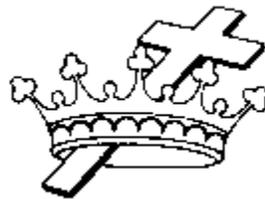


Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! Spring seems to have arrived. Though the season may officially be winter, the snow is gone. The roads are clear. Even the church year has advanced beyond Epiphany to Transfiguration Sunday and into Lent. The fullness of time has come once more for our Lord to travel to Jerusalem on the back of a donkey so that He may be tried and sentenced to death. Our King will be crucified, as we'll hear about in our mid-week Lenten rotation series.



As we enter Lent, the season in which we are led to even more scrutiny of our sinful ways and desperate need of a Savior, Luther's writing concerning the Lord's Supper follows a similar pattern. Luther encourages you to "put (your) hand to (your) bosom to determine whether (you) are made of flesh and blood. If you find that you are, then for your own good turn to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians and hear what are the fruits of your flesh (BoC, p.474)." Look at your works. Feel your body of flesh—and know that if Christ has not yet returned, then your flesh has not been made to be rid of the sin staining it.

If this is not reason enough to go to the Sacrament for the forgiveness of sins, Luther sends you back to the Scriptures. "They will not lie to you, since they know your flesh better than you yourself do (BoC, p.474)." You know that God is the author of the Bible, and you know that He is your creator. He knows you better than you know yourself. You may not know the number of hairs on your head, or how to lengthen your days, but He does. So trust His Word, that you are a sinner in need of His forgiveness offered at the altar in the very body and very blood of His Son, given for you.

“(L)ook around you and see whether you are also in the world. If you do not know, ask your neighbors about it. If you are in the world, do not think that there will be any lack of sins and needs.” Your enemy and mine, the devil, is very real. He “is a liar and a murderer. A liar who entices the heart away from God’s Word and blinds it, making you unable to feel your need or to come to Christ. A murderer who begrudges you every hour of your life. If you could see how many daggers, spears, and arrows are aimed at you every moment, you would be glad to come to the sacrament as often as you can (BoC, p.475).”

Dear brothers and sisters, you may have noticed that I have made many quotes from Luther’s work in this newsletter to you. It is because Luther has stated so well what I also would want you to know. I am called to speak and write to you God’s Truth, and I am not called to speak something new to you as though I had something of worth to say when God has already made known to us all we need to know in His Word. So hear the words I’m writing to you from Luther, pointing you to the only Word you need to care about: God’s Word. You can trust God’s Word, and in it, you learn that you can also trust that when Jesus has said the sacrament is “for you,” it really is. May God continue to bless you and bring you to His Word and His sacrament more and more. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh

A friendly reminder: Due to new laws, I may not be able to receive word from a hospital that you have entered it. If you are going into the hospital, or if your spouse has had an emergency, and you would like to have pastoral care, please call me or one of the elders so that I can get in to see you or your spouse. Thanks!