

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! This month we go from celebrating the Reformation (as pictured below)—even on the wrong Sunday (by my mistake)—to remembering those who have passed away in the faith before us, to concluding this church year with Thanksgiving for another year of God’s grace, and then to beginning anew, as we were made new in our Baptism. As we give thanks in each of these, we rejoice in God’s Word, as explained in Luther’s Large Catechism.



*Our Lutheran Youth Fellowship (Youth Group) project in October*

Last month we left off in the Book of Concord (BoC) on page 393. Luther had just written that using God’s name as a front for justifying yourself “in ordinary worldly matters or in sophisticated and difficult matters of faith and doctrine” is sin. “Therefore,” Luther continues, “God has added a solemn threat to his commandment: ‘For the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.’ This means that no one will be let off or go unpunished (BoC, p.393).”

How do you use the names “Jesus Christ” and “God” from Sunday at noon to Saturday night during the week? Is it in conversation, praise, prayer, and worship, or in anger, frustration, confusion, or trivial matters? If you’re not sure, how have your children picked up to use these

names from you or those around them? How do the television programs and movies that you and your children watch use these names? “Unfortunately it is now a common affliction throughout the world that there are just as few who do not use God’s name for lies and all kinds of wickedness as there are few who trust in God with their whole heart (BoC, p.393).” Does this mean, then, that it is better to never use these names? Does it mean to teach children not to say “Jesus” or “God” ever? Or is it a need to repent and work toward using the names only in proper ways?

To go on a slight tangent—as I am prone to do, just ask those I teach in adult Bible Class or catechism classes!—how do you speak the names grammatically? No, I’m not trying to be a grammar Nazi but to show you something that Dr. Dale Meyer, president of St. Louis Seminary, and I have both picked up on. When I speak concerning the names of God, it is far too often as just that, names. I speak and teach *about* God, but I don’t speak *to* Jesus Christ or God my Father very often. I don’t use the second person “You” as often as I could. How about you? Part of “trust(ing) in God with (your) whole heart” is *knowing* God, not just knowing *about* God.

*Heavenly Father and my dear Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me for using Your Name in improper ways! By Your Holy Spirit, restore a right spirit in me—one which speaks to You as my dear Abba, Father, and my dear Savior. In Your Name Jesus, for the sake of Your taking my punishment in my place. Amen!*

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh