

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.
- ◆ We rejoice to welcome Steve & Bridgit Kronewitter into the fellowship of our Emmaus congregation this morning, as Bridgit was baptized yesterday afternoon, and as she and Steve were then also confirmed in their confession of God's Word and faith as they have learned it from Luther's Catechism.
- ◆ Following coffee & refreshments this morning, Pr. Stuckwisch continues our discussion and study of Dr. Luther's Lectures on the Book of Genesis.

Catechesis class for the younger and beginning catechumens meets with Dcs. Rhein at the same time. Nathaniel Rhein and Nicholai Stuckwisch are teaching the catechesis class for children of approximately eight through twelves years of age. And Dave Smith is resuming his class on various Old Testament figures for teenagers and others who may be interested.
- ◆ To wait upon the Lord in repentant faith throughout this Advent Season, beginning this week, we will be gathered for Evening Prayer each Wednesday in December (the 6th, 13th, and 20th) at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ The 33rd Annual "Weihnachts Vespers" {a Christmas Service in the German Language} will be held this afternoon (3 December), at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 51490 Laurel Road in South Bend, beginning at 4:00 p.m.
- ◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 26 NOVEMBER 2017: \$ 2,950.00**

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 Dave & Debbie Smith to the glory of God, in celebration of their 28th wedding anniversary.
- ◆ **IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY:** (ELDER) Eldon Knepp; (USHERS) Erik Horner & Tobias Tribble; (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

“If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.’ All this should be referred to the entire office and ministry of Paul, so that there is an antithesis between his attitude when he was still in Judaism and his present attitude. It is as though he were saying: ‘Do you think I am still pleasing men?’ Thus he says later on in the eleventh verse of the fifth chapter: ‘If I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?’ It is as though he were saying: ‘Do you not see and hear of my daily battles, great persecutions, and afflictions? After I was converted and called to the apostolate, I never sought the favor of men. I did not try to please men; I tried to please God alone. That is, by my ministry and doctrine I seek the glory and favor of God, not of men.’

“Here, too, we see how insidiously and slyly the false apostles tried to increase the hostility of the Galatians to Paul by means of such accusations as these: that he was obliged to teach and observe what the Apostles commanded about circumcision and the Law; that this was obvious from his having circumcised Timothy, cleansed himself with four other men in the temple at Jerusalem, and shaved his head at Cenchreae. These and similar examples they collected and interpreted to Paul’s disadvantage. Then they looked for contradictions and inconsistencies in Paul, as our opponents do nowadays with our books. Thus they tried to convict him of having taught things that were mutually contradictory. ‘Now,’ they said, ‘he is preaching against circumcision, which previously he not only left intact but even observed by circumcising Timothy when the Apostles had instructed him and commanded him to do so.’ From this they concluded that Paul was by no means to be trusted, but that the Law and circumcision were to be observed. But these blind men and leaders of the blind (Matt. 15:14) did not see with what intention Paul and the other Apostles refrained from immediately abrogating the Law and circumcision among the Jews but freely observed them for a while.

“‘For I would have you know, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not man’s Gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ’ (Gal. 1:11–12). This is the central proposition of this chapter, down to the end of the second chapter; it is a refutation and a defense. Here Paul is reciting a sort of personal history. Jerome tortures himself anxiously and labors mightily to harmonize it. But he does not touch the real issue, for he does not consider Paul’s purpose or intention. The histories in the Scriptures are often concise and confused, so that they cannot be easily harmonized, as, for example, the denials of Peter and the history of Christ’s Passion, etc. Thus Paul is not reciting the entire history here.

Therefore I do not expend any labor or concern on harmonizing these things, but here I pay attention only to Paul's purpose and intention.

“The central proposition of this passage is this: ‘My Gospel is not according to man. Nor did I receive it from man; I received it by a revelation of Jesus Christ.’ This proposition he sets forth; he will stick by it, and he confirms it with an oath. He bears solemn witness to the Galatians, to make them believe that he did not learn his Gospel from any man but received it by a revelation of Jesus Christ. And they should not pay attention to the false apostles, whom he accuses of being liars, because they said that Paul had accepted and learned his Gospel from the Apostles.

“When Paul says that his Gospel is ‘not man’s,’ he does not mean that his Gospel is not human; for that is self-evident, and the false apostles, too, bragged that their doctrine was not human but divine. But he means that he had not learned his Gospel by the ministry of men or received it by any human means, as all of us either learn it by the ministry of men or receive it by some human means — hearing or reading or writing or drawing, etc. But he had simply received it by a revelation of Jesus Christ. If someone else wants to make some other distinction that is all right with me. When Paul denies that he received his Gospel from man, he clearly indicates by this that Christ is not a mere man but is true God and man at the same time.

“Paul received his Gospel when he was on the way to Damascus, where Christ appeared to him and spoke with him. Later He spoke with him again in the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 22:17–21). But Paul received his Gospel on the road, as Luke tells the story in Acts 9. ‘Rise,’ Christ says to him, ‘and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do’ (Acts 9:6). Christ does not tell him to enter the city in order to learn the Gospel from Ananias. Ananias was commanded to go and baptize him, to lay his hands on him, to commit the ministry of the Word to him, and to commend him to the church — but not to teach him the Gospel, which he had already received, as he boasts here, by a revelation of Jesus Christ on the road.

“Ananias himself acknowledges this when he says (Acts 9:17): ‘Brother Saul, the Lord who appeared to you on the road has sent me that you may regain your sight.’ Therefore he did not receive his doctrine from Ananias. But having already been called, enlightened, and taught by Christ on the road, he was sent to Ananias, so that he might have the testimony of men also to his having been called by God to preach the Gospel of Christ.”

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

