

Announcements

- ◆ A warm welcome to all our visitors and guests, friends both old and new. We pray that God has blessed your time among us with His Word and Holy Spirit. We cordially invite you to join us this morning for coffee and other refreshments downstairs following the Divine Service; and we ask that you please sign the guest book at the back of the church.
- ◆ Following coffee & refreshments this morning, our Family Bible Class will continue our study of Genesis, following Dr. Luther's Lectures on that book.
Catechesis class for younger and beginning catechumens meets at the same time. Also, Mike Jindra and Ian Walsh are teaching a catechesis class for children of approximately eight through twelve years of age. And Dave Smith is teaching a class for teenagers and others who may be interested.
- ◆ This Friday and Saturday, Pr. Stuckwisch and Dcs. Rhein will be attending an LCMS stewardship conference in Plymouth, IN, on behalf of Emmaus.
- ◆ There will not be catechesis class on Friday this week, since Pastor will be in Plymouth. All catechumens who can should attend the Wednesday class.
- ◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 28 MAY 2017: \$ 1,252.00
In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2400 is needed each week.
- ◆ The Altar flowers this morning have been provided by Linda Levine to the glory of God, in memory of her parents Victor & Marian's birthdays.
- ◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS EASTER DAY: (ELDER) Eldon Knepp; (USHERS) Erik & Matthew Horner; (ACOLYTE) Gerhardt Stuckwisch; (ORGANIST) Dcs. Sandra Rhein; (GREETER) Pat Nering.
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“Let us learn diligently this art of distinguishing between the two kinds of righteousness, in order that we may know how far we should obey the Law. We have previously said that in a Christian the Law must not exceed its limits but should have its dominion only over the flesh, which is subjected to it and remains under it. When this is the case, the Law remains within its limits. But if it wants to ascend into the conscience and exert its rule there, see to it that you are a good dialectician and that you make the correct distinction. Give no more to the Law than it has coming, and say to it: ‘Law, you want to ascend into the realm of conscience and rule there. You want to denounce its sin and take away the joy of my heart, which I have through faith in Christ. You want to plunge me into despair, in order that I may perish. You are exceeding your jurisdiction. Stay within your limits, and exercise your dominion over the flesh. You shall not touch the conscience. For I am baptized; and through the Gospel I have been called to a fellowship of righteousness and eternal life, to the kingdom of Christ, in which my conscience is at peace, where there is no Law but only the forgiveness of sins, peace, quiet, happiness, salvation, and eternal life. Do not disturb me in these matters. In my conscience not the Law will reign, that hard tyrant and cruel disciplinarian, but Christ, the Son of God, the King of peace and righteousness, the sweet Savior and Mediator. He will preserve my conscience happy and peaceful in the sound and pure doctrine of the Gospel and in the knowledge of this passive righteousness.’

“When I have this righteousness within me, I descend from heaven like the rain that makes the earth fertile. That is, I come forth into another kingdom, and I perform good works whenever the opportunity arises. If I am a Minister of the Word, I preach, I comfort the saddened, I administer the Sacraments. If I am a father, I rule my household and family, I train my children in piety and honesty. If I am a magistrate, I perform the office which I have received by divine command. If I am a servant, I faithfully tend to my master’s affairs.

“In short, whoever knows for sure that Christ is his righteousness not only cheerfully and gladly works in his calling but also submits himself for the sake of love to magistrates, also to their wicked laws, and to everything else in this present life — even, if need be, to burden and danger. For he knows that God wants this and that this obedience pleases Him.

“So far the argument of the Epistle, which Paul sets forth because of the false teachers who had obscured this righteousness of faith among the Galatians. Against them he asserts his authority and office.

“GALATIANS 1:1–2. ‘Paul an Apostle — not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead — and all the brethren who are with me.’

“Now that we have set forth the argument and have shown the summary of this Epistle to the Galatians, it seems appropriate, before we come to the content itself, to indicate the occasion for Paul’s composition of this Epistle. He had planted the pure doctrine of the Gospel and the righteousness of faith among the Galatians. But immediately after his departure false teachers crept in; they subverted everything that he had planted and taught so well. For the devil cannot do otherwise than attack this doctrine vehemently, with might and with craft; nor does he rest as long as he sees even a spark of it remaining. We, too, merely because we preach the Gospel purely, suffer all sorts of evil both on the right hand and on the left from the world, the devil, and the devil’s apostles.

“For the Gospel is a doctrine that teaches something far more sublime than the wisdom, righteousness, and religion of the world. It leaves these things at their proper level and commends them as good creatures of God. But the world prefers those creatures to the Creator. Finally, through them it wants to abolish sin, to be delivered from death, and to merit eternal life. This the Gospel condemns. But the world cannot bear the condemnation of that which it regards as best. Therefore it charges the Gospel with being a seditious and erroneous doctrine that subverts commonwealths, principalities, kingdoms, empires, and religions; it accuses the Gospel of sinning against God and Caesar, of abrogating the laws, of subverting morality, and of granting men the license to do with impunity whatever they please. With righteous zeal, therefore, and with the appearance of high service to God (John 16:2), the world persecutes this doctrine [of the Gospel and the righteousness of faith] and despises its teachers and followers as the greatest plague there can be on earth.”

“By the proclamation of this doctrine, moreover, the devil is overthrown, and his kingdom is cast down. From his hands are torn the Law, sin, and death; through these powerful and invincible tyrants he has subjugated the whole human race. In short, his prisoners are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and liberty (Col. 1:13). Is the devil supposed to stand for this? Is it not to be expected that the father of lies (John 8:44) will use all his wiles and power to obscure, corrupt, and eradicate this doctrine of salvation and eternal life? In fact, St. Paul complains in this and in all his other Epistles that even in his day Satan was displaying his skill at this business through his apostles.” (To be continued)

(From Dr. Martin Luther’s Lectures on Galatians, A.D. 1535)

