

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 twelves years of age. And Dave Smith is teaching a class for teenagers and others who may be interested.
- ◆ This will be the final week of catechesis classes for this academic year — on Wednesday and Friday, as usual, beginning at 4:30 p.m. Catechumens are encouraged to continue reviewing the Catechism over the summer.
- ◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 4 JUNE 2017: \$ 2,470.00
In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2400 is needed each week.
- ◆ The Altar flowers this morning are provided by Rev. Josh & Sarah Osburn to the glory of God, in celebration of their ninth wedding anniversary.
- ◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS EASTER DAY: (ELDER) Rob Rhein; (USHERS) Ariksander Stuckwisch & Egon Tribble; (ACOLYTE) Timmy Jindra; (ORGANIST) Dcs. Sandra Rhein; (GREETERS) Lois Veen & Marilyn Dulmatch.
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

*Father most holy, merciful and tender;
Jesus, our Savior, with the Father reigning;
Spirit of comfort, Advocate, Defender,
Light never waning;*

*Maker of all things, all Thy creatures praise Thee;
All for Thy worship were and are created;
Now, as we also worship Thee devoutly, hear Thou our voices.*

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“By the proclamation of this doctrine [of the Gospel and the righteousness of faith] 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 demonic angels.

“In our day, too, we complain and lament that Satan has done more damage to our Gospel by [the radical protestant reformers] than by all the tyrants, kings, princes, and bishops who have ever persecuted it and who go on persecuting it by force. If we had not been on our guard here in Wittenberg and worked so diligently to plant and teach this doctrine of faith, we would not have remained in harmony for so long; but sects would have arisen even in our midst long ago. But because we continue in this doctrine and never stop stressing it, it preserves us in the most complete unity and peace. Others, however, who either neglect it or seek to teach what they suppose is something more sublime, fall into various vicious errors and endless sects, and so they perish. It seemed good to us to show here in passing why the devil and the world are so spiteful against the Gospel, even though it is the Word of life and eternal salvation.

“I have referred earlier in this Epistle to the occasion for St. Paul’s discussion of Christian righteousness, namely, that right after he had gone away false teachers among the Galatians had destroyed what he had built up so painstakingly. These false apostles, adherents of Judaism and of Pharisaism at that, were men of great prestige and authority. Among the people they boasted that they belonged to the holy and elect race of the Jews, that they were Israelites of the seed of Abraham, that the promises and the patriarchs belonged to them, finally that they were ministers of Christ and pupils of the Apostles, whom they had known personally and whose miracles they had witnessed. They may even have performed some signs or miracles themselves, for Christ declares that the wicked also perform miracles (Matt. 7:22). When men with such authority come into any country or city, the people immediately develop great admiration for them; and they fool even those who are educated and quite steadfast in the faith. They subvert the Galatians by saying as follows:

“Who is Paul anyway? After all, was he not the very last of those who were converted to Christ? But we are the pupils of the Apostles, and we knew them intimately. We saw Christ perform miracles, and we heard Him preach. But Paul is a latecomer and is our inferior. It is impossible that God should permit us to fall into error, us who are His holy people, who are the ministers of Christ, and who have received the Holy Spirit. Besides, we are many, while Paul is only one. He did not know the Apostles, nor has he seen Christ. In fact, he persecuted the church of Christ. Do you imagine that on account of Paul alone God would permit so many churches to be deceived?”

“In our time, whenever the pope does not have the authority of the Scriptures on his side, he always uses this same single argument against us: ‘The church, the church! Do you suppose that God is so offended that for the sake of a few heretical Lutherans He will reject His whole church? Do you suppose that He would leave His church in error for so many centuries?’ With might and main he insists that the church can never be destroyed or overthrown. This argument persuades many people. With these and similar arguments these false apostles impressed the Galatians, so that Paul lost his authority among them and his doctrine came under suspicion.

“In opposition to this boasting of the false apostles, Paul boldly and with great openness pits his apostolic authority, commends his calling, and defends his ministry. Although he does not do this anywhere else, he refuses to yield to anyone, even to the Apostles themselves, much less to any of their pupils. To counteract their pharisaical pride and insolence, he refers to the events that took place in Antioch, where he withstood Peter himself. In addition, he pays no attention to the possible offense but says plainly in the text that he took it upon himself to reprove Peter himself, the prince of the Apostles, who had seen Christ and had known Him intimately. ‘I am an Apostle,’ he says, ‘and one who does not care what others are. Indeed, I did not shrink from reproving the very pillar of the other Apostles.’

“Finally, in these first two chapters [of the Epistle to the Galatians], he does almost nothing else but set forth his calling, his ministry, and his Gospel. He affirms that it was not from men; that he had not received it from men but from the revelation of Jesus Christ; and that if he or an angel from heaven were to bring any gospel other than that which he had preached, he should be accursed. But what does Paul intend by this bragging? I reply: This doctrine has its purpose that every minister of the Word of God should be sure of his calling. In the sight of both God and man he should boldly glory that he preaches the Gospel as one who has been called and sent.” (To be continued)

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

