

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! And Happy November! This month we take a look back over the year and give thanks to God for several things. First, we give Him thanks for the believers who have lived and passed on to the glory of heaven ahead of us. While the prophets and saints were only human beings like us, they lived lives of faith as examples for us. Second, we give thanks for our veterans from war. They have fought, and many have died, to preserve the freedoms we have in this country which we hold so dear. Not all of them have been Christian, but we can still be thankful for their sacrifices, whether time away from family before returning or the ultimate sacrifice of dying, to defend us and our freedoms. Finally, we give God thanks for all that He has taught us over this Church Year. Following Thanksgiving, it will be time to say “Happy New Year!” as we enter a new year of hearing God’s Word together. As we prepare for that new year, we take another look at Luther’s Large Catechism.



Last month, we heard that outside our Christian community, there is no grace or forgiveness. “Meanwhile, because holiness has begun and is growing daily, we await the time when our flesh will be put to death, will be buried with all its uncleanness, and will come forth gloriously and arise to complete and perfect holiness in a new, eternal life (BoC, p.438).” This month, as I mentioned before, we remember those saints who have gone before us into the eternal bliss of heaven. They have fought the good fight and have received their crowns of glory. They are the Church Triumphant. We, like Paul, long to be there with them, but at the same time, there are things for us to do here and now.

Echoing Paul, Luther wrote how “(n)ow...we remain only halfway pure and holy. The Holy Spirit must always work in us through the Word, granting us daily forgiveness until we attain that life where there will be no more forgiveness. In that life there will be only perfectly pure and holy people, full of integrity and righteousness, completely freed from sin, death, and all misfortune, living in new, immortal, and glorified bodies. All this, then, is the office and work of the Holy Spirit, to begin and daily increase holiness on earth through these two means, the Christian church and the forgiveness of sins (BoC, pp.438-39).”

It has now been several months ago that we began hearing from Luther’s Large Catechism regarding the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed. We’ve covered several things, so Luther summarizes what we’ve been hearing about: “the office and work of the Holy Spirit” through the means of “the Christian church and the forgiveness of sins.” These are the things we confess together when we conclude speaking the Creed to one another.

We can only speak them in faith because of what Jesus has done for us in living, dying, and being raised on the Third Day, paying for your sins and mine. Since Jesus has granted us forgiveness in this way, and it is applied to us through these means, we live to Him. “Then, when we pass from this life, in the blink of an eye he will perfect our holiness and will eternally preserve us in it through the last two parts of this article (BoC, p.439),” which we’ll hear about as we conclude this section. In the meantime, grace, peace, and mercy be to you as you live to Christ’s glory, looking forward to being with Him either by dying at the time He chooses or His return—whichever comes first. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh

*Happy Thanksgiving and New (Church) Year!!!*