

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

THE PETITIONS AND DOXOLOGY ALONG WITH T.L.H. 458, v. 2 - 9

**Hallowed be Thy Kingdom
Thy name. Thy Kingdom**

*Thy name be hallowed. Help us, Lord, In purity to
keep Thy Word, that to the glory of Thy name
We walk before Thee free from blame. Let no false
doctrine us pervert; All poor, deluded souls convert.*

*come. Thy Kingdom come. Thine let it be
In time and in eternity. Let Thy good Spirit e'er be nigh
Our hearts with graces to supply. Break Satan's pow'r,
defeat his rage; Preserve Thy Church from age to age.*

**Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.**

*Thy gracious will on
earth be done As 'tis in heaven before Thy throne; Obedience in our weal and woe And*

**Give us
this day our
daily bread.**

patience in all grief bestow. Curb flesh and blood and every ill That sets itself against Thy will.

Give us this day our daily bread And let us all be clothed and fed.

From war and strife be our Defense, From famine and from pestilence,

That we may live in godly peace, Free from all care and avarice.

**And lead
us not into
temptation.**

Into temptation lead us not. When evil foes against us plot And vex

our souls on every hand,

Oh, give us strength that

we may stand Firm in the faith,

a well-armed host, Through comfort of the Holy Ghost!

**But deliver
us from
evil.**

From evil,

Lord deliver us; The

times and days are perilous. Redeem

us from eternal death, And when we

yield our dying breath, Console us, grant us calm

release, And take our souls to Thee in peace.

**And forgive us
our trespasses,
as we forgive**

**those who trespass
against us.**

Forgive our sins, Lord, we

implore, Remove from us their burden sore, As we their

trespasses forgive Who by offenses us do grieve. Thus let us

dwell in charity And serve our brother willingly.

**For Thine is the
kingdom and the
power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Amen, that is, So shall it be. Confirm our faith and

hope in Thee That we may doubt not, but believe

What here we ask we shall receive. Thus in Thy

name and at Thy word We say: Amen.

Oh, hear us Lord!

'The More You Know'

From time to time network television puts on the air a public service announcement with the catchy phrase, "The more you know." The commercial makes use of popular actors who promote the ideals of staying in school, abstaining from drugs, and other matters of health, safety, and education. The basic idea seems to be the sensible truth that "the more you know" the better off your life will be.

The same pattern holds true with matters of the soul. The more you know your Bible, the better off your spiritual life will be.

It almost goes without saying that Christians should read and study their Bibles. But we know how easily the task of Bible study is left undone. So many other activities crowd into our lives taking up our time and motivation. When a person determines to exercise regularly, he looks for some incentive to take the time and make the effort. Consequently he prods himself

with the reminder that exercise will lead to better health.

When we study the Bible at home or in church, it will certainly involve the exertion of time and effort, but that exertion will pay off in real benefits that last forever.

**** The more you know the Word, the more God will strengthen your faith in Him.**

It's a fact of Scripture that the Holy Spirit creates our faith and sustains it. But He does so through the means of grace, that is, through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament.

When you read the Word in home devotions or take advantage of Bible Class to learn and review the great doctrines of salvation through Christ, the Spirit is working mightily to nourish your faith and make it stronger.

You can think of your personal Bible reading and your church's Bible study as a much-needed meal—spiritual food that will fuel a growing faith in

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Helpful Thoughts When Making Personal Use Of The Lord's Prayer

Heavenly Father, because Jesus alone paid for all my sins, I am sure-ly Your beloved child and confidently ask You:

Please enable me to honor Your name by what I teach and how I live. Also let Your Holy Spirit set up His kingdom in my heart and may Your good and gracious will be done in my life as it is done in heaven.

Give me this day my earthly needs. Give me a grateful spirit for all of them, including the unpleasant ones which you know must be given to me.

Heavenly Father, forgive my many and great trespasses against You. May Your forgiveness of my trespasses against You cause me to heartily forgive and willingly do good to those who trespass against me.

Faithful Shepherd, take my hand and lead me over life's rough way. Lead me beside still waters and into paths of right doing. But please, do not lead me into situations filled with temptation.

Instead, deliver me from all evil. Deliver me from Satan, from the Christ-less world, and especially from my own inherited devil-spirit. Deliver me from their control over me during this earthly life and deliver me from them completely in the life to come.

Heavenly Father, without a doubt, You have been granting me these requests over the past years, are doing so now, and will continue to do so in the future.

Why? Because no creature has authority to stop You. Yours is the kingdom. Nor does anyone have the ability to stop You. Yours is the power. Therefore, Heavenly Father, no one, especially me, deserves any of the honor and praise. Yours is the glory both now and forever.

All this is most certainly true. Amen!

—Submitted by Pastor Robert Mackensen

Christ.

will.

** The more you know the Word, the more you think in terms of God's

Christian faith is a power within the believer's heart, a power that leads us to

live our lives in loyalty and devotion to the Lord who bought us.

But we don't automatically know what God would have us do to serve and please Him. We need the Word to show us the way. Your faith will prompt you to ask the question, "What does God want me to do in my marriage, in my child-rearing, at my job, in my neighborhood, at my church?"

And the Scripture will give you the answers—answers that are found and applied through personal Bible study. The more you learn from your Bible, the more it will influence your heart and mind to think spiritually. That is, you will learn to base your attitudes, opinions, and world-view on the truth that God has spoken.

**** The more you know the Word, the more you know the truth.**

When Lutheran Christians are instructed and confirmed in the church, they confess to believe all the doctrines contained in Scripture.

They confess to believe in the teachings of infant baptism and the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. They confess to believe in the six-day creation, the vir-

gin birth, the resurrection of Christ, the final judgment, the permanence of marriage, the divine call of the pastor, the principles of church fellowship, and so forth.

Hopefully their confession is based on knowing what the Bible says to prove these doctrines as divine truth. Unfortunately, if we fail to reinforce these convictions through Bible study, the convictions will fade. Instead of saying with confidence, "We believe that Scripture says . . .," we may find ourselves confessing, "My church says . . ." or "My pastor says . . ."

Once we lose the scriptural moorings of our confessional beliefs, it doesn't take much to lose the actual confession. We start to doubt "what the church says" if we don't understand the scriptural reason why a certain doctrine is true.

Thankfully we are steadily reinforced in our doctrinal convictions by regular and thorough study of the Bible.

At all times in the year and throughout our lives, we can think of ourselves as students who continually enroll in the ongoing study of God's Word. It's always a mistake to think that we have



Pastor Mark Gullerud, Messiah, Eau Claire, Wis. addressed the delegates to the 1996 Synod Convention.

“graduated” from Christian education.

When the Word is put to use, the Christian’s knowledge of Scripture will become more in-depth. You will also discover where the principles of Scripture can be applied to your daily lives. The benefits are there, if we make the effort and stay with it.

Let’s also remember that our study of the Scriptures will be guided and blessed by the Holy Spirit who leads us to know the truth. He’s the One who makes potential benefits come true in the hearts and lives of His people.

—*Pastor Steven Sippert*



WHY BE ORTHODOX?

The word “orthodox” means “true teaching.” It is the opposite of “heterodox,” which means “other teaching,” that is, teaching other than that which God teaches. So the comparison is true-teaching versus false-teaching. It is used to describe the character of an individual or assembly and the doctrine which they espouse.

One Intended Meaning

Every sincere Christian desires to be orthodox, for that means believing and teaching faithfully what God has taught in His Word. We do not want to believe or teach anything other than that which God has taught.

Two different people can both be considered good citizens and patriotic, even though they may be at totally opposite ends of the spectrum philosophically. This, however, cannot exist within the Christian Church. There cannot be those who believe and teach one thing and those who believe and teach something totally opposite, and yet both sides still be correctly considered faithful followers of God and one in Christ.

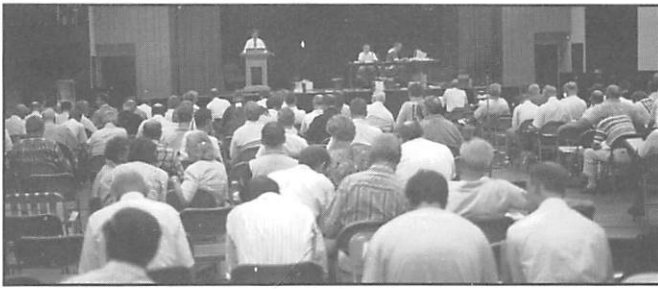
God has not given us a broad spectrum of doctrinal variations from which to choose. The doctrines taught by God cannot be correctly understood many different ways. People like to say, “Well, you can interpret a passage

your way and I will interpret it my way, and we can both be right.” Not so, as we read in 2 Peter 1:21: “. . . no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.” Each passage has one divinely inspired meaning, not many. And God’s Word is certainly not to be the object of subjective conjectures by anyone.

The goal of the child of God in reading Scripture and seeking to learn what God teaches is to discover the one Spirit-given meaning of each passage, and not to try and find out “what does this passage mean to me?” It does not mean something different to you than it does to me. God’s meaning is the same in the passage whether you are reading it or I am reading it. This is but one way in which God’s Word is altogether different from any other writings.

Students Of The Word

So, the child of God is to be a student of the Word. We bring nothing to



The 1996 Convention in session at Immanuel College, Eau Claire, Wis.

the Word. Our own ideas, feelings, prejudices, etc. must be left behind. They can only interfere with our discovery of what God teaches us. Our interest is in "Thus saith the Lord" and not in "And what do you think about it?"

If orthodoxy is our objective, then we must submit our own thoughts and reason to the Lord's eternal wisdom revealed in the pages of Holy Writ. We want our testimony to be nothing more and nothing less than what God has said. Only then are we orthodox, and that is not something we can take credit for. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit who has generated such a love for God's Word in our hearts and a desire to be true teachers of that Word. We thank the Lord that being faithful to His Word is still important to us, that *die reine Lehre* (the pure doctrine, teaching) is still for us the pearl of great price.

The hearts of many Christians have become numb in this regard nowadays. Emotion, enthusiasm, and pseudo-unity have become the focus. The fact remains, however, that without the pure, true, complete teaching of God, there is nothing about which to be enthusiastic and there is no true unity, no unity founded on the Word of Christ. How much more precious is the

unity that is shared on the basis of a oneness of confession and faith in the unchanging Word of our Lord.

Some people say that a person's interpretation of God's Word must change as the situations, circumstances, and morals of the world change. Never! "Heaven and earth shall pass away (with all their latest fads and ideas) but My Word shall *not* pass away" (Mt. 24:25).

Orthodoxy is not an end in itself, however. It is correctly understood as being a *means* to an end. It is centered in that Word which is able to make us wise unto salvation. It must be kept true and pure because it is the only antidote that can deliver our souls from the poison of sin. If we permit it to become diluted with the philosophies of men, then at the very least we jeopardize salvation. St. Paul declares that "the Gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Any error that is permitted by men to creep in can only reduce the efficiency of this wonderful power.

Beware Heresy!

When a church is said to be orthodox, that is not the same as saying that it is infallible. Heresies are able to find their way into even the most devout

gathering of believers. As we read in 1 Cor. 11:19: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

When a heresy looms, then it is edifying for the members to study God's Word all the more. Additionally, a cleansing will take place, and those faithful to the Word will be revealed. Such a matter is not decided by majority but by God's Word. (For example, the vast majority at the time of Elijah were wrong.) There is the danger that a gathering of orthodox believers will become proud, feeling that *they* would never be guilty of permitting error to enter their assembly. They need to beware, for they are on the verge of falling hard.

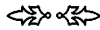
A simple review of history shows that error and errorists show up even among the most sincere believers. Paul had to scold the Galatians, saying: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched

you, that ye should not obey the truth...?" Think of what terrible influence Arius had upon the outward church with his lie that Jesus was not true God!

A church that has an orthodox character needs to be always on the ready for the wolves from within and without who will speak perverse things (Acts 20:29-30). And when it is discovered that an error has found a place, and perhaps it has been in place for a long time, they dare not let pride affect their judgment. It is far better to say "Lord, be merciful to us and forgive us for giving error so long a place among us" than to say "Error? What error? We are orthodox!"

May the Lord preserve in our hearts such a love for Him and His Word, that we preserve His Word in truth and teach His Word in purity. May we never stand for anything less!

—Pastor Delwyn Maas



Studies In Galatians

Standing Fast In The Liberty By Which Christ Has Made Us Free (See 5:1)

Chapter 4:8-20

PRECIOUS MEMORIES

"Oh, Pastor, I am getting so forgetful in my old age. I just can't seem to remember anything. I wonder if I have Alzheimer's disease." Certainly such thoughts and fears have been expressed more than once by shut-ins and others. And whether it is a matter of little import such as remembering where one laid down a pencil, or something more serious such as forgetting that one left a stove burner on high, the loss of memory has wide-ranging consequences.

When stories are told of people with amnesia, it is usually considered an affliction and many problems are solved by the recovery of memory. Our schools also teach courses in history because it amounts to a kind of amnesia for a people to be unaware of what has happened before their own time.

When it comes to our relationship with God, memory is even more important. Consider Peter in the courtyard of the High Priest. He was busy cursing and swearing that he knew nothing of Jesus, until the Lord looked at him and "*then Peter remembered the word of the Lord*" (Lk. 22:61). This led to Peter's contrition and eventual restoration as an apostle.

Or think of the women going to the tomb on Easter morning, perplexed and fearful when they saw the stone rolled away, the tomb empty, and the angels who suddenly stood by them. The angels reminded them of how Jesus had told them that all this would take place, and "*then the women remembered his words*" (Lk. 24:8). They returned from the tomb with fear and great joy!

Many years later, when Peter wrote his second epistle, he urged believers to grow in grace, adding to their faith goodness, and knowledge, and perseverance, and brotherly kindness, and love. If anyone does not have these qualities, he says, "He is nearsighted and blind, and *has forgotten* that he has been cleansed from his past sins" (2 Pet. 1:9).

Dangerous Forgetfulness

When Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, they too were in danger of forgetting the path on which the Lord

had set them in connection with Christ Jesus. They had been rescued from worshiping as gods things that were nothing of the kind. In their idolatry they had imagined that their status with "the gods" depended on outward things such as rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices.

From this they had been rescued by the free gift of grace in Jesus Christ. If they remembered that, how could they now go over to Judaistic teachings which taught that their status with God depended on outward things, such as rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices? "You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you" (Gal. 4:10).

But if they remembered how God's gospel had brought them joy, and how grateful they had been for it, even when it came from an apostle weakened by illness and infirmity, how could they now think that the one they had considered an angel from God had become their enemy, and hid from them the true way of salvation?

Childhood Memories

Paul was certainly agitated and upset when he penned this brusque letter, but he also revealed to them the reason for his manner of writing: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you."

The apostle was thinking of them as his dear children in mortal danger, and thus his warning was swift and strong. He was not concerned that they be his followers, as the false teachers were.



A CLC sister congregation of the Bharath Ev. Lutheran Church at Indra Nager, India

He wanted them to be like him only in their reliance on God's gospel so that Christ might be formed in them. He wanted to talk to them face to face and then his tone could change as he saw the light of understanding dawn in their eyes. The written letter did not permit such adjustment of tone, but a face-to-face meeting was not possible and this matter could not wait until it was.

Paul knew how easy it was for Christians to forget their Way and take the side road of reliance on (their own) outward deeds for their status with God. They were very zealous, but just having zeal does not ensure that one is on the right road.

It was the gospel of peace through Jesus Christ that had taught them to say "No" to ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12), and now they were in danger of thinking that it was simply saying "No" that would keep them safe. The Old

Testament laws said a mighty "No" to many things, and some might imagine that a stronger "No" equaled a stronger faith. Thus the gospel could be bypassed, and Paul's preaching among the Galatians would have been completely unnecessary!

Did this reminder jog the Galatians' memory so that they once again found their joy in Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Consider that the letter was not cut into strips and burned in the fireplace but preserved among the churches to this very day.

For this we thank God the Holy Spirit, for through the reminder of Paul He has also reminded many a Christian of how God remembers him or her (Gal. 4:9) in Christ Jesus.

May such a memory also be ours.

—Prof. Paul Schaller



SMORGASBORD

* **GETTING EXCITED ABOUT A SYNOD CONVENTION (!?)**

Synodical conventions are often

seen as anything but exciting and electrifying. How does one get excited anyhow about sitting in meetings in hot and



The new ILC Commons and Dining Hall (left) and the multi-purpose auditorium

humid weather to wee hours of the night discussing doctrinal matters, ‘hammering out’ budgets and programs . . . ?

“Try it, you’ll like it.” On-site experience proves that, far from being just dull and tedious (yes, they can be that at times), more often sessions are stimulating and inspiring. They are that mostly because the Spirit is there daily and richly in the Word, formally in devotions and essays and informally in floor-debate and out-of-session “under the fig tree” (cf. 1 Kgs. 4:25, Micah 4:4) conversation.

Surely none can be unstirred, unmoved, and unaffected when the assembly joins voices in hymns of praise to Him who is the entire reason for being there in the first place.

Speaking of “electricity” at Convention, an unsolicited but wel-

come writing recently came to us. The article called “Thoughts About The Convention” is by Greg Kesterson, a member of our congregation in Sioux Falls, S. Dak.

As we now share excerpts from Greg’s thoughts, may a good deal of “un-convention-al” excitement rub off on the rest of us.

“I will not be going to this year’s CLC convention, But I do have some thoughts concerning this greatest event.

“. . . Essays in the past have attempted to cover a wide variety of subjects from God’s Word and I have received some of my greatest spiritual refreshment when I pondered what these papers talked about. The Lord’s hand was truly blessing me in a very wonderful way by all of these wonderful convention essays.



Delegates “on the left” at 1996 Convention



m (right) will again be the site of the 23rd CLC Synod Convention in Eau Claire, Wis.

“As an ILC graduate, I am always so fondly interested in how that school changes from year to year while still giving out that same glorious gospel message that it does. You might even say that ILC (exemplifies) the life, type and blood of the CLC. In this way the Lord preserves this school so that it may tell forth His Word from generation to generation.

“I also remember observing with keen interest how (the delegates) would hammer out the CLC budget for each two-year period, as they attempted to use God’s gift of money along with all of His other gifts to us in a spirit of thanksgiving. Moreover, our CLC Board of Doctrine leads the way in keeping our church body orthodox, being themselves led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. I also greatly love

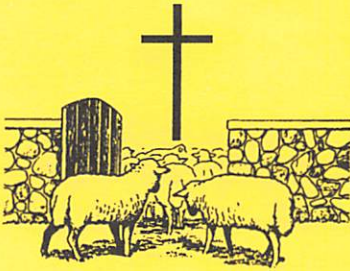
the idea of missions . . . Mission work always enables us to do many fruitful activities for our dearest Savior as we tell others of their terrible, desperate need for Him and also the greatest things He has done for them. . . .

“And now I would like to speak of the fondest, most beautiful convention memory which I have. This memory concerns that most fabulous night of June 20, 1996. That convention’s committee on doctrine painstakingly created a document with joint cooperation by some of those who had been on the other side of the third use of the law controversy. . . . We welcomed back into fellowship those who had been separated from us for 18 years. We all besought forgiveness for our offenses against one another. Following all of this there was a doxology which everyone sang in



Delegates “on the right”

Twenty-Third Convention



*Immanuel Lutheran College
Eau Claire, Wisconsin*

June 15-19, 1998

greatest praise to our God who brought all this about. . . .

“By the time of this year’s convention . . . may our dearest Lord grant us that same spirit of devoutness and reverence. . . . May He call us to praise and glorify His greatest and most Holy Name in every way that we can as we employ the name and the power of the Holy Spirit in order to do this most marvelous task.”

Thanks, Greg, for the encouraging words. Let’s all be praying for the delegates at the 23rd CLC Convention.

*** CHRISTIAN YOUNG PEOPLE ‘SHINING’** (*Glenn Oster of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church & School, West Columbia, S.C. agreed to let us share with you his recent e-mail posting. Under the title “Let your light shine...” it related the following true story:)*

Several young ladies (high school freshmen and sophomores) from our congregation went out to eat together over the recent spring break.

They didn’t realize that a man eating in a (near-by) booth immediately

noticed them. He watched as they all bowed their heads and prayed together before the meal. He watched as they engaged in lively conversation, without becoming “wild.” He noticed the respect they showed their server.

As he got up to leave, he walked over to their table, picked up their ticket, and told them that their meal was on him. He stated that it wasn’t very often that teenagers behaved as they did, and he wanted to show them that that type of behavior was very much appreciated.

These young ladies are all results of Christian upbringing and graduates of our Christian Day School. It is wonderful and gratifying to see that the Christian training we offer in our homes and in our schools makes such an obvious difference in our kids. Praise to the Lord!

*** ‘THE MOST GLORIOUS OFFICE IN THE WORLD’**

The “Clergy Talk Discussion Forum” is an E-mail exchange of thoughts and ideas among many of our CLC pastors. The items exchanged include pithy quotes from the pastors’ reading. The following words were posted by Pastor Paul Naumann, DuPont, Wash., who also serves as moderator of this forum.

. . . Teachers of the Word of God are . . . most despised and even hated by the world. Nevertheless their estate and office is the most glorious of all, for the following reasons:

- 1. The work of their office centers about man’s spiritual welfare, his immortal soul.*

2. *They employ the most salutary means and instrument in their work, namely, the Word of the living God.*

3. *They aim at the most salutary and glorious end, namely to make man truly happy in the present life and to lead him to the life of eternal bliss.*

4. *They are most wholesomely engaged in an occupation which entirely satisfies their spirits and advances their own selves in the way of salvation.*

5. *Their labor yields the most precious result, namely, the salvation of man.*

6. *Their labors have the most glorious promise of the cooperation of the Lord, so that they are never entirely futile and in vain.*

7. *Their labors have the promise of a gracious reward, which consists in a glory in the world to come that is unutterably great, exceeding abundantly above all they ever could have asked and prayed for in this life.*

If men would stop to consider these points, they would come crowding into the sacred office of the ministry and that of teachers of religion . . . Parents would deem it a high honor and a special grace of God if they could have their sons trained for this sacred office. (LAW AND GOSPEL, Dr. C. F. W. Walther, p. 285)

Spoken over 100 years ago (May 8, 1885) as part of an evening lecture, Walther's words have never been more

timely. Most church bodies are experiencing a drop-off in young men training for the pastoral ministry as well as "expected" retirements and "unexpected" resignations for a variety of reasons.

If this is true of other church bodies, our CLC is not exempt. It's not that there has been a fall-off of young men studying for the ministry in our midst. Seldom have we had prospects for more than two or three graduates in any given year and there are three pastoral candidates entering the field this Spring. At the same time, as of this writing there are two prospects for the CLC clergy through colloquy.

Yet, at the time the above quote appeared on Clergy-Talk there were seven pastoral vacancies in our midst. Inevitably, more prospects for the classification of retiree loom. The need is always urgent.

As Dr. Walther itemizes them, there are many profound and fulfilling reasons that young men should be encouraged to give more than passing consideration to a work which, while "most despised and hated by the world," is also "the most glorious of all."

Parents, please notice that Dr. Walther refers to you. He implies that your role is crucial in encouraging your son(s) in the direction of the public ministry.

Let us be praying that the Spirit of the Lord move mightily in the hearts of those with the God-given gifts for the most glorious office in the world. ●



LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

Joshua Chapters Six And Seven

God's Victory Over Jericho

Perhaps most of you are familiar with the spiritual “Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho.” It has a rather catchy tune and it doesn't contain any spiritual untruths. It does, however, seem to put the emphasis on the wrong person.

If Joshua had been interviewed after the battle of Jericho there is no doubt that he would have given the credit for the victory entirely to the Lord. After all, this is the same Joshua who later spoke those well-known words: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15).

Joshua became famous after this battle only because he faithfully carried out the instructions of his Lord. It is this gift of victory which will be the focus of this article.

The Promise of Victory

The Lord knows the outcome of battles before they take place. Such was the case with Jericho. One day while Joshua was surveying this ancient, walled city from afar a man who identified himself as the “commander of the army of the Lord” spoke to him. He said that Jericho was already delivered into the hands of Israel.

He went on with detailed instructions as to how Joshua should lead His army against them. He was to march around the city once a day with all of his armed men for six days. On the seventh day he was to have his army march around the city seven times and then

have the trumpets blow and the people shout and the walls would crumble.

Joshua's Obedience

This is not the only time in Scripture where the Lord provided unusual instructions for His followers. The instructions to Gideon in regard to the Midianites come to mind, as do the instructions of Elisha to a leprous Naaman. In each case God was showing His power, eliminating any chance for people to take credit for the victories He produced. Joshua faithfully carried out the instructions of the Lord in every detail. He coordinated the procession of Israel around Jericho with the ark of the covenant as the focal point.

One can only imagine how those in Jericho must have felt as these ominous processions continued. They had heard about the miraculous parting of the Jordan and of Israel's earlier triumphs, and in fear had shut up their city and were relying on their walled defense. But this was no defense against the power of God, for as the Israelites completed their seventh lap on the seventh day and the crowd shouted, the wall collapsed and the Israelite army “charged straight in” (Josh. 6:20).

Joshua's obedience continued with the utter destruction of the city. His army destroyed every living thing—men, women, children, and animals. He also told them to keep away from any of Jericho's religious articles, for they would be a temptation to those who kept them.

Jericho, which probably means "moon city," was a pagan religious center housing many false gods. Included in their worship were child sacrifices and ritual prostitution. God did command them, however, to keep articles of gold, silver, bronze and iron for the treasury of the Lord's house. Joshua then had the city burned and placed a curse on any who would rebuild it.

God's Grace Toward Rahab

Amidst all of this mass destruction of Jericho was the rescue of Rahab and her family. Rahab was the prostitute who had protected the two Israelite spies sent to Jericho and had even helped them to escape. For the kindness she showed them they had promised to save her and her family from harm if Jericho was attacked.

After Joshua entered Jericho he had the spies locate and rescue Rahab and her family. In Matthew 1:5 we learn that Rahab and Salmon were the parents of Boaz, the great-grandfather of David. God in His grace had rescued this Canaanite prostitute and used her in His divine plan for salvation.

Lessons For Us

The biblical account of the fall of Jericho provides many lessons for us today. First, we should be awestruck by the power of our God. Cities built with hands, no matter how ancient or grand,

cannot stand before the wrath and judgment of our God. Jericho was a pagan city filled with people who worshiped false gods and committed deplorable acts.

Does Jericho in any way resemble the cities of our world today? The deities worshiped may be different, but the disregard for God and His Word is very familiar, as are the wanton acts of sin. Let us pray that our God lengthen the days of our cities and that His Holy Spirit works faith and repentance in the hearts of unbelievers.

We should also learn from the Jericho account to follow God's commands however illogical they may appear to us. Joshua did not question the military strategy God had chosen to employ against Jericho. He did not try to save the women and children of the city as "innocent" bystanders. He did not disobey God and then try to rationalize his behavior. He simply carried out the instructions God had given him.

How often do we doubt the promise of God? How often do we question the logic of what God allows to happen to us? How often do we deliberately sin and then try to rationalize our behavior? Let us learn from the faithful example of Joshua.

Finally, we should learn of God's grace to sinners through the story of Rahab. God chose to rescue Rahab, a sinner. God chose to rescue Rahab, a prostitute. God chose to rescue Rahab, a Gentile. Not only did He rescue her, but He chose to use her in fulfilling the promise of a Savior, her Savior!

This should provide us with hope as we look over our lives of sin. If God's promise of salvation was extended to this Gentile sinner, it means that His

promise of salvation is extended to us as well. If God used Rahab to carry out His will on earth, He also uses us, “clay vessels” as we are, to carry out His will.

God rescued sinners like Rahab, and God *rescued* sinners like you and me! Thanks be to God for giving us the victory!

By grace I'm saved, grace free and
boundless
My soul, believe and doubt it not.
Why stagger at this word of promise?
Hath Scripture ever falsehood taught?
Nay; then this word must true remain:
By grace thou, too, shalt heav'n obtain.
(TLH 373:1)

—Prof. Joseph Lau



(The studies which follow were done by a pastor for his own congregation. As we begin the four-part series we include here the pastor's opening 'introduction.')

Introduction

We are orthodox. That is, we teach only and all of God's Word with no admixture of error and no deletions from the sacred Word.

There is an ever present danger for us who would be confessional in that when we speak of “fellowship” we think only of separation and withdrawal. The severance of fellowship (or rather, the expression of it) is called forth when there is no longer the unity and agreement on what God's Word teaches. However, in this study of “koinonia” or fellowship—the word as it is used in context in Scripture—let us see the splendidly positive aspects as well.

***First**, we shall consider how fellowship is the common union of God with man in what we call the church. Our fellowship is first vertical, that is, we by the power of the Spirit believe in God. Through the Word we learn that Jesus is our Redeemer. He has atoned for all our sin and makes us one with God through His sacrificial death and merit. It is then also that our fellowship is horizontal. We are part of the earthly bride of Christ, His Church on earth.*

***Secondly**, our fellowship finds its very intimate expression in the sacrament of the altar. In considering Paul's words to the Corinthians on their fellowship in communion, we see that there is a clear separation from idolatry involved and a very special, mysterious intimacy.*

***Thirdly**, fellowship is not merely a fine sounding word for doctrinal presentations. It is something of the heart that expresses itself in activity. Fellowship means “sharing.”*

***Lastly**, fellowship among us means a very personal relationship, a “partnership” in the Gospel, a “participation” in the Spirit.*

May our gracious God reinforce through His Word that blessed fellowship we have with him and with one another in the church. May He also preserve us in this fellowship until the last day.

Part One: The Vertical And Horizontal Of Fellowship

The word "*koinonia*" is found in noun form in the New Testament some 19 times. It is variously translated as fellowship, communion, partnership, participation, share, contribution, taking part in (all RSV translations except for "communion"). We take up our study of this word to better know how we are to be in our Christian congregations as we await our Lord's return.

You may remember that an apt description of the church at Jerusalem was recorded by Luke in Acts: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers" (2:42). Here we see first of all that fellowship is an activity. Fellowship is not merely having one's name "on the books" of a Christian congregation. We remove names from our membership because individuals no longer practice fellowship with us. To be a member of a Christian congregation in name only is a shallow thing.

Fellowship With God

Fellowship with God and His Son, and with His children on earth, is serious business. The fellowship we are to have is not over coffee but over His Word. The people in the church in Jerusalem continued steadfastly in, devoted themselves to, the apostles' teaching, that is, to the Word of God. To not hear the Word means a dwindling faith. To not study the Word means a puny faith. To not read the

Word means a tenuous faith. Our faith grows as we search the Scriptures, and our fellowship with Him and His children is likewise reinforced.

Very many enter into fellowship with God through the Word in baptism. "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). "The Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith." The most important aspect of this fellowship is our being called into fellowship with His Son. He is the cornerstone of our faith. Upon Him our whole salvation depends. Were it not for Jesus there would be no church, no faith, no hope. The personal relationship we have with Him is paramount. First we look up.

John writes about the vertical and the horizontal fellowship together. "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn. 1:3). Very beautifully the vertical and the horizontal make the cross. That which is the symbol of our holy religion is a picture of the common union we have in Christ. John says: "we proclaim to you." It is just through this proclama-

tion of the Gospel that the union is formed by the Holy Spirit.

Fellowship With One Another

And once we have fellowship with Him our lives simply change. Our relationship to people also changes. "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:5-7).

In other words, can you murder your son and be in fellowship with God? Can you visit a prostitute and visit the communion table? If a sin is rebuked but not repented of then fellowship is called into question. How can one want fellowship with the Savior from sin if sin is not acknowledged and repented of? Impenitence makes Jesus of no effect in one's life and cancels the fellowship with God and with His church. Either we are in the light or we walk in darkness. It is the blood of Jesus Christ alone that cleanses us from all sin. But we can reject the cleansing. We can cast aside His forgiveness, as we prefer to do those evil deeds in the darkness.

A very important part of our fellowship is the open confession of sin to God and to one another. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his

word is not in us" (1 Jn. 1:8-10). To have fellowship with the Lord and His people, sin simply must be confessed. True confession is not "if I have sinned" or "if I have done wrong." There are no "if's" about it. It is properly "because I have sinned...." and "since I have sinned...." We must admit how we have sinned and also acknowledge what we rightly deserve for our sin.

And how do we know that we have sinned? We come back to the Word. As Jesus is the Light of the world to shine into our hearts through the Word, so also His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path to expose our missteps. When we measure our lives by the holy Ten Commandments we must cringe. It is by deed, by word, by thought that I sin. Against the holiness of God I see clearly my black nature. It is only then that we can truly treasure Jesus, whose blood cleanses us from all sin. Against my hating there is His loving. Against my weakness there is His strength. Against my wickedness there is His righteousness.

The Power Of The Gospel

Knowing the power of the Gospel in our lives brings us to one last point. Being called by the Word into fellowship with Him means suffering. As they treated Him, so they will treat you. You are not above the Master. "... Know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Php. 3:10). To be in the fellowship means to suffer. As Jesus was mocked, so we should be expecting mockery for our holding to the Word. As Jesus was laughed at when He would raise a child from the

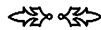
dead, so we should expect deriding scorn for our firm conviction in the Word.

We can meet any and all comers because we are in fellowship with Him. As He overcame so we overcome and have already overcome in Him. We even welcome suffering, as it draws us closer to Him. "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our heart through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:3-5).

How sad for the word "fellowship" to have a bad connotation. It shouldn't. It is positive in every way. At times we seem to be somewhat apologetic for our teachings. How wrong! We have nothing to be ashamed of with regard to our teachings, as they are drawn directly from God's Word. We come to church for fellowship over the Word, to hear of our sin and of our Savior. In our fellowship we get the proper direction from the light of the Word for the coming week.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hope, our aims, are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

—*Pastor (now missionary) David Koenig*



Parables Of The Master

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Tares

Do you know what "cheat" is? My grandfather told me about it. He homesteaded in northeastern North Dakota early in this century. Wheat was an important crop. "Cheat," also known as "darnel" (and "tares" in the parable) was a troublesome weed which grew in the wheat fields.

The young plants are hard to distinguish from the wheat. This "look-alike" factor makes it difficult to remove the weeds before the harvest when the seed heads make the difference more apparent. With earlier attempts at removal, mistakes would be made and wheat ripped up with, and instead of, the weeds.

Even today control is difficult because of the close relationship between the wheat and the weed. Herbicides which would kill the weed must be very selective or they will harm the wheat as well.

Of course, there were no herbicides in Jesus' time. So, the solution given in the parable was to wait until the harvest. Then the weeds could be detected and removed without damage to the wheat.

While Jesus was speaking about plants in the parable, He really had people in mind. As He explained, He is the sower. The world is the field. The good seed are people in whom God's Word

has accomplished its purpose of bringing them to faith in Jesus.

The enemy is the devil. The weeds are the people whom the devil has led to resist the Word and to remain in unbelief. The harvest is Judgment Day when the difference between the believers and unbelievers will be clearly evident. Then the unbelievers will be removed for eternal damnation.

It is the handling of the "tares" with which the parable is chiefly concerned. The kingdom of heaven is found throughout the world wherever the Word is taught. In its earthly state, the kingdom of heaven includes all those who are associated with the visible church. Among them are hypocrites, people who wish to be known as Christians but who possess no faith in Jesus.

There has been the temptation since the beginning of the Christian era to purge the church of tares. But only God can read hearts and determine the presence or absence of faith. Imagine the spiritual wreckage that would result from zealous people trying to identify and eject people from the church for lack of faith. That is why Jesus tells us that He does not want anyone to attempt to remove the hypocrites. He will send His holy angels to do that on the Last Day.

Does this rule out church discipline and excommunication? No. There is a clear difference. Church discipline is the loving effort to lead known sinners to repent of their sins. Excommunication is the last step in seeking to help an impenitent sinner. It is the apostle Paul writing under inspiration who urged: "Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit

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may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5).

Hypocrites we cannot help. We are unable to recognize them. We leave them to the Lord's judgment. Sinners we can identify. Toward them we are to direct our loving efforts to lead them to repentance and eternal life.

May we always make that distinction. And may we never forget what a blessing it is to be wheat plants in the Lord's field. Thank God that the Holy Spirit has made us such by sowing the gospel in our hearts so that we trust in the Savior for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

—Pastor Keith Olmanson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Change Of Address

Ascension Lutheran Church
Pastor Paul Naumann
3315 46th Street E.
Tacoma, WA 98443
Phone (253) 922-8736

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, Daniel Fleischer, who was called by Resurrection congregation of Corpus Christi, Texas to be its pastor, was installed on May 3, 1998. Pastor Joel Fleischer did the installing, assisted by Pastors Thomas Schuetze and John Klatt.