

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! August has just flown by and here we are entering September. But that's not the only thing we're entering again. Our children and teens are re-entering school, college students are returning to their college towns, and some of you may be returning from family vacations. This September we remember once again to take time off for Labor Day (God included a day of rest in the original seven days and so should we). We remember the events of 9/11 so that, Lord willing, the terrorist attacks will be stopped by the God-given governments around the world. And we also remember to go back to our Book of Concord study.



This month we dive into Luther's explanation of the First Article. He begins with the words themselves: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, CREATOR of heaven and earth..." Concerning these words, Luther wrote: "This is the shortest possible way of describing and illustrating the nature, will, acts, and work of God the Father. Because the Ten Commandments have explained that we are to have no more than one God, so it may now be asked: 'What kind of person is God? What does he do? How can we praise or portray or describe him in such a way so we may know him (BoC, p.432)?"

How would you describe God the Father? Ultimately we know that God the Father sent His Son Jesus to save us and that He coexists with the Son and the Holy Spirit together in eternal glory. But how would you describe just the person of the Father, without mixing in what the other two persons have done/are doing? Luther wrote that in the words of the First Article, we have our answer. We describe and praise God by acknowledging Him as the Creator.

Have you noticed that in some ways, pomp and circumstance is disappearing from our nation? It's no longer just Fridays that are Casual, when one may wear blue jeans. It's no longer the awe of dinosaurs created from the blood sucked by mosquitos before the danger as in *Jurassic Park* in movies today, but only non-stop action, with no awe or marveling or time to sit and admire. It's no longer suits and ties and dresses for church—not that we need to, but again, it seems that there has been a shift in our culture to get rid of awe and to just always be on the move.

The fact that God the Father created everything should make ALL of us stop and admire, like a child seeing a whale or a movie or a mountain for the first time. Do you ever stop and consider, God made that? Or God made this? Or God made me? Or God made those organs inside of me to function together so that I might live? (I won't go further than that on that one.)

That is what the First Article calls us to do—to stop and consider. To give glory to God by acknowledging Him as *the Maker*. It is what is commanded of us in the First Commandment, but too often we fail. So stop. Take a minute and confess your sin of not recognizing God the Father as you should. And then marvel. Look around you and find something that makes you consider: hey, God *made* that. Then give God praise and prayer that He made whatever it is.

We know the other persons of God exist. We would have reason to do nothing but fear and try to appease God through works of filth if not for God the Son, who has saved us from our sin; and we would have no need for the First Article if not for the Holy Spirit, who has begun working in us so that we might live as new creatures, ones who give God the Father praise, thanksgiving, and marveling every now and again. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh