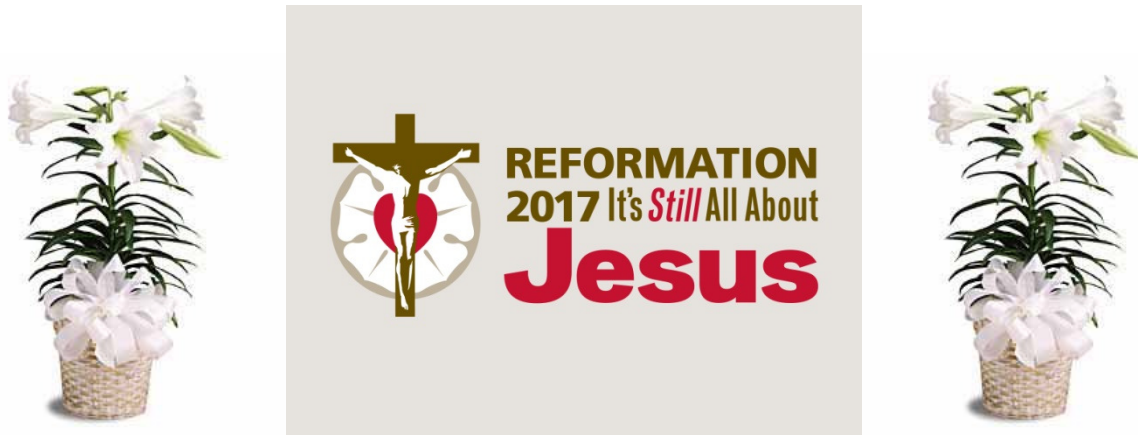


Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! He is risen, He is risen indeed, Alleluia! With the celebration of Easter returns that phrase which we know and love. Christ was dead but is alive once more; and He has taken us from being dead in sin to truly alive in Him. That is the focus of Easter, the locus of our lives, and the focal point of this newsletter article. As the icon says, “It’s...ALL about Jesus!”



Last month we read how Jesus has snatched us from the very jaws of death. This month, we read Luther’s conclusion to the Second Article. He begins by writing words very similar to the ones we read a few months back: “Let this be the summary of this article, that the little word ‘Lord’ simply means the same as Redeemer, that is, he who has brought us back from the devil to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and keeps us there (BoC, p.434).” Luther brings up the word “Lord” again and once again defines it as one who has redeemed or saved us. “The remaining parts of this article simply serve to clarify and express how and by what means this redemption was accomplished—that is, how much it cost Christ and what he paid and risked in order to win us and bring us under his dominion...(H)e became a human creature, conceived and born without sin, of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin, so that he might become Lord over sin; moreover, he suffered, died, and was buried so that he might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owed, not with silver and gold but with his own precious blood. And he did all this so that he might become my Lord. For he did none of these things for himself, nor had he any need of them (BoC, pp.434-35).”

That is both hard to read or hear, and joyous to hear and read. God doesn’t need us. He doesn’t need you. It was not because you are so good that Jesus went to the cross for you. It was not your personality or the

things which you enjoy. God doesn't need you; *He* made you. *You* need Him. And thanks be to God through His Son, our Risen Savior Jesus Christ, He has saved you—and me! Jesus paid His own blood, His own life, for you to be saved. He did it because He wanted to. He did it because He is love.

“Afterward he rose again from the dead, swallowed up and devoured death, and finally ascended into heaven and assumed dominion at the right hand of the Father. The devil and all his subjects must be subject to him and lie beneath his feet until finally, at the Last Day, he will completely divide and separate us from the wicked world, the devil, death, sin, etc. But the proper place to explain all these different points is not in the brief children's sermon, but rather the longer sermons throughout the whole year, especially at the times appointed for dealing at length with such articles as Christ's birth, passion, resurrection, ascension, etc. (BoC, p.435).”

You read that right, but you probably got the wrong idea. Luther did refer to children's sermons, but he did not mean brief messages given to children prior to the fuller sermon at a Sunday morning service. Luther was drawing a distinction between the sermons given throughout the week (Yes, they had sermons everyday) and the longer ones on Sundays. If you have a Book of Concord with footnotes, you might read that it says “that is, sermons at weekday worship services, which were designed primarily for children and servants.” But again, note that these sermons were not long enough to do this article justice.

As Luther concludes, “Indeed, the entire gospel that we preach depends on the proper understanding of this article. Upon it all our salvation and blessedness are based, and it is so rich and broad that we can never learn it fully (BoC, p.435).” Having just heard about Jesus' birth at Christmas, His life over the last few months, and His resurrection on Easter last month, do you feel that you know it all? Let us continue to gather and hear the proclamation of Jesus' victory through Law and Gospel preaching, that we might continue to learn and grow in it, and—though it is an impossibility in this lifetime—strive toward knowing it fully!

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh