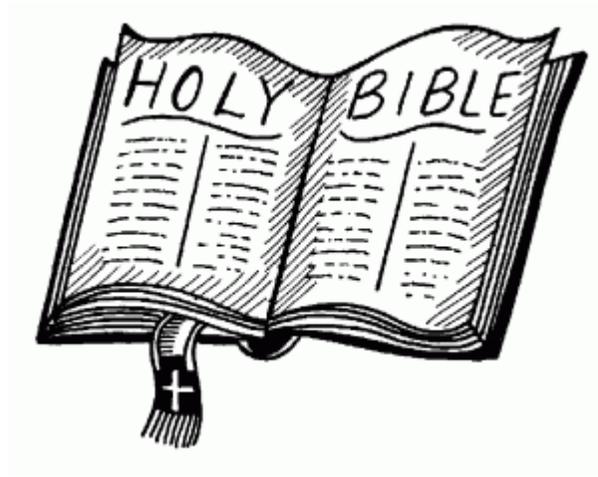


Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! I may be the youngest man to ever receive shingles or I may not be, but don't worry, the doctor has cleared me to send this newsletter to you!



Last month, we learned how reading, teaching, and even singing the catechism and Scriptures is beneficial to our lives. “If this were not enough to admonish us to read the catechism daily, God’s command should suffice to compel us. For God solemnly enjoins us in Deuteronomy 6[:7-8] that we should meditate on his precepts while sitting, walking, standing, lying down, and rising, and should keep them as an ever-present emblem and sign before our eyes and on our hands (BoC, p.382).” Luther continues that certainly that same God who made us also knows our weaknesses and limitations far better than we ourselves. Therefore He gave us His Word to study and to know what to do when sin confronts us in our everyday lives, and reminds us of His grace when we fail. So, then, why would we not study His Word? How are we being if we do not? Well, in a word, presumptuous—at least, that’s what Luther thought.

“(W)hat else are these bored, presumptuous saints doing—people who will not read and study the catechism daily and have no desire to—except thinking that they are more learned than

God himself and all his holy angels, prophets, apostles, and all Christians (BoC, p.382)?” Stop and think on that for a second. Luther, in his usual strong vocabulary, calls those who do not study God’s Word daily not just presumptuous, but also arrogant, so arrogant that they let on that they know more than God, His holy angels, and all Christians combined! Perhaps those who don’t read God’s Word daily do not think about it in this way, but should they? After all, “God himself is not ashamed to teach it daily.”

So what benefits are there for those who do read God’s Word daily? To Luther, “(t)his much is certain: those who know the Ten Commandments perfectly know the entire Scriptures and in all affairs and circumstances are able to counsel, help, comfort, judge, and make decisions in both spiritual and temporal matters...Therefore (he) appeals once more to all Christians...(i)f they show...diligence, then (Luther) promise(s) them—and their experience will bear (him) out—that they will gain much fruit and God will make excellent people out of them (BoC, pp.382-383).”

Is that not the second table of the Law: to serve one another as excellent people? Then I agree with Luther, let us each study God’s Word frequently! God knows what we need more than we do as He even knows more about us than we do (e.g. the number of hairs on our heads). Lord God, give us each the desire and the will to do this, in Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh

(P.S. The doc did clear me to get back to work this morning—thanks so much for all of you who were praying for me!)