

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, Pr. Stuckwisch will continue the discussion of stewardship that we've recently been having. One and all, including youth and young adults, are encouraged to attend and participate. Summer catechesis class for the younger children will meet the same time.

- ◆ Dcs. Rhein will be leaving tomorrow for a couple weeks in Ethiopia, in order to continue her work on the Lutheran Hymnal Project there. Please remember her in your prayers and intercessions as she travels and works.

- ◆ While Dcs. Rhein is in Ethiopia, and as the summer is drawing to a close, we'll be taking a break from our usual Monday evening Vespers. We will resume our usual schedule in September, as the new academic year begins.

- ◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 13 AUGUST 2017: \$ 2,152.00**
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 Lester & Betty Shankle to the glory of God, in celebration of their wedding anniversary.

- ◆ **IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY:**
(ELDER) Dave Smith; (USHERS) Caleb Smith & Ariksander Stuckwisch;
(ACOLYTE) Stefan Horner; (ORGANIST) Deaconess Sandra Rhein;
(GREETERS) Lois Veen & Marilyn Dulmatch.

- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“The question is: What are we to do with sins — not only other people’s but our own? Paul answers that the man who is called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has given Himself for them (Galatians 1:4). These are wonderful words of consolation and promises of the old law: that our sins are not removed by any other means than by the Son of God given into death. Such bullets and such artillery must be used to destroy the papacy, all the religions of the heathen, all ceremonies, all works, all merits. For if our sins can be removed by our own satisfactions, why did the Son of God have to be given for them? But since He was given for them, it follows that we cannot remove them by works of our own.

“It also follows that our sins are so great, so infinite and invincible, that the whole world could not make satisfaction for even one of them. Certainly the greatness of the ransom — the blood of the Son of God — makes it sufficiently clear that we can neither make satisfaction for our sin nor prevail over it. The force and power of sin is amplified by these words: ‘Who gave Himself for our sins.’ We are indifferent, and we regard sin as something trivial, as nothing. Although it brings with it the sting and remorse of conscience, still we suppose that it has so little weight and force that some little work or merit of ours will remove it. But we should note here the infinite greatness of the price paid for it. Then it will be evident that its power is so great that it could not be removed by any means except that the Son of God be given for it. Anyone who considers this carefully will understand that this one word ‘sin’ includes the eternal wrath of God and the entire kingdom of Satan, and that sin is no trifle.

“Therefore this text concludes that all men are the captives and slaves of sin and, as Paul says, are ‘sold under sin’ (Rom. 7:14); and that sin is a very cruel and powerful tyrant over all men throughout the world, a tyrant who cannot be overthrown and expelled by the power of any creatures, whether angels or men, but only by the infinite and sovereign power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was given for it. If we fortify ourselves with this faith, and if with all our hearts we cling to this man Jesus Christ, we shall get a light and a sound judgment that will enable us to make free and certain judgments about every way of life. For when we hear that sin is such an omnipotent tyrant, we immediately draw the inevitable inference: ‘Then what are the papists, monks, nuns, priests, Mohammedans, and sectarians doing when they seek to abolish and overcome sin with their own traditions, preparatory works, satisfactions, etc.? From now on we regard all those sects as vain and vicious; for they not only mar the glory of God and of Christ but remove it entirely, and in its place they advance and establish our own glory.’

*“Pay careful attention to each of these words, ‘Who gave Himself for our sins’ (Gal. 1:4), and note particularly this pronoun ‘our.’ For we find very often in the Scriptures that their significance consists in the proper application of pronouns, which also convey vigor and force. It is easy for you to say and believe that Christ, the Son of God, was given for the sins of Peter, Paul, and other saints, who seem to us to have been worthy of this grace. But it is very hard for you, who regard yourself as unworthy of this grace, to say and believe from your heart that Christ was given for **your** many great sins. In general, therefore, and without the pronoun, it is easy to praise and exalt the blessing of Christ extravagantly, namely, that Christ was given for sins, but for the sins of other men, who are worthy. But when it comes to applying this pronoun ‘our,’ there our weak nature and reason is thrown back; it does not dare approach God or promise itself that it is to receive such a great treasure freely. Therefore it refuses to have anything to do with God unless it is pure and sinless first. Accordingly, even though it reads or hears this sentence, ‘who gave Himself for our sins,’ or something similar, it does not apply this pronoun ‘our’ to itself; it applies it to others, who are worthy and holy, and decides to wait until it has been made worthy by its own works.*

“All this means that human reason would like sin to have no greater force and power than it itself dreams of. Though hypocrites, who do not know Christ, may feel sorry for sin, they still suppose that they can get rid of it easily by their works and merits. In the privacy of their own hearts they wish that these words, ‘who gave Himself for our sins,’ were merely an expression of humility, and that their sins were not serious and real at all but mere trifles and figments. In short, human reason would like to present to God an imitation and counterfeit sinner, who is afraid of nothing and has no sense of sin. It would like to bring one who is well, not one who has need of a physician (Matt. 9:12); and when it has no sense of sin, only then would it like to believe that Christ was given for our sins.

“The whole world feels this way, especially those who want a greater reputation for goodness and holiness than others, such as monks and all self-righteous people. With their mouths they confess that they are sinners; they confess also that they sin daily, though not so much that they cannot remove their sins by their own works. Besides this, they want to bring their righteousness and merit before the judgment seat of Christ and demand that the Judge reward them with eternal life. Meanwhile, since they give the appearance of being very humble friars, they do not claim that they are completely free of sin. They pretend to be guilty of certain sins, and for the forgiveness of these they pray fervently with the tax collector: ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”

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

