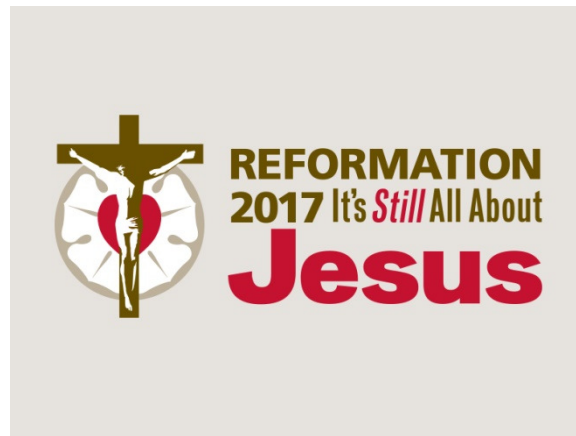


Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! This month we again enter Lent, that time of sincere and humble introspection where we acknowledge that God is right: we are poor, miserable sinners who would be lost without Him and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is never easy to consider our sinfulness. Every Sunday, we feel a little bit of Lent as we have a moment of silence for self-examination and reflection on God's Word before we confess our sins. But whether we do it in Lent, or all year long in the service of Confession and Absolution, we also have the hope that as we confess our sins God, who is merciful and just, will forgive our sins for the sake of Jesus. Everything, every part of life, is all about Jesus, from Old Testament times to New Testament times to this present time, when we will consider more of Luther's Large Catechism.



Last month, we completed our review of Luther's explanation of the First Article of the Creed, and this month we'll begin our study of Luther's writings on the Second Article, the article about Jesus Christ—didn't I mention that it's all about Jesus?

In the Second Article, Luther writes, "we get to know the second person of the Godhead, and we see what we have from God over and above the temporal goods mentioned above, namely, how he has given himself completely to us, withholding nothing...(W)e shall take up one phrase and in it grasp the substance of (this) article...We shall concentrate on these words, 'in Jesus Christ, our Lord.'

“...What is it ‘to become a lord’? It means that he has redeemed and released me from sin, from the devil, from death, and from all misfortune. Before this I had no lord or king, but was captive under the power of the devil. I was condemned to death and entangled in sin and blindness (BoC, p.434).”

As we are in Lent, we’ll begin at the end. Before Jesus became our Lord, we were captive under the power of the devil. We were entangled in sin and blindness. We were in the devil’s power, and we were happy to be there. “As a result, we lay under God’s wrath and displeasure, sentenced to eternal damnation, as we had merited and deserved it. There was no counsel, no help, no comfort for us until this only and eternal Son of God, in his unfathomable goodness, had mercy on us (BoC, p.434).” Now we have been claimed by our Lord Jesus Christ by His call through Baptism and the Word. Yet it is not hard for us to imagine being entangled in sin. Each Sunday morning, and this Lenten season, we’ll consider how we still sin—not because we want to, but because while we are saints, we are still sinners. The difference is that now we no longer desire to sin, whereas before, we enjoyed being in it (Romans 7).

This season, and for the next few newsletters, we’ll see how God did not leave us as the devil’s prisoners, but precisely how He became man for us, so that He could suffer and die in your place and mine for your sins and my own. We’ll see just how important the Second Article of the Creed is for our faith, but even more for our lives. Everything, indeed our entire lives, are all about Jesus. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh

FOR THOSE SEEKING TO LEARN ABOUT COMPUTERS OR IPHONES: I learned recently that Centralia Public Library offers free or minimal-cost courses on how to use the computer and the internet, and it reminded me that some of you have talked about desiring to learn. Calling the Evans Public Library in Vandalia, I learned that while they do not offer similar classes, Kaskaskia College does on a fairly regular basis, as well as one on using your iPhone. Keep an eye on the paper or go to

<http://www.kaskaskia.edu/Lifelonglearning/Default.aspx> to see when you may attend the next class(es).

Blessings on your studies!