

# 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.

October 2020

## The Whole Family in Heaven and Earth

Pastor Ron Holmgren; Hockinson, Washington  
July 2005 CM

*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named**, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

*Ephesians 3:14-19*

**H**OW WONDERFUL IS THE BIRTH of a child. A mother has received, through much labor, a gift that removes her memory of pain. She holds the baby in wonder.

The father can hardly contain his relief that his wife is now able to rest and recover from the delivery of a new little one. He now has the same wonder as he looks at the child the Lord has given to him and his wife. In the family, there may already be brothers and sisters who awaited the birth, and now receive the new one into the family with joy. Each child is different, and though there may be similarities in their looks and actions, each one is unique.

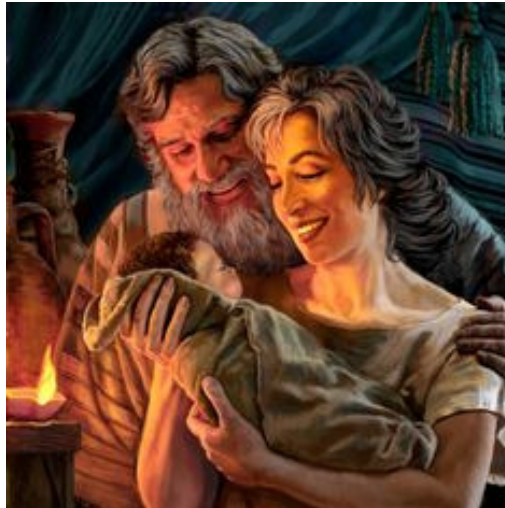
A child is born, and a name is given to identify him. This child also has a family name that identifies him in the community. The people who live and interact with this person throughout his life will know by the family name who his father and mother are.

Paul was in prayer in the third chapter of his letter to the Christians in Ephesus. As he wrote to them, his heart was moved by God to remind them of the fact that they are members of a family. This family has a father. He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are named and identified with Him. God was pleased to introduce Jesus to the people of this world, and many times He said, *This is my beloved Son.* (Matthew 3:17)

The Word says that we are the brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ. *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.* (Hebrews 2:11) We are born of God, and therefore are members

of His family, named and identified with Him. This is not like our natural birth, as Peter wrote: *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* (1 Peter 1:23)

A natural birth is a wonder to us, and it leaves us filled with joy. The Bible tells us that the angels in heaven rejoice with greater joy and can be heard here on earth when a sinner repents. Thus a new child is born into the family of God. The Church, which is the bride of Christ, has, together with Christ, conceived of, and with much labor, brought forth a child to the great joy of both the husband and wife. Like Abraham and Sarah, a child was given, and they called his name Isaac, which means laughter.



The whole family has all that the father provides for them. They are *rooted and grounded in love.* (Ephesians 3:17) This love of Christ is ours because we are His and He is ours.

These verses that end the third chapter of the Ephesians should remove any doubt from us that we have everything in Christ. It may be that we don't understand why things are the way they are, just as children are often not able to understand how or why their parents do the things

they do. However, our heavenly Parent has our best interests always in mind. He knows what is good for us.

Trust God to do what is right for His family. He knows the future, and all things are in His power. Jesus set a little child before the disciples as the example for them. The child is totally dependent on his parents to care for his every need, and trusts completely in them to provide. We can do no better than to trust God completely, rejoicing that we have been included by grace in that most blessed of all families.

*God's peace.*

# Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice

**L**UTHER WROTE THIS HYMN IN 1523, and it was the first hymn he ever wrote for congregational singing. While “A Mighty Fortress” might be the most popular of Luther’s hymns in our day, “Dear Christians One and All Rejoice” might be Luther’s most important hymn in addition to being his first. It tells the powerful story of man’s wretched state, the Father’s plan to send his Son to die for the sins of the world, and Jesus’ faithful execution of his Father’s will. Salvation was not easy. Indeed, it was the most bitter of all struggles, but because of our Lord Jesus’ work, we are blest forever. The hymn concludes with Jesus promise to send the Holy Spirit and the blessed encouragement that we follow in our Lord’s teaching.

Ryan Loeslie, “5 Hymns Of Martin Luther Which Every Lutheran Should Know”

Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice,  
With exultation springing,  
And with united heart and voice  
And holy rapture singing,  
Proclaim the wonders God has done,  
How His right arm the victory won,  
What price our ransom cost Him!

Fast bound in Satan’s chains I lay;  
Death brooded darkly o’er me.  
Sin was my torment night and day;  
In sin my mother bore me.  
But daily deeper still I fell;  
My life became a living hell,  
So firmly sin possessed me.

My own good works all came to naught,  
No grace or merit gaining;  
Free will against God’s judgment fought,  
Dead to all good remaining.  
My fears increased till sheer despair  
Left only death to be my share;  
The pangs of hell I suffered.

But God had seen my wretched state  
Before the world’s foundation,  
And mindful of His mercies great,  
He planned for my salvation.  
He turned to me a father’s heart;  
He did not choose the easy part  
But gave His dearest treasure.

God said to His beloved Son:  
“It’s time to have compassion.  
Then go, bright jewel of My crown,  
And bring to all salvation.  
From sin and sorrow set them free;  
Slay bitter death for them that they  
May live with You forever.”

The Son obeyed His Father’s will,  
Was born of virgin mother;  
And God’s good pleasure to fulfill,  
He came to be my brother.  
His royal power disguised He bore;  
A servant’s form, like mine, He wore  
To lead the devil captive.

To me He said: “Stay close to Me,  
I am your rock and castle.  
Your ransom I Myself will be;  
For you I strive and wrestle.  
For I am yours, and you are Mine,  
And where I am you may remain;  
The foe shall not divide us.

“Though he will shed My precious blood,  
Me of My life bereaving,  
All this I suffer for your good;  
Be steadfast and believing.  
Life will from death the victory win;  
My innocence shall bear your sin,  
And you are blest forever.

“Now to My Father I depart,  
From earth to heaven ascending,  
And, heavenly wisdom to impart,  
The Holy Spirit sending;  
In trouble He will comfort you  
And teach you always to be true  
And into truth shall guide you.

“What I on earth have done and taught  
Guide all your life and teaching;  
So shall the kingdom’s work be wrought  
And honored in your preaching.  
But watch lest foes with base alloy  
The heavenly treasure should destroy;  
This final word I leave you.”

Martin Luther

***Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?***

Micah 6:7-8

**S**CRIPTURE TELLS US, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.” We cannot please God by offering anything of our own for our salvation; our own righteousness is filthy and polluted in His sight. Will thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil please Him? Will giving our first born for a sin offering please Him? They are all His; He owns the cattle on ten thousand hills. No, our salvation is in Christ alone. He gave His Son to save us from sin. But when we are saved, then He requires us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before Him. This is being called unto obedience. This is being a follower of God, as dear children. These are not for our salvation, but they are fruits of our salvation. God help us to know the difference!

Paul Coponen; Chassell, Michigan

Submitted by Ralph & Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire



# A Peace in My Heart

Shirley Lampinen  
Marysville, Washington

"There's a peace in my heart  
That the world never gave,  
A peace it cannot take away;  
Though the trials of life  
May surround like a cloud,  
I've a peace that has come there to stay."

Mrs. Will Murphy

**T**HESE WORDS HAVE RUN THROUGH my mind since speaking with a friend in Hockinson after church last Sunday. We were talking about our lives today and all that is going on around us and how it can affect us within. I quoted this song then and the words have been running through my mind since. Then this morning, while writing to another lady who was full of concern about the situations around us, the words came strongly to mind again. Since then I have struggled with writing about the thoughts that have run through my mind these last days as, to be truthful, I didn't want to. So what did I do about it the urging? I went to our songbook and told God that if He wanted me to write some of my thoughts, I would open the book to the exact page where it is written... as you can see, here is the result of what happened.

"There's a peace in my heart." Can you, or even I, say this with complete truthfulness as we look around us at what is going on and the attacks we see from the devil on not only the world as a whole, but on our own lives as individuals and the family unit? As you listen to the news, read what this person or that person says, what this survey or that one reveals, that this group is "way off base" or that one are just "sheep?" Can you say: "There's a peace in my heart?"

How about the next part of the sentence: "that the world never gave"? We know that for certain this world and all that it contains, will never give peace to a heart for there's always something bad happening.

Then comes a line with the acknowledgement that this peace that I have in my heart that the world never gave, is a peace "it cannot take away." Think about that thought. What is this "peace" that is so fixed in our hearts that the world

and all that goes on in it, cannot take it away? It is God's peace. His peace doesn't sway in the wind. It doesn't depend on the ideas of man, or the wiles of the devil and all the devil tries to do to take this peace away. It is fixed on something that is unchangeable and unmovable, because it is fixed on God Himself. Does that mean that as Christians we never should have concerns, never have fears, never know a minute

of worry, and that, if we do we are not a Christian anymore? Not at all. Our God knows us through and through because He created us. He knows that we will. Yet "though the trials of life may surround like a cloud (isn't that how we feel when going through trials... like we are in a cloud and cannot even see our way out of it?) I've a peace that has come there to stay."

So, how can we have a "peace" in our hearts that "has come there to stay" in the midst of trials that are so heavy that we cannot see a way out of it? I think the answer is found in the chorus of the song:

"Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine;  
Constantly abiding, rapture divine."

When we trust in Him, abide in Him, lean on Him and feel His strength, His courage, His abiding love and presence, He gives us His peace in our hearts that the "world cannot take away." Think of the last two lines of the chorus:

"He never leaves me lonely,  
Whispers, O so kind:  
'I will never leave thee,'  
Jesus is mine."

So let's trust in the One who is able to give us "peace in our hearts" no matter what we experience. Let us bring our doubts, concerns, disappointments, sorrow, and yes, even our great joy to Him in prayer.

**And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**

**Colossians 3:15-16**

*Leaving you in God's peace.*

# Peace



Oh that the hard crust of the heart were shattered, and that in the pure vital air, real, unrestrained love might burst forth into a flame! How would the scales then fall from our eyes! How clearly should we then see how infinitely much we all need to be forgiven! Let us think of our special connection with those to whom we are united by the common bond of faith and of the forgiveness obtained for us by Christ. How much more we could do to purify and strengthen this holy bond, by teaching, by help, and by example; how much more in the way of finding out and helping forward everything good, and in sifting out and sup-

pressing the evil; how much more by counsel and comfort, by forbearance and long-suffering, to be representatives of Jesus! How much we have to be forgiven! and yet how plain it is that nothing but love—the earnest longing and effort always to do more and to be more—can cover the multitude of sins. But think also how much this bond of believers itself, so to speak, forgives; how it acknowledges us notwithstanding our weaknesses; how from it the strength of our oneness in spirit and faith flows into our inmost being and draws us towards the holiness which is our goal.

*Friedrich Schleiermacher*

# In Everything Give Thanks

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children, far and near,

Hello again to every one of you who read this. I pray all is well with you. I know many of you learned of the great sadness that came upon our family this past March in the loss of our daughter-in-law and granddaughter, and I just wanted to tell you that our son and his kids along with us, are doing as well as we can at this six-month mark. God is carrying us for sure. We could not take on so much grief without Him. Do pray for our son and his kids, as he begins life alone.

I was wondering what to write about and giving thanks is my key thought, and I will tell you where I'm giving with this.



**I**N A RECENT BOOK I listened to, this verse has come to me over and over:

***In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)***

As we have been dealing with tragedy in our own family and the deaths of many others (mostly younger people) that we personally know, it has one's mind spinning. It has all been so hard to accept. Maybe some of you have lost dear people in your family or friend circles. Maybe you have other tough things you are going through, with your health perhaps, or a friend has hurt you, or you have had trouble with school or work.

Trials in life come in all shapes and sizes and they are hard; that's just how it is. God's Word in the verse above tells us plainly that we are to give thanks in everything. EVERYTHING! We are to be thankful for all the good and the ugly. "WHAT? Really?" You may ask. I know I thought the same thing.

How can I be thankful that we lost loved ones, that our son, his son, and little daughter have lost their wife and mother? I am still trying to find the thankfulness in that. I often say I'm thankful they do not have to see all the awful things that are going on in this world right now, and now that they are gone I wouldn't wish them back from the peace of heaven that is theirs for all eternity, but I stop at giving thanks for this sorrowful thing. I know in my heart I need to be able to give thanks.

It's easy to give thanks when things are going well and we are progressing at a project or feeling loved by our family and friends, or the weather is favorable, or school is going well. I could think of many more good things that one can be thankful for, and I know as you read this you are probably thinking of good things you yourself are thankful for.

If you look at the second part of that verse, we are to **give thanks** because this **IS THE WILL OF GOD – in CHRIST JESUS – for YOU!** I read that and am very humbled and shake in my shoes because me and you are to DO the will of God. It calls us to obedience and that is SO important. I pray to be obedient. God sent His only Son to die for mankind, and more personally, for you and me. I am thankful Jesus gave His life that we may live, because had He not given it we would not have any chance at eternal life.

We are to be thankful to God in and through Christ Jesus. It is for our own good to help us to grow in Christ and be closer to His likeness, and He molds and perfects us.

I need to pray a lot about giving thanks in the hard things that come in life as I can't freely admit thanks. I can imagine that in finding the strength to give thanks there may be a special peace. I hope to understand this one day.

I pray that each of you will be carried by God in whatever trials may be in your life, and although I don't know all the good things in your life I am thankful for those good things for you.

The best thing we can be thankful for is that we can say we believe in God and Jesus and that we love them. We have a Father in heaven whose heart is always thinking about us and He WILL NEVER forget about us. He has promised.

*Deuteronomy 31:6: Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.* God was instructing Joshua when he was leading the Israelites to the promised land.

God is still leading us, and His words of instruction, encouragement, chastisement, peace, love, and joy are for us today. We have such a beautiful home waiting for us in heaven, where our loved ones have reached that shore and He wants us there also. Press on, children, God loves you.

I pray that God will lead us all in His perfect will and that we will understand it. I pray for all who speak His name to live in that will also. I ask God to take care of each person who reads this and proclaims His name.

I want to leave you with this simple prayer that is in the back of my favorite Bible.

***Lord, set my life in order,  
making me to know what I ought to do,  
and do it in the way I should. Amen.***

*In God's peace.*

*And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; **and be ye thankful.** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** to God and the Father by him.*

Colossians 3:12-17

# Lord, Keep Us Steadfast

Alvin Holmgren  
October 2005 CM

**S**TEADFASTNESS PLAYS AN IMPORTANT PART in the life of a Christian. Not only is it essential for our own individual health and development, but also for the growth and health of the body of believers as a whole. Steadfastness implies the quality of being faithful—firmly established and unwavering. There are many biblical exhortations to steadfastness. The verse that I will use for this meditation is found in 1 Corinthians 15. This chapter emphasizes the gospel revelation of the resurrection and of the life to come. It concludes with a word of counsel that is as important for us today as it was for the early New Testament Christians to whom the letter was written. This is what Paul wrote: ***Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)***

In order for us to be steadfast, it is necessary that we are nourished and strengthened by the Bread of Life, and that we are refreshed by the Water of Life. Jesus is both. As Christians, we agree with David when he wrote that *his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Psalm 1:2)* Since the Word is our food, it is the source of our strength. We draw on this life-giving source in our private meditation. Our faith is increased and strengthened through the hearing of the preached Word, and we share our living hope with others in the fellowship where we worship.

Even then, were we to be wholly responsible for our steadfastness, we would doubtless soon fail the test. Recognizing this, the Reformer, Martin Luther, placed this important responsibility in more secure hands than his own when he wrote a hymn on the subject:

Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word;  
Curb those who fain by craft and sword  
Would wrest the kingdom from Thy Son  
And set at naught all He hath done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thy power make known,  
For Thou art Lord of lords alone;  
Defend Thy Christendom that we  
May evermore sing praise to Thee.

O Comforter of priceless worth,  
Send peace and unity on earth;  
Support us in our final strife  
And lead us out of death to life.

Martin Luther, 1541

In this work, to which the Lord has called us, we are to be steadfast and unmovable, using the gifts we have been given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12) We are in subjection to Christ, 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. (Colossians 1:18-19)

There is another bible passage that I want to use as a conclusion to our subject of steadfastness. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. **Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.** Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. (Hebrews 13:7-9)

The verse, *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*, is not to be isolated from the verses that precede and follow it. Jesus Christ is changeless. Let us endeavor to follow the example of those who have gone before us, remembering that, as Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)* Let us pray that God will continue to impart the guidance of His Spirit so that it may be said of the twenty-first century believers, as it was said of the first-century Christians, *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. (Acts 1:14)* ~



*Luther in the Circle of His Family*, by Gustav Adolph Spangenberg  
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



# Shod with the Gospel of Peace

C.O. Rosenius

**And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.**  
*Ephesians 6:15*

**A**LL SOLDIERS OF CHRIST HAVE been called to participate in the great matter their Lord has at heart, namely, that the gospel of peace will be spread on the earth. The Lord Christ says: *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.* (Matthew 12:30) And Peter writes, not to clergymen, but to Christians in general: *Ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* (1 Peter 2:9) But if you become a zealous and faithful witness to your Savior, you thereby expose yourself to many disagreeable things and troubles. Yes, you get all the kingdom of the devil against you. Inwardly glowing shots become much more numerous and more difficult, and outwardly the enmity and bitterness of his faithful servant, the world, looks for all possible opportunities to accuse you.

Then understand how necessary this text is: *your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.* Mark those words: *the feet shod!* It is necessary for the soldier to have his feet shod when he is to dash forward through a roadless terrain, full of sharp thorns and stones and poisonous snakes. In the same way we must be well armed against all the bitter experiences and temptations to impatience that accumulate on our way, if we want really been faithfully to have zeal for the gospel of Christ. It is as if we had to push our way forward through a thick forest of thorns where many sharp things and poisonous animals will wound, tear and sting us, if we are not well armed.

With what then shall we cover our feet? With what shall we be shod? The apostle says: *with the preparation of the gospel of peace*, or willingness toward the gospel of peace. This willingness consists first of an inner willingness, a heartfelt inclination and love which expressly originate from the gospel of peace. Here the secret lies. Trained Christians know it from their experience. All possible admonitions, expostulations, requests or grounds for consolation have absolutely no power to bring us to a living confession of the gospel, if we have not ourselves become warm, enlivened and and willing in the spirit by the same gospel. If the heart is still cold and dead, then a man always find some excuse for his spiritual numbness. Or he may make many resolutions, but they do not result in anything after all, provided that no outer calling gets him in motion. But when my own heart has become warmed up and saved by grace, when the Lord has spoken to me, and assured me of the forgiveness of my sins and His friendship, then I get an inner prompting so that I cannot keep silent. Then it happens with

me exactly as David says: *I believed, therefore have I spoken.* (Psalm 116:10) And again: *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.* (Psalm 119:32)

But the word 'preparation' gives us to understand, that the man is prepared. And the covering of the feet making him less sensitive to the sharp things knocked against indicates patience. The reference to our spiritual footwear means that we arm ourselves so that we had a persistent patience, that we reconcile ourselves seriously with the thought that we shall suffer, and even want to suffer with Christ. As Peter says: *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind* (1 Peter 4:1), wanting to suffer for His sake. Because if we have not armed ourselves with that mind, then it happens with us, as we often see in others, that souls begin the spiritual fight with great delight and boldness. But when the fight becomes a bit more serious, so that it really becomes a matter of suffering something, then they turn away hastily. Then they change their tone and course, and that only in order to escape the suffering. Such people are no use in this fight. Because the one who wants to be a true Christian, the one who wants to belong to the party of the crucified and despised One, and is seriously anxious for His sake and the gospel, that man must, as Luther says, "expect all possible resistance, assault, wicked intrigues, contempt, ingratitude, scorn and revilement, though he does

good to all." Therefore we must be so fit that we can suffer evil, and bear most undeserved bitter things and thus break ourselves, through patience. But in order to be fit like that it is required first that you are on an intimate footing with your God and know Him as your

reconciled, gracious Father. Secondly, it is necessary that you impress the dear truth deeply on yourself, that He will take care of you in everything and watch in the most fatherly way over all that happens to you. So that there shall not an hair fall from your head without His faithful will. It is true, that many repeat this with their mouth, but there are few who believe in it seriously. Moreover, we should not despise the old well-known words of our Lord: *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you... Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* (Matthew 5:11-12) Shall then also we, unworthy as we are, be allowed to participate in this glory of the prophets? God, help us to wake up! ~



**Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.** (Mark 9:24)

Lord, I see—but enlighten my darkness!

Lord, I hear—but cure my deafness!

Lord, I move—but quicken my dullness!

Lord, I desire—but help my unwillingness!

William Secker

# Two Catechisms

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

**D**ID YOU KNOW that Martin Luther wrote two different catechisms? What we call “the” catechism, which we use in our Sunday Schools and homes primarily for children’s teaching, is Luther’s Small Catechism, a short book in question/answer format that contains the basic teachings of our Christian faith. It covers the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, Holy Baptism, the Office of the Keys, Confession and Absolution, and the Sacrament of the Altar, each section having questions with simple answers.

Dr. Luther put together the Small Catechism after visiting several congregations in Saxony and finding that the people didn’t understand even the most basic doctrines of Christianity. He wrote in the preface:

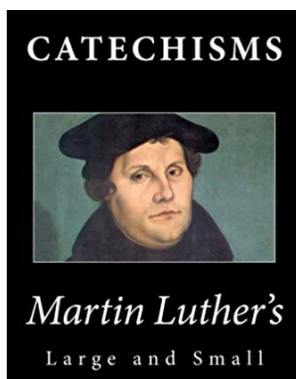
The deplorable, miserable condition which I discovered lately when I, too, was a visitor, has forced and urged me to prepare this Catechism, or Christian doctrine, in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Good God! what manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and, alas! many pastors are altogether incapable and incompetent to teach. Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, have been baptized and receive the holy Sacraments. Yet they cannot 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 intended that the text would be committed to memory, and then the meanings as well, keeping the form (wording) consistent so that memorization would be simpler. As the catechumens grew, they would begin to understand the Christian doctrines, and so be able to explain and defend their faith.

After learning the Small Catechism thoroughly, the Large Catechism was to be studied, in order to gain a richer and deeper knowledge of the Christian faith. The Large Catechism takes up in greater depth the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar.

In the preface to the Large Catechism, fathers are exhorted to teach their children:

Therefore it is the duty of every father of a family to question and examine his children and servants at least once a week and to ascertain what they know of it, or are learning, and, if



they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it. For I well remember the time, indeed, even now it is a daily occurrence that one finds rude, old persons who knew nothing and still know nothing of these things, and who, nevertheless, go to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and use everything belonging to Christians, notwithstanding that those who come to the Lord’s Supper ought to know more and have a fuller understanding of all Christian doctrine than children and new scholars.

In our tradition, we are confirmed as teenagers after learning the Small Catechism. Some of us might never open our catechism again, other than to briefly reminisce about our Sunday School and confirmation days. We may remember bits of our memory work from childhood, but probably couldn’t recite all the parts of the Christian doctrine we confess. We ought to study our Catechism daily, though, as Luther exhorts:

If I were to recount all the profit and fruit which God’s Word produces, whence would I get enough paper and time? The devil is called the master of a thousand arts. But what shall we call God’s Word, which drives away and brings to naught this master of a thousand arts with all his arts and power? It must indeed be the master of more than a hundred thousand arts. And shall we frivolously despise such power, profit, strength, and fruit—we, especially, who claim to be pastors and preachers? If so, we should not only have nothing given us to eat, but be driven out, being baited with dogs, and pelted with dung, because we not only need all this every day as we need our daily bread, but must also daily use it against the daily and unabated attacks and lurking of the devil, the master of a thousand arts.

And if this were not sufficient to admonish us to read the Catechism daily, yet we should feel sufficiently constrained by the command of God alone, who solemnly enjoins in Deut. 6:6ff that we should always meditate upon His precepts, sitting, walking, standing, lying down, and rising, and have them before our eyes and in our hands as a constant mark and sign. Doubtless He did not so solemnly require and enjoin this without a purpose; but because He knows our danger and need, as well as the constant and furious assaults and temptations of devils, He wishes to warn, equip, and preserve us against them, as with a good armor against their fiery darts and with good medicine against their evil infection and suggestion.

May the study of God’s Word bring comfort and peace to our souls, today and forever. ~

**Christian Monthly** Vol. LXXVI—No. 10

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

US: \$12 (Washington residents add your local sales tax)

Canada: \$18 (US money order only) Foreign: \$25

Send articles for publication to:  
Lois Matson, Editor  
Email: [cm@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:cm@apostoliclutheran.org)  
Phone: (360) 904-6951  
Postal Mail to:  
CHRISTIAN MONTHLY  
PO Box 2126  
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA

Address subscriptions, payments,  
and Book Concern orders to:  
Anders & Clara Sundqvist, Managers  
THE BOOK CONCERN  
PO Box 2126  
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA  
Phone: (360) 896-7344  
Email: [books@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:books@apostoliclutheran.org)

**Apostolic Lutheran Church of America**

[www.apostoliclutheran.org](http://www.apostoliclutheran.org)

Western Mission: [western@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:western@apostoliclutheran.org)

Eastern Mission: [eastern@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:eastern@apostoliclutheran.org)

Foreign Mission: [foreign@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:foreign@apostoliclutheran.org)

The *Christian Monthly* (ISSN 0009-5494) is published monthly for \$12 per year by the Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, 19113 NE 144th Street, Brush Prairie, WA 98606. Periodical permit paid in Brush Prairie, Washington.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604

**General Disclaimer:** The material in the *Christian Monthly* is reviewed for scriptural soundness and to ensure that it does not conflict with the teachings of the ALCA. Publication does not imply that other material by included authors has been so approved.



**HAVE YOU MOVED?** Please notify the Book Concern of address changes. We must pay return postage on undelivered mail.

## Goodness and Mercy

Pastor Mark Aho  
Ashburnham, Massachusetts

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

Psalm 23

**H**OW COULD DAVID BE SO confident in his salvation? Was it because he felt he could save himself, or that by his own righteousness he could be worthy? No, David, through the eyes of faith, could see his salvation in all that Christ Jesus would provide for him. *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.* (Psalm 23:1)

First, Christ Jesus would fulfill all righteousness for him. Then He would pay the full price for his sins, die on the cross, and descend into hell. The most assuring of all is when he could see Him risen victorious over death, hell, and the power of the devil.

Jesus Christ lives forevermore as a mediator between God and man, making intercession for him. To the Father He says that He has purchased him with his own blood (Acts 20:28), and has sent down His love to dwell within him. *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* (Romans 5:5) Therefore, Christ says, he is mine. *I will come again, and receive you unto myself.* (John 14:3)

Surely David's confidence was in the sheer grace, mercy, and forgiveness of Christ, and not in himself. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* (John 17:3)

You, also, can have the confidence of David, and be sure of your salvation. May the revelation of Jesus Christ be ever with you. ~

Surely GOODNESS  
and MERCY  
shall follow me  
ALL the days of my life,  
and I shall DWELL  
in the house of the LORD  
FOREVER.  
Psalm 23:6

## To Understand Grace

Pastor Tom Lappi  
Newberg, Oregon

**I**T IS A DELIGHT TO meditate on God's Word and to discover the treasures of wisdom hidden there. He is the Source of the Living Water that flows of its own volition. It flows silently, and we cannot see from where it comes. Yet, for those willing to stoop down and drink, it is refreshment unlike anything else.

Jesus told of two men whose lives were about as different as they could possibly be. *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores.* (Luke 16:19-20) In two short verses, Jesus described the unbeliever and the child of God.

Our hearts are united with the beggar named Lazarus. We can identify with him, and somehow we are not ashamed. The one aspect of Lazarus that is so moving is the last phrase, for Lazarus is described as *full of sores*. There is the mystery of godliness that is hidden from the eyes of the world, and especially from the self-righteous who pass by and point out the sores of the Christians.

The real story isn't that we have these sores, or that we have to get rid of them, but rather that we are fit for heaven by His grace, shown to us because of the merits of Jesus. Lazarus carried these sores until the moment of death, and then the angels carried him home.

May we not be discouraged, or despair, when we take our place with Lazarus, for it is here that we understand grace. We know that each of us, like Lazarus, also has a name, and it is written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life.

God's peace.