

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

September 2017

Salvation — God or Man?

Pastor Wayne Juntunen
April 1988 CM

GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE BE MULTIPLIED unto you from God, our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ! Every now and again a discussion arises regarding the activity of God and man in connection with a person's salvation. Sometimes the discussion can generate a great deal of energy, but when the heat and smoke have dissipated, no one is the wiser. Generally the debate centers around the question of man's will. Is man an active participant in his salvation? Is he entirely passive? Is it a combination involving both God and man? Does a person receive or accept Christ, or is he incapable of this?

This debate is not new. It has been a part of the Church almost from its inception. (Every form of legalism is an expression of this argument.) During the Reformation, Erasmus wrote in his publication entitled *Discourse Concerning Free Choice* that men must have the freedom to choose or refuse grace, otherwise their damnation would not be just. Luther wrote his voluminous *On the Bondage of the Will* in response to Erasmus, contending that merit has nothing to do with salvation. God is not bound by what man does or does not do. God is always just and always loving.

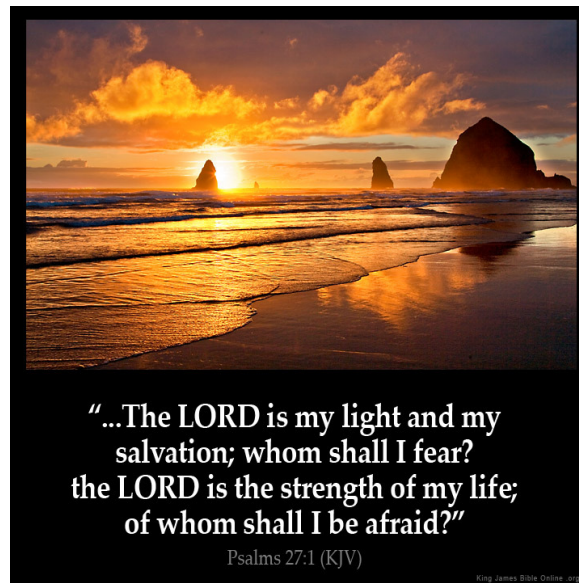
There are many today who seem to side more with Erasmus. Those who hold this position claim that man must have the freedom of choice in order to be held responsible or accountable for his rejection of God's grace. Therefore, some reason, that since a child cannot make such choices, he or she must naturally be a child of God at birth. (What original sin means to someone who believes this is a mystery.) The next logical step based on this doctrine is that a person must be old enough to decide either for or against God. The preaching of repentance focuses upon actual sins rather than on the total depravity of man, and the exhortation is frequently heard: "Accept Christ as your Savior!"

Where is the truth in this matter? The simple truth is that man is totally and completely bound by his inherited corruption. Not only is he incapable of making a decision for Christ, he does not even desire to do so. In fact, man by nature hates God (Romans 8:7; 3:10-18; Ephesians 2:1-3). He wants to live life apart from Him (Luke 19:14; John 1:11; 6:66).

If so, you ask, how can a person be saved? This is purely by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-10). God works through His Word to awaken the dead conscience. It is this power of God—His Holy Spirit—which enables a person to respond (John 6:44). But, you say, isn't this then a choice? Most surely it is, but it is not a choice to receive Christ or to accept Him. The choice is either to accept or reject God's assessment of our sinfulness (2 Samuel 12:7; 1 John 1:8-9). If we humble ourselves to accept what God says about us, He will give us more grace which will empower and enable us to admit or to confess our sinfulness and

repent (James 4:7-10). If we refuse to accept our sinfulness, we close the door to any further work of God in our hearts (Luke 20:15-18). If we refuse long enough, we may be lost forever in the fires of hell. If, however, during this time of grace we repent (and we must; no one can do it for us), God will give us grace to believe through the Gospel. His gift of faith is our assurance that He has accepted us in Christ (Ephesians 1:6). We have not accepted Him. He is the One who declares us righteous, not we (Romans 3:23-26).

After we have become believers, we are to yield ourselves to God as servants of righteousness in a life of sanctification wherein Christ increases in us and we decrease (Romans 6:11-18). This yielding, while an act, nonetheless conveys the connotation of submission or subservience. Christ is our head! He rules over us! We are to obey His leading. ~



"...The LORD is my light and my
salvation; whom shall I fear?
the LORD is the strength of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?"

Psalms 27:1 (KJV)

King James Bible Online .org

Christ Has Redeemed Us

Pastor Ansten Tretten
Lake Worth, Florida

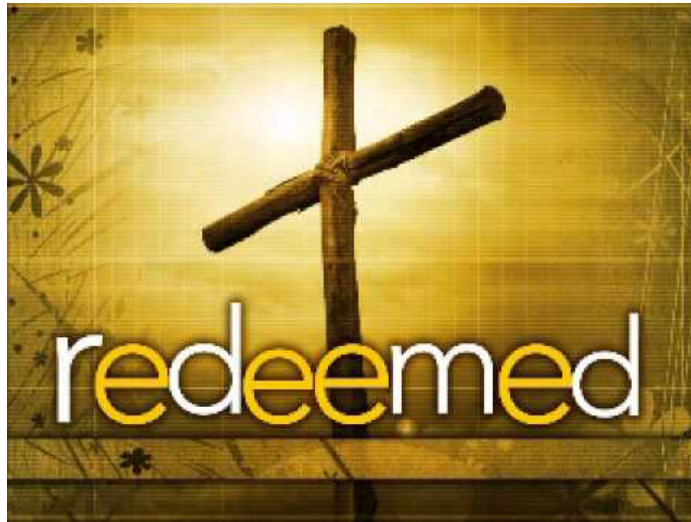
For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:10-14

WE LOOK IN the third chapter of the epistle of Paul to the Galatians, verse thirteen: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse...* but not just any curse. There are many curses in this life. We know there are those who are practicing witchcraft and who place curses on people, on things, on animals; there is a world that is the demon world, that world that is not seen by the human eye. We know that Christ Jesus has dominion over that world. In many parts of the world this type of practice is performed, and we see in the Scriptures, in the book of Acts, there were men who practiced this demonic form of religion, placing curses on people. Right away the question comes up: Can there be a curse placed on believers? Of course not! Because of Christ Jesus *...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)* But I will tell you this: that believer who opens himself up unto the way of some form of living after the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, the pride of life, who live, as an example, in covetousness, who live after the love of money, they are opening themselves unto all forms of Satan's working in their lives. They believe lies! They live after self-centeredness and pride and they are not led by the Spirit of God. Be careful, dear children of God, to follow Christ Jesus with all of your heart. Recognize the leading of the Spirit of God, and do not follow the way of darkness, of passions, and what you would (and men do) justify as good and right. Dear friends, live as followers of Christ Jesus!

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse... from all curses, but here we see *from the curse of the law* and the curse of the Law is God's Law where God says, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (Galatians 3:10)* And what is our response to that statement in Holy Scriptures? I'm guilty; I am cursed apart from Christ Jesus. Friend, apart from Christ you are cursed. You are under the curse. You are not partly there; it's not others who are there. You say, "Oh no... it's those who are living in the awful sins of adultery and fornication, who live in drugs, alcoholism, who live after covetousness and power, who live

after the way of destroying the lives of others, taking advantage of people, taking advantage of the poor. Oh, these will burn in hell!" Dear friend, those who will burn in hell are the ones who reject Christ Jesus. Why do you suppose Jesus Christ came into the world? He came to die, to bear your sin, to die your death, because He does not want anyone to go to hell, to the lake of fire. Don't reject Christ Jesus! Don't judge others by your measurement and determine who is worthy of eternal life and who is not. No one is worthy! Christ Jesus says, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do!" That's how unworthy we are. We are blind unto the evil of our ways. And do you know what is the most harmful sin among all of mankind? It's the sin of pride, the sin of self-centeredness, the sin of boasting. Oh, dear friends, come to Christ and ask Him to show you what perfect righteousness is and how you stand before God in what you call your righteousness. Dear friend, Christ Jesus says, "I am come that you might have life! I am come that you might have life and you might have it more abundantly."



The blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, and by no other means does the blessing of the Holy Spirit, of righteousness, peace and joy come. The blessing of eternal life comes upon all men through the promised Seed of Abraham by faith. We will receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith, the fourteenth verse of the third chapter tells us. The Holy Spirit is our guide and leads us in the way where we have eternal life abiding in us. Any other

means destroys the knowledge and assurance of eternal life. You add something unto Christ, such as the Law, and you will be separated from eternal life, because, as we see in the fifth chapter: *Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised (that's a ritual required by the Law in the Old Testament), Christ (who has fulfilled all laws, the moral law, the ceremonial law, the dietary laws, the laws of the priesthood. Christ has fulfilled them all, so therefore in Christ Jesus we have everything,) shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (Galatians 5:2-4)*

Is this to be looked at seriously? Is this a warning? Is it really true that those who walk by the Law are fallen from grace? Dear friend, I do not say that you who walk by the Law are going to be lost, but I say you who are walking by the Law have no relationship with Jesus Christ. You are believing in the cross and in the shed blood of Christ and then you think that the safe way to reach heaven is by a list of rules. Dear friend, the safe way is by being united unto Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen.

My Reflection on the Summation of the Gospel

the late Marian Halberg

entered glorious eternity on December 21, 2006

ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION given us in the Bible, God is all powerful, holy, just, pure and righteous. His law is correct, true and immutable. According to His law, anyone who transgresses one portion of the law is guilty of the full condemnation of the law of death. We each have come under the curse of the law by the transgression of the first man when he chose his own will, rejected God's will and disobeyed God. In our fallen state we are hopelessly lost, and in total opposition to the mind of God, demanding our own way according to our own will.

We've each been fearfully and wonderfully knit together in our mother's womb by the marvelous hand of God, created in the image of the Divine Creator. Beside this physical body, we have each been entrusted with a soul. We have been given the ability to have a personality, to reason, to perceive and discern, to plot and to plan. Breathed into each one is a spirit. It is the part that yearns to return to the Creator. It is the part that longs to have communion with God and is unsatisfied without a relationship with the Lord.

When left to our own discretion, we all are inclined to be self-centered, driven by our appetite for control of our circumstances and taken up with comforts for our "creature self." Our natural bent is for self-survival and accumulating for our selfish gain and comfort. Basically we are indifferent toward others, and the natural response to being wronged is retaliation. Lawlessness, pride, deceit and rebellion are the fruit of our self-directedness. Our natural state is intolerable to a holy God. We are dead in our sinfulness, unable to save ourselves, but...

God in His infinite wisdom and marvelous inscrutable mercy, before the creation of all things, had a plan for the redemption of each one of us and a knowledge of every day of our existence. God, sending His beloved Son in the form of a man, lived out a perfect sinless life. He fulfilled prophecy and was presented on the cross at Calvary as the perfect sacrifice for our sin payment. His life and death was perfect submission to the Father's will, thereby appeasing the righteous anger of a holy God. Through the person of Jesus, the way to the Father is opened for us fallen creatures, to cleanse all our sin, to cover our guilt and blame, to restore us to godly fellowship, to sanctify us, to heal our brokenness and empower us to do His will. We can be right with God through the substitutionary death of Christ. The perfect sinless One, wearing our sin debt and becoming sin for us and in our place, was brutally mistreated in every way. He endured bitter scourging and crucifixion, shed every drop of His blood, bore the wrath of a holy God, overcame the power of death and hell through His resurrection from the grave, thereby breaking the curse of sin and death.

By God's grace alone, His Word, quickened by the Holy Spirit, has found us in our dreadful depravity and dead state. Our eyes have been given sight and our hearing is restored. We are risen to new life, given a renewed existence. We have comprehended our great sinfulness, selfishness, rebelliousness and helplessness, and we have pleaded for forgiveness. God, through His Word, has granted all who are smitten by the terror of their condemning consciences to

believe their sins pardoned according to His holy Word which says, *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18)* Our salvation is completely of Christ. There is nothing we can do to justify ourselves. We receive Christ as our Savior and Lord. Our life is then hid in Christ Jesus and He becomes the One to whom we are yoked. We no longer serve sin or self. Our direction, resources, time and efforts are all surrendered to the Lord Jesus. Anything we do outside of our surrender to Him is nothing. His Word says, "I can do all things through Christ," who empowers us to walk in a supernatural way. We turn from our carnality and the temptation to act according to the flesh and, as a bond slave to God, we say "no" to our usual reaction and instead turn to Jesus, confessing our inability to react with grace. We defer to His strength and He enables us to behave in a more gracious way, only because it is Christ in us. Thus we are enabled to live an abundant life of victory in Jesus Christ. In His name, we also are restored to fellowship with the God of the universe, from eternity past. We can bring our pleas, praise and questions before His throne. We pray without ceasing. We are His adopted children. He is our Father, Provider, Protector and All in All. Our trust and hope is in Him alone.

Daily, we then choose to surrender our will and way to the Master. We seek Him in prayer, and He guides us through His Word, admonishing, correcting and encouraging us. From a heart of gratitude, we desire to know Him more and we love and hunger for His Word. We are so grateful for His grace and

He has promised to keep us to the end, and we will share glorious eternity with Him.

the wealth of blessings which He lavished upon us in the gift of Christ Jesus. We are taken up with a new perspective. The natural is seen through the spiritual. We love and serve others as our Lord would have us. Every blessing is held loosely, submitting to His holy will for the use of our resources and talents. We are walking yoked to Christ, according to His ways, joyfully serving and loving those He sends into our lives as a service to Him, praising Him and receiving every circumstance as from His hand of grace, recognizing that all glory is His and all power is from Him. Everything we do is an act of worship. We exist to His great glory and honor.

When we continue seeking to live in His will, in prayer and the study of His Word, He gives more enlightenment. As we grow in grace and the knowledge of Him, we hear and recognize His voice, and He directs our footsteps. We experience joy regardless of our circumstances, and a sense of peace in our surrender. Our delight is in our intimacy and fellowship with the God of the Bible. As we abide in Him, we become more and more like our Lord, whom we love and yearn for. He is our betrothed. He has loved us with an everlasting love. Our names are written on His hands and we are sealed unto the day of our salvation. He has promised to keep us to the end, and we will share glorious eternity with Him. He will come again to receive us. His Word is truth; He cannot lie. He is all powerful, holy, just, pure and righteous. He is God and He is our "Abba." ~

Does Jesus Care?

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello and God's peace to each of you. I do hope you are having a good day. If not, maybe the subject matter of this page will be helpful. I want to write about Jesus caring for us.

God's Word is the best source and start to a good day. There will be times when it does not seem to lift us up, but we must remember that the problem is not with the Word but with our attitude and our heart. This is something Jesus cares about, too.

Does Jesus Care?

I can well imagine that everyone has asked this question when going through a difficult time. This is something that we are prone to do when we take our eyes off of Jesus for a moment and focus on ourselves. But this is something Jesus is not unfamiliar with and cares about.

Our Lord has always cared for us.

- *Jeremiah 31:3: The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

We have always been deeply loved by God and His Son Jesus. To not love is something Jesus cannot do.

We are encouraged many times in the Word to bring all of our cares to Jesus. He never wants us to keep hard things to ourselves, but to pour our hearts out to him.

- *1 Peter 5:7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*
- *Psalms 55:22: Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer (allow) the righteous to be moved.*
- *Isaiah 41:10: Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

Dear one, when you are up against a difficult time or there is something pressing that you need to do, or someone has hurt you in any way and you are not sure what to do, take it to God in prayer. Here are more verses that let you know again that Jesus cares:

- *Psalms 46:1: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*
- *Matthew 11:28-30: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

We all need things for this life, like food, clothes, shelter, jobs, friends and family, etc. These are all blessings from our Lord. You can know with all your heart that Jesus knows what you have need of and will gladly supply it all.

- *Philippians 4:19: But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Jesus cares about us when we are sad, happy, worried, fearful, tempted, unsure, etc. We know from the Bible that nothing is hidden from Him that He does not know it.

- *Hebrews 4:15: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (physical or mental weaknesses); but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Jesus wants us to come to Him with confidence and with courage.

- *Hebrews 4:16: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Most importantly, as Christians, and because Jesus loves us with such a deep love, He would desire that we speak of Him wherever we go and not be ashamed to do so.

- *Romans 10:9-10: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*



In closing I want you to know that Jesus cares SO much for you. Right at this moment I want to encourage you to talk to God in prayer, whatever it is that might be concerning to you. Keep His name on your lips and in your heart. He will carry you all the way.

I also want to encourage you to pick up your Bible and randomly open it and read verses. Do this even a few times in a row, and you are sure to find words of care and love from our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Does Jesus care? Oh yes, He cares.
No one cares like He does.**

God's peace.

The Call to Teach

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
New York Mills, Minnesota

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 28:18-20

WHEN WE THINK OF THE GREAT COMMISSION we tend to focus on the call to evangelism. We often forget that with evangelism, comes the call to teach. This call is one that if we were to look at the whole church we would see failure. The church is good at evangelism, but isn't always good at following through with the teaching part. Martin Luther observed this in his preface to the Small Catechism:

The deplorable, miserable condition which I discovered lately when I, too, was a visitor, has forced and urged me to prepare [publish] this Catechism, or Christian doctrine, in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Good God! what manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and, alas! many pastors are altogether incapable and incompetent to teach [so much so, that one is ashamed to speak of it]. Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, have been baptized and receive the [common] holy Sacraments. Yet they [do not understand and] cannot [even] recite either the Lord's Prayer, or the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live like dumb brutes and irrational hogs; and yet, now that the Gospel has come, they have nicely learned to abuse all liberty like experts..." Luther's Preface to the Small Catechism

Luther uses some harsh language in this quote, but that's because the situation was so dire. People were ignorant, and in their ignorance they were using the Gospel as an excuse to sin. It was these observations that led Luther to write the Catechism. He saw it as a means to teach the laity what he considered the chief parts of doctrine: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Confession and Absolution, and the Sacrament of the Altar.

The Small Catechism was intended to be a means for parents to teach their children. Each section he began with "As the head of the family should teach in a simple way to his household."

When Sunday School was first introduced people were very concerned. Not because they saw formal education as wrong, but because they were worried parents would stop teaching their children. Sunday school is good, but learning begins and is nurtured at home. As Sunday school approaches, as parents we need to remember how important it is to go over the lessons with our kids. It's good for them if they need help understanding and it's a great refresher for us.



Eternal Things

Pastor Joel Kandoll
Castle Rock, Washington

OFTEN AS WE GO THROUGH LIFE, we give thought to our priorities. We may be considering the relative importance of things that have an effect on our current situation, or those things that will affect us in our future. How good it is if we can take into account the words of Paul as he writes to the people of Corinth in 2 Corinthians 4:14-18: *Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus,*

and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Paul's desire was for the Corinthians to see the merciful hand of God in all things, that through the work of Jesus Christ their salvation was accomplished, that they and all believers would be partakers of the resurrection. By the leading of the Holy Spirit, this message of the Gospel of forgiveness through the blood of Jesus has been brought unto them, and even though Paul and the apostles were made to suffer for their faith, Paul says of this suffering that it is *but for a moment*, and he looks beyond this life to that eternal life promised unto those who believe.

Often we may have a tendency to dwell on earthly things, and the heavenly things begin to grow dim unto us. We may also be discouraged by our feelings, especially when we consider our human nature, but Paul encourages us to believe that *we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* (2 Corinthians 4:7) The treasure is that which we give thanks for, those heavenly blessings He has bestowed upon us, that faith He has placed in our hearts to believe His promises.

In the beginning of the next chapter he also writes: *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* (2 Corinthians 5:1) Look beyond all things temporary, look unto the heavens above, rejoice in what the Lord has promised unto those who believe in Him. Even though we have not merited any of this, He in His love has made it all possible for us.

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. (Philippians 4:4)

The Bread of Life

Pastor Don Salo
New York Mills, Minnesota

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:6

What did Jesus say about this? *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matthew 6:33)*

In our everyday life, we need to eat each day to be able to maintain bodily health. God in His infinite wisdom in creation already provided all that is needed in body and life. When we are hungry, we go to the cupboard and find something to eat to satisfy this hunger.

God created man in His own image, and as a result we are spiritual beings. Even as the body needs food, so the spiritual portion also needs to be fed.

In the Old Testament Isaiah speaks about this matter. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Isaiah 55:1)*

Isaiah already saw the gift that God would provide for our soul's salvation. That gift was given on the cross by His own Son who paid our sin debt in full. All this came because He loved fallen man. As Isaiah said, *come, buy... without money, this is a gift to be received by faith. God knew that it was impossible for man to save himself. In love, grace, and mercy, Jesus took all of our sins to the cross and made atonement for them. All that God asks of us is to repent and believe on Him who the Father sent.*

In the second verse, Isaiah asks another question. *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. (Isaiah 55:2)* The Bible is clear in the only way that a man can be saved. Too often man thinks that by keeping the law, he can be saved. *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16)*

There are those who think that their good works will save them. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall*

enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:21-23)

It is clear from these examples that our only spiritual food can come from Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:51)*

Following are several verses that Jesus spoke, saying that He is that bread: *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread*



from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:32-35) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. (John 6:47-50)

All of this eating is done by faith and not of works, lest any man should boast. Every time we pick up our Bible and read it, this is the Word of Life. Every time we come to church to hear the spoken Word, we are feasting at the Master's Table. Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are eating and drinking of His body and blood which was given for us. If we come by faith, hungering and thirsting, we will be filled. Pray to the Lord of harvest for faith and He will give it to you.

God's peace.

To God Be the Glory

"A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord..." (Frances J. Crosby)

At the 109th convention hosted by the Federation of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America and the congregation at Esko, Minnesota, I along with the other Christians experienced showers of blessings. *As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10:15)*

Thank you to all of you who worked hard to serve us in so many ways. We were well fed, both spiritually and physically. The fellowship with one another was uplifting. *As it is written: For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (Hebrews 6:10)*

The music was beautiful with singing from the heart. *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. (Hebrews 13:15)*

"Take time to be holy, Speak oft with thy Lord; Abide in Him always, And feed on His Word.

Make friends of God's children; Help those who are weak; Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek." (William D. Longstaff)

God's peace,

Dave Impola; Everett, Washington

All Things

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

And we know that **all things** work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us **all things**?

Romans 8:28-32

All things.

You may have seen the first verse above printed on a picture as a decoration. You may have heard it in times of trial or difficulty, used as an assurance that God has not forgotten you, that He is working "all (these bad or difficult) things" for your good.

You may have heard the last verse used in a "prosperity gospel" way. God will give you all things, if you only believe... maybe a Cadillac, or a paid-off home!

The verses prior give a little more context:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but **the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us** with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because **he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.** (Romans 8:26-27)

In our weakness, we don't know what to pray for; but the Spirit helps us. The indwelling Holy Spirit of God intercedes for us, with groanings which our lips can't even speak. The Father knows what the Spirit groans, because the Spirit intercedes for us according to the will of God.

The verses following also give more context:

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? **It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor

things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:33-39)

God spared not His own Son. He delivered Him up to death for us. Therefore, who can lay any charge against us? God has justified us! Who can condemn us? Christ died and rose again, and is at the right hand of God interceding for us.

The Holy Spirit intercedes for us. The Son intercedes for us. What is intercession, anyway? The dictionary says *intercede* means "to intervene on behalf of another." The Holy Spirit and the Son intervene on our behalf before the Father in heaven. Though we are guilty of death, the Spirit and the Son plead our case.

Because of the intercession of the Spirit and the Son, because we are justified before God through the blood of His Son, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* The list of calamities that follows can all be answered with a resounding "No!" Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Not tribulation. Or distress. Or persecution, famine, nakedness. Not peril or sword. In all these calamities, we are MORE than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Not even death (or life) can separate us from the One who loved us, loved us to death. Not angels, principalities, powers. Nothing in the present, nothing in the future. Nothing in all creation.

Thanks be to God!

For by him were **all things** created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or



principalities, or powers: **all things** were created by him, and for him: And he is before **all things**, and by him **all things** consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in **all things** he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile **all things** unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Colossians 1:16-20

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The Luther Rose and Three Solas

The Reformation #4

[Editor's Note: This is the fourth in a series celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The printing press allowed for distribution of printed materials, and there was desperate need for reformation in the Church. God led Dr. Luther to the Word, planting a seed that would grow into a tree.]

A letter from Martin Luther at Coburg Castle, to Lazarus Spengler, explaining his seal, also known as the Luther Rose:

Grace and peace from the Lord. Honorable, kind, dear Sir and Friend! As you desire to know whether my painted shield, which you sent to me, has hit the mark, I shall answer most amiably and tell you my original thoughts and reasons about why my seal is a symbol of my theology.

The first should be a black cross in a heart, which retains its natural color, so that I myself would be reminded that faith in the Crucified saves us. "For one who believes from the heart will be justified" (Rom. 10:10).

Although it is indeed a black cross, which mortifies and which should also cause pain, it leaves the heart in its natural color. It does not corrupt nature, that is, it does not kill but keeps one alive. "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17) but by faith in the Crucified.

Such a heart should stand in the middle of a white rose, to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace. In other words, it places the believer into a white, joyous rose, for this faith does not give peace and joy like the world gives (John 14:27). That is why the rose should be white and not red, for white is the color of spirits and angels (cf. Matt. 28:3; John 20:12).

Such a rose should stand in a sky-blue field, symbolizing that such joy in spirit and faith is a beginning of the heavenly future joy, which begins already, but is grasped in hope, not yet revealed.

And around this field is a golden ring, symbolizing that such blessedness in heaven lasts forever and has no end. Such blessedness is exquisite, beyond all joy and goods, just as gold is the most valuable, most precious and best metal.

This is my *compendium theologiae* [Compendium of Theology]. I have wanted to show it to you in good friendship, hoping for your appreciation. May Christ, our beloved Lord, be with your spirit until the life hereafter. Amen. From the wilderness Grubok [anagram of Coburg, used here for the first time] on July 8, 1530.



The Latin *solas*, namely: *Sola Scriptura* [Scripture Alone], *Sola Gratia* [Grace Alone], and *Sola Fide* [Faith Alone] are phrases used in connection with the Lutheran Reformation in the 16th Century. These phrases define Lutheranism today. The ancient Church Fathers affirm these principles:

Scripture Alone

We are not entitled to such license, I mean that of affirming what we please; we make the Holy Scriptures the rule and the measure of every tenet; we necessarily fix our eyes upon that, and approve that alone which may be made to harmonize with the intention of those writings.

St. Gregory of Nyssa (On the Soul and the Resurrection NPNF II, V:439)

Grace Alone

But when the Lord Jesus came, He forgave all men that sin which none could escape, and *blotted out the handwriting against us* by the shedding of His own Blood. This then is the Apostle's meaning; sin abounded by the Law, but grace abounded by Jesus; for after that the whole world became guilty, He took away the sin of the whole world, as John bore witness, saying: *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* Wherefore let no man glory in works, for by his works no man shall be justified, for he that is just hath a free gift, for he is justified by the Bath. It is faith then which delivers by the blood of Christ, for *Blessed is the man to whom sin is remitted, and, pardon granted.*

Ambrose (Letter 73, to Irenaeus, a layman)

Faith Alone

Similarly we also, who by His will have been called in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, or our own wisdom or understanding or godliness, nor by such deeds as we have done in holiness of heart, but by that faith through which Almighty God has justified all men since the beginning of time. Glory be to Him, forever and ever, Amen."

St. Clement of Rome (Letter to the Corinthians, par. 32)

