, and concern (BoC, p.385)."

Luther obviously gave a lot of emphasis to these doctrines, as should we. As Lutheran Christians, we know that we are sinners and that God sent His only begotten Son into the flesh to save us on the cross, and that now that we are saved, we are free to live the Law, not under the Law, but upholding it, as Paul talks about in Romans. Thus we keep the Ten Commandments to know not

only that we are sinners, but also how we ought to live before God and with one another. The Creed reminds us as often as we state it what we believe concerning God, as the Father who created us, the Son who redeemed us, and the Spirit who sanctifies us and keeps us in the one true faith through the communion of saints, which is the Church—attending and receiving the Sacrament on a regular basis.

Once children and those beginning in the faith learn these, then they can go on to learn about the Sacraments, as Luther continues. Luther translates Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:16 in reference to the Sacrament of Baptism; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, Luke 22:19-20, and Matthew 26:26-28 in reference to the Sacrament of the Altar. He then says about them that “(i)t is enough for an ordinary person to know this much about baptism from the Scriptures (BoC, p.385).” So if you do not know these verses by heart, look them up in your Book of Concord or in your Bibles, that you may be well-versed in what we believe concerning these great gifts from our Heavenly Father. “However, it is not enough for (you) simply to learn and repeat these parts verbatim. (You, no matter your age or length of time in the faith,) should also attend sermons, especially during the times when preaching on the catechism is prescribed, so that (you) may hear it explained and may learn the meaning of every part (BoC, p.386).” I don’t preach on any set agenda, other than the lectionary—which even that, I bounce around from Old Testament to the Epistles to the Gospels, so I encourage you not to just look for when the catechism is preached on in particular, but every Sunday, that you may know your Savior, Jesus the Christ, and what He has done for you. In this way, you’ll have assurance in your faith and in the fact that for His sake, you will be going to heaven. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh