



10 Commandments

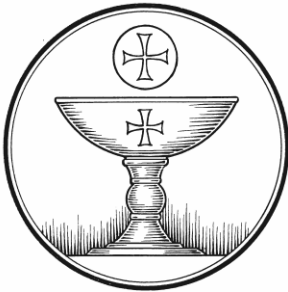


Apostles Creed



Holy Baptism

Lord's Supper



Keys & Confession



Lord's Prayer



Confirmation Essays

**St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church
Class of 2022**

The Bible Is God's True Word

By Travis Pucker

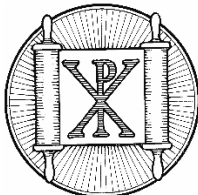
The Bible is God's true Word. This is shown through information revealed to us within the chapters of the Bible. As we look at God's Word, I hope to answer three questions: Why do we need the Bible? How can we trust what the Bible says? And, why the Bible is so important?

God's creation and the conscience within each of us testify clearly that there is a God, so why do we need the Bible? According to 2 Peter, the Bible gives messages we could never have known nor come up with on our own and we will do well if we pay attention to it. He compares it to using a light to guide us in the dark. Though my conscience can be mistaken and creation doesn't tell me the whole story. God's Word does. It illuminates the whole truth for us. ¹⁹ *And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.* ²⁰ *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.* ²¹ *For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21).* 1 Corinthians 2:9,10 further explains, *No eye can see, no ear has heard and what no human mind has conceived, are the things God prepared for those who love him. But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.*

Because it's God's Word, we can trust what the Bible tells us. In Matthew 24:35 the Bible tells us *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words (the words of the Bible) will never pass away.* God's Word, like the one who spoke, it is truthful and eternal. Peter even reminds us that the Apostles saw that truth in person in 2 Peter 1:16, *We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

The Bible is important because it tells us the most important truth we could ever learn. Paul points to it as he speaks to Timothy, *from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:16).* John also tells us, *“these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31).”* As the Holy Spirit works through His Word within us, Paul can confidently tell the Ephesians and all of us, *you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19-20).*

As you can see in both the Old and New Testaments the Bible is God's true Word. The Holy Spirit brought His words to us, written in the Bible that we might be saved.



The Bible's Two Main Doctrines

By Collin Ferriol

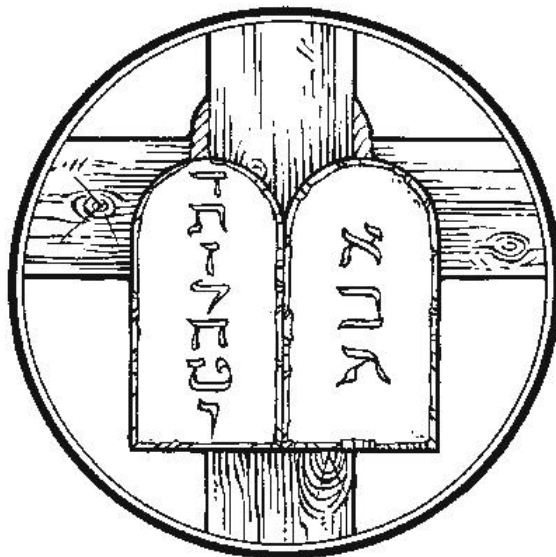
Today I am going to tell you about how the Law and Gospel are important, how they work together, and what the difference is between them.

God has given us His Law through the prophets in his Holy Word and through the Commandments. These Holy Commandments teach us how to live a holy life and teach us how God our Lord wants us to live. A lot of people ask how to earn righteousness in God's eyes but as Romans 3:20 states, *no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the Law; rather, through the law, we become conscious of our sin.*" As you can see we can not earn righteousness by ourselves. The main purpose of the Law is actually not to show us how to get to heaven. Instead, the Law shows us our sin. It is because of this that the Law's main goal is to prepare us for the Gospel.

God has given us His Gospel through His apostles. Jesus lived His whole life being perfect so that we could have eternal life through Him. He dealt with the same temptations that we go through today. Such as fighting back against the people who mocked Him. People even tried to kill Him for His amount of faith. The devil himself tried to tempt Him. Jesus died for us so we may be saved. As Romans 4:25 says, *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.* The Gospel actually tells us how to get to heaven. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that we are saved. When we learn this truth, we will want to live our lives thanking Jesus for what He has done for us.

Now, the Law and Gospel work together to teach us what not to do, what to do, and that we are saved not by what we do but through Jesus' suffering and death. However, God's Gospel is more important because it lets us know that we are saved through Him and that God loves us. As the well-known passage, John 3:16 says, *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

It is my prayer that in this essay we have been reminded that God's Law and Gospel are very important in our lives. They are truly very different teachings, and they work together to show us our need for a Savior and a loving God who gave us Jesus.



Modern Societies' False gods

By Cage Mueller

Modern societies' false gods are everywhere! They are present in houses, landmarks, and other places around the globe. But as believers in God, we know there is only one true God and He wants us to know about false idols that we may avoid them.

False gods or idols do nothing but trick us and lead us away from God and the Word. They ultimately leave us with nothing as Isaiah tells us *All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless* (Isaiah 44:9). But the true God gives faith and forgiveness. Ephesians 2: 8-10 *“For it is by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not from yourselves it is the gift of God not by works so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship created in Jesus Christ to do good works which God prepared in advance for us.”*

But the idols of our world aren't just images of wood or stone. There are also many false prophets throughout the world. Matthew 7:15 tells us to *watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferrous wolves*. False prophets would point us to other gods, sometimes even claiming to be the one true God of the Bible but ultimately something they have made in their minds and hearts.

Some people don't believe there is a God at all. They are called atheists. They want to believe there is no God and they are masters of their own destinies and they aren't responsible for anyone else. The Scriptures call such thinking foolish because by it they ultimately seeks to set themselves up as a god, a truly flawed one. *The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good* (Psalm 14:1).

How does God tell us to avoid these fake objects and prophets? First, He reminds us there is only one true God in Isaiah 45:5 saying *I am the Lord your God and there is no other god besides me*. Then He reminds us why it is so important to follow after Him, *Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other* (Isaiah 45:22).

In conclusion, there are many modern-day idols. Far too many to even mention them all here. However, they all do the same thing. All modern-day false idols try to tear us away from God and His Word. God loves us enough to give us the First Commandment in His Word to warn us and keep us safe. The very same Word shows us every time who the only true God is: The one who loves us and saves us.



How We Keep the Sabbath in the New Testament Era

By Anna Suprenand

Our earthly bodies can get tired after a long day at school and work. Our souls can get tired too, with the weight of guilt, fear, and doubts. We long for tranquility and rest. Sabbath means “rest” in Hebrew. When God asks us to remember the Sabbath, He wants us to appreciate the true rest He offers for our tired souls. God gives us this rest when we worship Him and especially when He guarantees us that our sins are forgiven through Jesus.

How were the people blessed as they observed the Sabbath Day? Well in Exodus 20 verses 9 - 12 God tells us that for *Six days you shall labor and do all your work,* ¹⁰ *but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.* ¹¹ *For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.* Also in Ezekiel 20 verse 12, God says, “*Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy.*” So how were the people blessed as they observed the Sabbath day? Well God gave the Sabbath day to keep a sign between Himself and Israel, “*so they would know that I the Lord made them holy.*” By observing the Sabbath, Israel would give a testimony that He was their God and they were His people who would always acknowledge the day on which He rested after finishing creation.

What does the Third Commandment then mean for us in the New Testament? John 8 verse 47 says, *Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.* So, as believers in God, we belong to Him and we hear Him, but unbelievers who don’t hear God don’t belong to God. And in Colossians 3 verse 16, *Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, sing to God with gratitude in your hearts.* With the Word of God always with us, we can be confident that we will live in the thankfulness that comes from knowing our Savior. So What does the Third Commandment then mean for us in the New Testament? It means God’s word brings rest to our troubled hearts and our lives through its comforting message of forgiveness. The Third Commandment shows how God warns us to not despise His Word but, rather, consider it sacred and hear it and study it gladly.

Why is God’s Word especially important to us? Romans 10 verse 17 says, *Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.* We, believers, hear and know God’s Word. Another passage we can look at is Deuteronomy 32 verse 47, *They are not just idle words for you – they are your life. By them, you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.* God’s Word isn’t a joke. We live by it to keep our faith safe from the harm of sin, and to show our appreciation for everything God has done for us as He secured the eternal gift of Heaven. Again, Why is God’s Word especially important to us? It’s the source of our life. With the craziness in this world going on, we have God’s Word as a guide to keep us safe on the path to Heaven. Without God’s Word, our faith will struggle and perhaps even disappear altogether. That’s a scary thought.

How do we keep the Sabbath in the New Testament era? As believers, we keep the Sabbath when we come together to hear God’s Word and when we spread the Word freely. We can believe and obey God’s Word. We shouldn’t neglect His Word or fail to read His Word. Instead, may we remember the importance of His Word in our lives and the saving message it proclaims.

Respecting God's Authorities

By: Madison Zittlow

God has blessed us by putting many authorities over us. Some we don't realize are there, and some that are very important to us. The 4th Commandment specifically talks about and focuses on why God has placed them over us, and why we should respect them. We are most familiar with our parents being our main authority, but God has placed many others over us.

Who are the representatives God has placed over us? God has placed representatives over us that we don't think much about. How could police officers be representatives of God? Well, they give us rules to follow in order to keep us safe, same with people like firefighters and even the government. Some people find it hard to believe that they help us because they don't agree with some of their rules or opinions. But it's true, and God placed them there for a reason, and we should have confidence in what they say. God says in Hebrews 13:17 that we should always *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

Another question that's frequently asked is how do we dishonor those whom God had placed over us. One of the main things is we let our own sinful nature take over, and disobey what they have asked us to do, or not to do. God wants us to strive to obey our authorities and not sin. He also wants us to not lie or deceive them, or hurt them with our words or actions. In fact, He goes so far as to say in Romans 13:2, *Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

God has blessed us with many authorities to watch over us and to discipline us. God wants us to show our love to them by respecting what they do and say and to use their discipline as a blessing. It's hard to look at discipline as a good thing, but it truly is a blessing. Again, the book of Hebrews instructs us, *No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.* God has placed authorities over us so to keep us safe and help us live in peaceful societies that we might learn His Word in safety.

God has given us many blessings through the people He gives authority over us. Sometimes it's easy to see and other times it may take a bit of effort. We pray that God would lead us to properly respect all authority as the gifts from God they are.



Human Life Is a Precious Gift to Protect

By Layla Schwartz

God creates every single human to be unique in all sorts of ways. Genesis 2:7 says, *“The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”* Because God has given all life, the gift of life is precious and something we should protect and not just throw away.

Each of us should cherish the life that has been given first to us and then to others. No life should be taken or ended by our own doing. We call this murder or suicide. God is the only one who should decide when life is over. In Genesis 9:6, He warns, *Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.*

But it’s not just actual murder God warns us about. Leviticus 19:16 states, *Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbors' life. I am the Lord.* The words we speak, the hatred we hold in our hearts, the actions we may even take part in, can harm our neighbors which in God’s eyes is every bit as wicked. Instead, God urges us to treat others as He treated us, *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you* (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Human life should be cherished by all, whether it is your life or someone else’s. God made all of us and gave us life for a reason. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 6:2, *I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.”* God has given us our lives so that we might come to faith in Him and be saved. He leaves us here so that we might hold His Word out to many others. To end a life is to end that time of grace and no one has the right to do that. Instead, may we joyful serve God in thanks for the gift of life He has given us all.



Purity of Life Is Important to Christians

By Owen Slattery

In the beginning, marriage was the joining of flesh and companionship between one man and one woman. But in recent times, God's gift of marriage has been discredited by the many actions of the world today. Which leads people around us to ask, 'Why is purity of life important?' That is the question I'll be answering today.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him... Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ... For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh (Genesis 2:18,22,24). These passages from Genesis show us that God Himself instituted marriage from the beginning to be the unification between a man and a woman. This union is a perfect gift from God and isn't something that should be taken lightly.

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral (Hebrews 13:4). God wants us to keep these commands, but we sin against Him when we indulge in desires intended for marriage outside of marriage, and also when we do not respect marriage with coarse talking. Instead, God wants us to love our spouse as ourselves, and to commit ourselves fully to them in thought, word, and deed. We can do this by keeping ourselves pure both inside and outside of marriage.

"Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him" Psalm 127: 3. God wants us to keep this commandment so we can enjoy the gifts He gives us through marriage. This passage lists children but companionship with our spouse in marriage and living a truly chaste life as God directs are also blessings He gives to us through marriage.

So why is purity of life important? It is because God seeks to bless us through marriage. A union He Himself instituted and which He wants us to live in purity and joy so that we may enjoy our life on this earth with others.



Using Earthly Possessions in a God Pleasing Way

By Emmitt Slattery

What are possessions? Possessions are the property we own, the wealth we've obtained, and the materials that make up every household. Where does God fit into this? How does He want us to use them? That's what I'm answering here today.

Why should we care about our things? The Bible says in James 1: 17a, *Every good, and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of the heavenly lights.* Because God gave us all our possessions, we want to honor Him by taking care of the things He gives us.

How does God provide us with possessions? The important thing to realize here is that God gave us our possessions. We did not earn them. God says in Deuteronomy 8: 17-18a, *You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.* God lets us gain things by working for them. He does this by giving us all talents and abilities to serve one another, and therefore, serve the Lord. He also gives us these gifts when someone else gives them to us as a gift or through an inheritance.

How do people sin against their possessions? People sin against God and the Seventh Commandment in various ways. God says in, 1 Timothy 6:9-10, *Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.* Our biggest sin against the Seventh Commandment is putting money or other possessions above God and our other duties on earth. This happens when we skip church to work a few more hours, or when we do things such as stealing.

We can sin against our possessions in other ways too. God tells us in 1 John 3:17, *If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in them?* We can still sin by not doing things with our money. When we refuse to help our friends and family with financial aid or other physical problems, God says we are worse than an unbeliever.

How then does God want us to use our possessions? To answer this, let's look at Psalm 37:21, which says, *The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously.* God wants us to give some of our possessions back to Him in the way of offerings. Of course, we are to take care of ourselves, our family, and our friends as well. God allows us to do other things with our possessions too. Even after the essential things like bills and taxes, our God allows us to use our possessions to rest, have fun, and enjoy life on earth.

God wants us to honor Him by the way we use our possessions. Not wasting or neglecting them, but taking care of them, helping others, and giving them back to God. He doesn't want us to worry about gaining more than our neighbor, because He has said, *"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)."*

The Human Tongue: A Use For Good And Evil

By: Bevyn Haase

The function of our tongue can be used in many different ways. Such as a way to digest The food we eat by facilitating the movement of food during chewing and assisting swallowing. Other important functions include speech and taste. The tongue consists of striated muscles that can be used to speak to allow us to spread God's Word and bring encouragement to others. But also, at the same time, our tongues can be evil by acts of speaking ill of someone, lies, or deceit.

We as Christians use our mouths in a God-pleasing way. We are not only encouraging others but are also helping ourselves. We as Christians will gain trust from others. Which will allow them to feel more comfortable and trust that they can talk to you about life or concerns they may have. It can be as simple as a compliment or politely asking how someone's day is. Also, the good name it builds helps us to spread the Gospel of the Lord. We as Christians want to bring others to faith. We open doors to do that by the way we live our daily lives in our words and actions towards others. As Christians, we need to always praise God, pray to God, sing to the Lord and be a witness for the Lord, and praise our heavenly father daily.

Even though we are Christians, we are still tempted by sinful nature. We are tempted to say sinful and harmful words towards ourselves and others. It's easy to blame others, speak unsympathetically to those in need, boast, complain about others, swear or even blaspheme. It's far too easy to use our tongues in ways our God has warned us against.

The Scriptures help us Christians to better understand how we should speak as disciples of Christ. Through a careful study of the Bible, we appreciate all our God has done for us and are encouraged by the loving way He speaks to us in forgiveness rather than in hatred.

We have seen that our tongues can be used in a number of good ways as well as in a number of bad ways. How can it be controlled? Only by the Holy Spirit. Have you ever asked the Holy Spirit to take control of your tongue? And Romans 6:13 we are exhorted to offer the parts of our body to God "as Instruments of righteousness" our hands, eyes, feet, and tongue.

And as we continue on our journey through life, we will be required to face even greater challenges. But we are to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power, by putting on the Armor of Christ and standing firm and abiding in Him, knowing that His grace is sufficient for the greatest challenges. As we struggle, we have God's full assurance that He is by our side, for He has promised, I will never leave you nor forsake you, even to the very end of the age.

The tongue can be the most destructive weapon on earth; its misuse has damaged more lives than all the weapons of war or disease on this earth! The tongue can bring some of life's greatest joys; like someone simply saying "I love you," or it can bring some of the greatest pains; like someone telling you "I hate you!" Let your tongue be an instrument of righteousness, NOT a weapon of destruction!



The Triune God

By Keely Nuey

We believe in one God. Even though it might be hard to explain or even wrap our own brains around for that matter, the Bible clearly tells us that this God is the Triune God: one God in three persons.

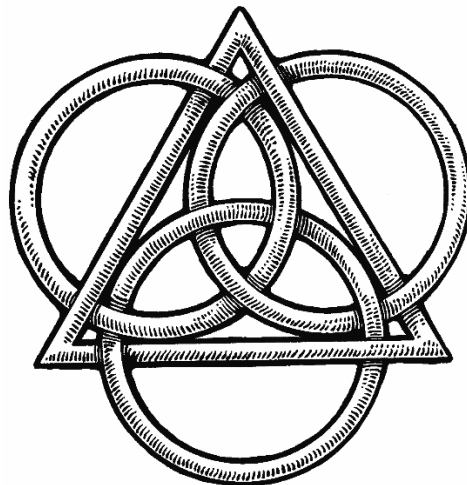
The first person of the Holy Trinity is God the Father. We usually talk about the Father as the person of the Trinity who created and preserves the world. Genesis 1:1 tells us, *“in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”* Not only did God the Father create the earth, He also loved us all enough to send His Son for us. God promised this in John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* And God kept this promise.

God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, came to earth and became true man in order to save us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Mark 10:45 tells us, *“the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* This is shown to be true. Ephesians 5:2 tells us *“Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

The third person of the Holy Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, brings us to faith and preserves us in it. 1 Corinthians 12:3 tells us, *“no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”* The Bible is also inspired by the Holy Spirit. He gave the writers the thoughts and words to write. 2 Peter 2:21 announces, *“prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

It's easy to see that Bible clearly teaches that there are three distinct persons as it speaks of God. Yet the Bible never speaks of three Gods but only one God. Deuteronomy 6:4 reminds us, *“Hear, O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one.”*

It may not make perfect sense to our sinful human brains, but the Bible teaches us our God is three distinct persons in one God. Matthew 28:19 states, *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* While I may not be able to perfectly describe it, I know that this doctrine is for my comfort. The Father loves me enough to send the Son, who actually sacrifices Himself for the sin of the world, mine included, and the Holy Spirit grants me the faith to believe it all and hold it out to others.



Angels

Adler Meyer

Angels do lots of things for us in our everyday lives. Some of the things they do are bringing messages to God's people and taking a person's soul at the time of death. Angels also give us that spiritual protection that we don't even know is there.

They are very active as Jesus comes into the world. In Luke chapter 1 the angel Gabriel announces the good news to Mary and in Matthew chapter 1, gives very similar news to Joseph. In Matthew 2:13-21 God used an angel to tell Joseph to take Mary and the baby Jesus and flee from impending slaughter. In so doing they protected Jesus, His family, and the plan of salvation.

Angels also help us with lots of other things. Hebrews 1:14 announces, *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?* Angels are God's servants helping us as they do the will of God. Psalm 103:20-21 says, *Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.*

Because Angels are also powerful beings they protect us too. Angels protect us from the devil and demons, who are constantly trying to get us to fall into sin and throw away our faith. Psalm 91:11 tells us *God will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.*

This is one of the reasons we talk about guardian angels. In Daniel 6:16-23, God protected Daniel in the lions' den by sending an angel and in 2 Kings 6:8-17, God sent an army of angels to protect Elisha. Psalm 91:12 tells us *they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.*

Angels are mighty beings who do God's will. As we see angels, we are then reminded of the love of our God. He created them, commands them, and sends them to proclaim His Word and protect His people. They are then another reason that you and I can give thanks to our gracious God.



Why Can We Be Confident that Heaven Is Ours?

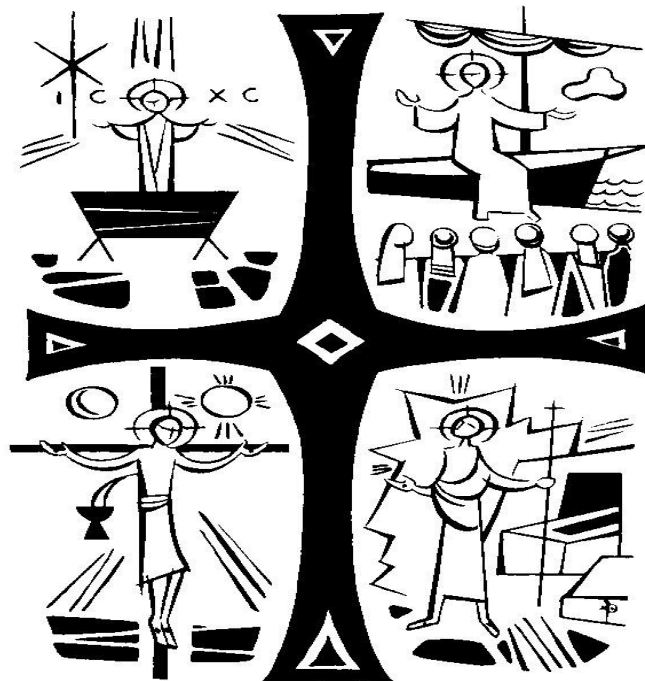
By Braydon Brylski

There are so many reasons why we should be confident that heaven is ours. The greatest gift of all was that Jesus lived a perfect life for you and for me and gave that life for us on the cross. It says in John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* Through faith in Jesus, we are saved from all of our sins.

Already when we are little children God granted faith in our hearts connecting us to the promise of heaven as it states in Matthew 19:14, *Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.* God does this through our baptisms. Mark 16:16 states, *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*

The promise of the kingdom of heaven never leaves us! When things in life seem too hard and we may struggle, it is easy to doubt God's promises. But God and his love remain with us. Psalms 23:6 reminds us, *Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.* Even in the fight against sin Second Timothy 4:18 assures us, *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and bring me safely to this heavenly kingdom, To Him be the glory forever and ever.*

A very comforting promise is found in John 14:13, *Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back to take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am.* The work is still in Jesus' hands. He died for us. He rose again. He is preparing a place for us. He will come back to take us to be with Him in heaven. Why can we be confident that heaven is ours? The answer is simple. Jesus loves me. He loves you too. He has made heaven our home.



Using God's Name to Win Souls

By Evalyn Paul

Since the beginning, God has commanded Christians to use His Name to spread God's word. God uses Christians as His prophets to spread the word to the world so that all humans can be saved and have peace with God in heaven one day.

Spreading God's Word is much easier said than done. The big question many people come to is, "How do we come to believe in Jesus?" The real answer is that the Holy Spirit calls us to faith in Jesus. An important detail to remember is that humans can't bring people to faith. We don't have the power to believe on our own or to make others believe. The Holy Spirit does. John 15:16 tells us, *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.* An excellent example of the Holy Spirit calling us to faith would be Baptism. In Acts 2:38 Peter says, *"repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* This reminds us that through the sacrament of Baptism you receive the gift of faith as the Spirit works within it. It is important that we spread the Word about Baptism so everyone can be saved.

Even though the Spirit does all the work, it is still important for Christians to share the message. As it says in Romans 10:17 *"Faith comes for hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."* Romans 10:17 also reminds us that true faith comes back to Christ. In the end, we come to believe in Jesus through the "Word about Christ". This is proof, we need God's Name, ultimately everything God tells us in the Word about Himself, to win the souls for Him.

Unfortunately, many people believe that there is no God. That is why it is important to spread the word to win souls from the devil to the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10 says, *"As it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him."* This isn't a message we will simply know someone must tell us about our Savior. Someone needs to tell us that God has prepared a place for all His believers when earthly death greets them. This is why God wants us to spread the word so that more people get to enjoy heaven as their eternal home. This is why we need to spread the word like Matthew 28:19 says, *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"*.

In conclusion, there are many people in the world who don't know about God or believe in Him. It is important for Christians to be faithful servants of God and spread the word about the Bible at any opportunity we get. Christians have an advantage because we know we have true hope in our eternal home in heaven that we want to share that good hope with the world around us.



SHARE HOPE.
SHARE LOVE.
SHARE JESUS.

What My Baptism Means to Me

By Isabelle Kampman

I'm guessing most or all of you have heard of Baptism. However, do you recall what blessings God gives us through it and what changes the Holy Spirit brings about in our lives through our Baptism? That is what I will be discussing with you, my fellow believers in Christ Jesus, today.

Baptism is water connected to the Word of our God. It's usually a pastor who pours water on your head and says the words "*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*". Perhaps he also made the sign of the cross on your head and on the heart as a symbol that you were now God's child forever. In itself, Baptism seems pretty simple but what it does is far from it.

What blessings does God give us through baptism? Acts 2 verse 38 says: *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"*. This verse explains two things we receive through Baptism: forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. These two blessings are linked as the Spirit grants us faith in our Savior Jesus Christ and therefore connects us to the forgiveness He won on the cross. 1 Corinthians 6:11 tell us "*You are washed, you are sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God*". These words remind us of the former blessing as we are justified through faith in Christ. However, we see another blessing that is ours as well because we are sanctified. Martin Luther wrote, "where there is forgiveness there is also life and salvation". Because we are justified, we are also freed to live lives of thanks to our God and live each day in the hope of the eternity God has prepared for us all.

Of course that changes everything as the Holy Spirit works in Baptism. In John 3:5,6, it tells us, "*Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the spirit flesh gives birth to flesh but spirit gives birth to spirit.*" We are reborn in Baptism. This is not a physical rebirth but rather we are reborn in the Spirit. Since we are reborn free from sin and free to live for God, we can strive to put off our old self and do the will of God in our everyday life. Our old Adam in us is "drown by daily contrition and repentance that the new man may rise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

On June 6th, 2008, I was Baptized. On that day God made me His child as He granted faith and washed away my sin. Through your baptism, you also received many gifts and are continually blessed. Baptism is the blessing we are given to wash away our sins and live in the victory Jesus has won for us. Thanks be to God that He loves us in such a way and gives us the victory.



Why I'm Looking Forward to Holy Communion

By Jack Jerman

Today I have been asked to talk about the thing I look forward to most in Holy Communion. I am most looking forward to receiving the Lord's Supper because of the blessings it brings. There are mainly two blessings it brings, blessings that we couldn't go without.

The first blessing we receive is pointed out in our Catechisms in Question 351 on page 356. The question is asked, "What blessing did Jesus promise to give through the Sacrament?" Matthew 26:28, on that same page says, *This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.* We do not only receive Jesus' body and blood, but also the blessings that very body and blood won for us, namely the Forgiveness of Sins. This also means it is important to understand that Jesus' body and blood are truly present in the bread and the wine. If you do not believe this, we do not receive the forgiveness of sins.

The second blessing of Holy Communion is found in Question 353 on page 359 of Luther's Small Catechism. It asks "What further blessings are ours because of the Forgiveness of Sins?" Romans 6:22,23, also written on that same page in Luther's Small Catechism says, *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Paul reminds us here that where there is the Forgiveness of Sins, there is also life and salvation.

These are pretty amazing blessings. How did Jesus accomplish all of this? Again our Catechism in Question 352 on page 357 points us to Isaiah 53: 6 and explains this clearly when he says *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Because of our sins God had Jesus die on a cross. He placed our sin, our iniquity on Jesus and let him suffer for us. Therefore we should thank Jesus for His willingness to die so that we can go to heaven.

I am looking forward to Communion. There, Jesus' body and blood in, with, and under bread and wine are regularly held out to all who partake of it. There, as in the other Means of Grace God provides, everything that body and blood did for me will be freely given. I hope you enjoyed my essay. Thanks for your attention.

