

What it Means to be a Lutheran: Then and Now
Class II October 30, 2024

Opening Prayer

Overview of course

Ten second introductions

Lutheran Theology

Justification by Grace Through Faith:

Historical Background:

Luther is obsessed with salvation which he believes comes from good works and the Mass. He realizes that he cannot stop sinning, he beats himself, starves himself, but nothing works!

He realizes that he does not love God, he hates God!

It was when reading Romans 1:17 that he read that in the gospel, “the righteousness of God is revealed.” But what was the righteousness of God?

NOT the punishment of sinners as he previously thought, but God’s justice and righteousness that comes from outside, from God (alien righteousness). This God freely gives!

Thus Luther began to love God and as a result, he wanted to do what God wanted him to do, not out of a fear of punishment, but out of a love for God

Also during this time in Wittenberg, the church was selling forgiveness in the form of indulgences

Romans 3:19-28

Ephesians 2:8-9

-Justification: To be made right with God, saved, sins are forgotten.

-Grace: undeserved love and forgiveness given by God. We rebel against him, but he does not abandon us. He continues to shower us with his grace.

-Why don't we deserve to be forgiven?

-Faith: Believing in God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

-We are simultaneously sinners and saint—our human condition is one of sin, our salvation is assured through our faith (Read Lull pg. 596)

-Grace is not earned, it is given by God. We cannot earn our salvation!

-Why can we NOT earn our salvation?

-Good works are the fruit of and not the payment for our justification by grace through faith

-What role do good works play in Lutheran theology if we are saved by faith?

-This realization helped Luther to love God again, and not hate God.

-Also, under this idea, there is no room for indulgences

Some thoughts on Predestination:

-What are your thoughts about predestination?

-Humans have a large amount of free will: God did not create us to be robots, but in relationship with God. God does not script out our lives. God knows what will happen, but God does not manipulate us. We make our own decisions about who we will marry, how fast we will drive, and even whether or not we choose to believe in God.

-Humans cannot save themselves, only God can save. God offers salvation to everyone, we choose whether or not to accept that salvation through faith.

-We do not believe in double predestination where God chooses some for salvation but not others.

-There is a story about Luther when he was asked by a student, "How do I know I am saved?" Luther answered, "Do you believe?" "Yes." "Then don't worry about it!"

Priesthood of All Believers and *Sola Scriptura*

Historical Background:

State of the Church in 15th Century:

1. Simony—selling of ecclesiastical posts
2. Nepotism—giving important positions to relatives
3. Absenteeism—being a bishop or archbishop of somewhere you did not even live
4. Pluralism—holding more than one ecclesiastical post
5. Luxurious lifestyles spending the church's money like kings
6. Families, having illegitimate children and then practicing nepotism
7. Political greed and want such as raising armies and attacking other "nations"

-How can a priest be righteousness when they have to buy their position? Clergy were uneducated, monasteries were run by illegitimate sons of kings, clergy had no idea of penance, how could the people? The church could no longer be trusted. It was time for change!

Priesthood of all believers:

I Peter 2:9

-When someone asks you about yourself, how do you usually answer?

-In reality, what is your most important identity?

-God calls us all to different professions and callings, but God first and foremost calls us to love and serve one another no matter what we are doing.

-This means that everything we do in our lives, we do for the good of our neighbor out of a love for God

-There are many different vocations-jobs, father, mother, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, volunteer...

-Because we are called to always be sharing love, we are priests. We are all called to serve each other and do the work of Christ here on earth.

-Priests (pastors) work for the congregation and can be removed by the congregation if they are corrupt. They are called to serve just like all Christians and Christ himself

-This was a powerful shift in Luther's time because of the hierarchical system

-Lutheran churches are set up differently from Catholic churches

Sola Scriptura:

-The Bible is the ultimate authority, not the pope or a council

-Humans are sinful and can err in their judgement through Greed, selfishness, lust, or anger

- The Bible is forever
- This is true because it was Christ, the Word of God, that made the church and gave the gospel, the life giving word of salvation
- The Bible guides the church and all Christians in their actions on earth
- The Bible is not infallible, it is not set in stone
- Through the Bible, Jesus comes to us.
- Any teaching in the Lutheran Church has to be defended with Scripture
- Interpretation occurs through individuals, historical analysis, and consensus.
- Hair-brained interpretations are weeded out. But even YOU have the power to interpret scripture.
- What does it mean to you that you have the authority to interpret scripture?*
- Can God say something different to two people who read the same passage? Who is right? Who is wrong?*

Law vs. Gospel and Two Kingdoms:

Historical Background:

Great Schism of the Church 1378-1414:

- In 1378, **Urban VI** was elected and crowned pope by the Cardinals BUT
He began to reform the church stopping nepotism and simony
The Cardinals decided he had gone mad (too much reform too quickly), so they joined together and elected a new pope, **Clement VII** who resided in Avignon.
- Now there are two popes elected by the same cardinals!
All of Europe had to choose up sides. They choose based upon political alliances that date back hundreds of years. Basically, France, Scotland and Spain vs. Germany, England and Italy.
- The Council of Pisa is called to end the Schism and **Alexander V** is elected pope, and now there were three popes!
- In 1414, the **Council of Constance** met and **Martin V** was elected and was recognized by all of Europe as pope.
Leo X dies, and the new pope, **Clement VII**, sides with Francis and attacks Charles. The German princes, many of whom are Lutheran, attack Rome on behalf of Charles and sack the city. Eventually Charles makes peace with Francis and the pope.

Peasant's revolt of 1524-1525:

Peasant's are treated harshly by princes and they revolt believing Luther's ideas support their economic demands (which Luther denied)
Luther tried to persuade the peasants not to use violence
He agreed that their grievances were just and the princes should listen
Eventually backed the princes as they made a violent end to the revolt, urging them to be merciful.

Law vs. Gospel

Romans 3:19-20, 31

“The law terrifies, accuses, condemns, denounces, punishes, and kills. If this is not true, the gospel cannot comfort, strengthen, forgive, liberate and renew.” –Carl Braaten

- The law represents the demands of God (rules, laws, commandments...)
- The gospel, which means good news, represents the promise of God. (salvation, forgiveness, eternal life, hope, joy, love, peace...)
- Without the law to point out our faults, we do not know we need the gospel.
- Do you more often feel the law or the gospel in your lives?*
- Lutheran preaching and teaching should always include both the law and the gospel.

Two uses of the Law:

- What are some of the rules and laws in our society?*
- What are some of the rules and laws of God?*
- What would it be like in our world if there were no laws or rules?*
- What is the purpose of the laws and rules we have as a society?*

- The law is used in the public domain to order society, punish crime, and prevent chaos
- The laws of God keeps good order in creation (order out of chaos) this stops us from hurting ourselves or others.
- The law points out our need for God and the forgiveness that comes from God.
- When the law finds us guilty, the gospel makes us right with God

- If we are already right with God, why do we do anything good?* Out of love and gratitude toward God for the gift of grace
- The law is born out of fear, the gospel out of love
- The law prepares the way for the good news, the gospel
- The gospel needs the law and the law needs the gospel.

Two kingdoms:

Matthew 22:15-22

- God created two kingdoms, one under the law, one under the gospel
- Although not a separation of church and state, what is the role of your government? What is the role of your church?*
- Do you expect the church to do the work of the state or vice versa?*
- The state functions under the law to stop sin
 - If not, the world would be in chaos and destruction
- Christians, or the church, live under the gospel. They do not need the law because they live their lives in love and service to others.
 - However, not everyone is Christian, a true believer. Also, even believers sin and hurt others. Therefore, the civil authorities are needed to curb evil. (read Lull 663)
- The temporal government creates order out of chaos. This allows for the gospel to be heard
- The spiritual realm produces righteousness, the temporal brings about peace by preventing evil deeds
- One realm does not have power over the other realm.
- Non-Christian leaders are to be followed as long as they are not tyrants b/c they serve a function
- Likewise, the state should not interfere in the dealings of the church because the sword has no authority over the gospel.

- BUT, a tyrant prince, who lords himself over others, should not be obeyed, even if they are Christian, because they have broken the gospel. Luther said he would rather follow a Muslim prince that was righteous than a Christian prince who was a tyrant.
- Lutherans believe that God can work good, especially in the secular realm, through non-Christians.
- Princes should serve and not be served! (a novel idea for that time) Do not take, give.
- Clergy should also serve and not be served. They have no business in the temporal realm!
- Both realms need each other and should not be removed.
- The theory and philosophy of the two-kingdoms theology is solid, it is when the theology is put into practice that it becomes very gray, as it did for Luther in the Peasant Wars of 1524-1525.

Sacramental Theology:

Catholic Church had seven sacraments: Baptism, Communion, Marriage, Ordination, Last Rites, Confirmation, and Confession.

Lutherans have only two: Communion and Baptism

What is a sacrament?

- Sacred acts, instituted by Christ, ordained by God, promising grace, and combining natural elements with God's Word.
- sacraments do you no good without faith
- Read Matthew 28:19 and Luke 22:17-20**
- Why do the other Catholic sacraments (Marriage, Ordination, Last Rites, Confirmation, and Confession) not qualify as sacraments for Lutherans?*
- Does that mean they are not important?*

Baptism:

- infants are surrounded by the faith of the community.
- "Faith does not make the sacrament, but receives it."
- In the Bible, whole households are baptized. Therefore, infants can be baptized
- In baptism, God chooses, not us. God is doing the work and making the promises in baptism.
- We affirm our baptism in confirmation.
- Lutherans believe we are born "children of a fallen humanity". Do you agree?
- In baptism, the old sinful person is drown and we become children of God and inheritors of eternal life.
- Our sins are forgiven and we can know that we are saved. This we can cling to our whole lives!
- We must daily remember our baptism and again ask God for forgiveness.

Communion:

- Christ is present!
- Compare with Catholicism, Zwingli, and Calvin (see sheet below)
- How Christ is present is a mystery: "In, with, and under."
- In Communion we remember Christ's death and resurrection and we receive God's grace.
- We also take comfort in knowing that Christ is present there with us.

Ryan Brodin

**Adult Forum God's Love Lutheran Church
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Four Views of the Lord's Supper During the Reformation

Catholicism:

Transubstantiation-The bread and the wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus. This is possible by using Aristotelian metaphysics. Two parts: substance and accidental. Example: candle wax: The substance (wax) never changes and can never change, or else wax would cease to be wax. Accidents (outer appearances) can change without changing the substance (i.e. melting wax). But at the time of consecration by the words of institution, a miracle occurs in which the substance changes while the accidents stay the same. Therefore, there is bread and wine in all its qualities, but its true substance is the body and blood of Christ. "This is my body" is quite literal. Lord's Supper is a continual sacrifice of Christ over and over again. Also believe in Communion in one kind (no wine, just bread)

Zwingli:

Christ ascended to be at the right hand of God and cannot be anywhere else. (Luke 22.69) Supper is symbolic; there is no real presence. Christians simply remember Christ's death, proclaim Christ's death, declare allegiance to Christ before each other, and offer praise and thanksgiving to Christ. When Christ speaks of feeding on his flesh, as in John 6:54-56, he means feeding in terms of faith. Lord's Supper is not necessary to feed on the flesh of Christ, only faith is necessary. Eucharist is faith. "This is my body" taken figuratively and symbolically. Lord's Supper is only important because Jesus commands us to "Do this in remembrance of me." Christ was sacrificed once and for all on Calvary.

Calvin/Reformed:

Lord's Supper seals and confirms Christ's promise to us that his flesh is food and his blood drink. In the Lord's Supper, Christ sustains us with food and drink in our faith as real food and drink sustain us in our physical lives. A second use is for outward confession of Christ's death and its importance to salvation and forgiveness of sins. A third use is to unify the community at large by partaking of the one loaf. In the Lord's Supper, whatever is Christ's becomes ours and whatever was ours Christ took away. We share in all his righteousness, and he takes away our sins. It is necessary to actually feed on Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, not just symbolically through faith (as Zwingli believed). Christ's humanity is so present in the elements that the Lord's Supper becomes the medium through which God re-creates, renews and quickens our faith. It is a real participation or union with Christ.

Like Zwingli, Calvin believed that Christ's body was in heaven and seated at the right hand of God. Therefore, Christ cannot be present physically in the Lord's Supper. He believes this because Christ sent the Holy Spirit down to be with us while he ascended into heaven. (John 16:7) It defeats the purpose of sending the Holy Spirit if Christ is still present with us in the Lord's Supper. It is ludicrous to think of Christ being hidden behind the mask of bread and wine because his body would take up space already occupied by the elements of bread and wine. He believes that Christ refers to the bread as his "body"

("This is my body") as a metonymy. In an metonymy, a symbol represents something that is not describable; it is not to be taken literally. According to Calvin, if the bread was the body of Christ, the disciples would have been grossed out by eating it. Also, Christ was sitting right there at the table with them in the flesh! Thus, he is present spiritually, but it is a real presence. Christ is present to us through faith and bonded to our spirit through the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit in the Lord's Supper. Our Spirit goes to Christ because he is not able to come to us.

Luther:

Luther attacks the Catholic position only because it was made into Church doctrine. He agreed with transubstantiation as an opinion, but it had no scriptural backing. He was also appalled by Zwingli's lack of respect for the importance of the Lord's Supper. "This is my body" really means this is his body. How it is his body, Luther does not attempt to describe because it is not important. We cannot begin to understand God and his ways because we would be gods ourselves if we could: Christ is present in, with, and under the bread and wine, but the bread and wine do not change from bread and wine. Luther bases this decision on I Cor. 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" Luther would rather base his ideas on the literal interpretation of scripture rather than on someone's interpretation of that passage.

In the Lord's Supper, Christ lowers himself to us as a gift. Just as others in the Bible touched him and were healed, we too are healed when we touch him in the real presence of the Lord's Supper. Doctrine of Ubiquity (Omnipresence) is Luther's explanation. He bases this on his Christology. God is present to us only through Christ's humanity. Wherever Christ is present, so is God's divinity, and vice versa. God is omnipresent and works in all things and, therefore, so is Christ. This answers how Christ can be at God's right hand and on many altars at the same time. Normally, we cannot comprehend Christ's presence because it is beyond our comprehension. But in the Lord's Supper, God chooses to reveal his presence to us by limiting himself with the words "This is my body." Luther argues that Christ's body can be present without taking up space physically as his opponents argued. This is possible because Christ's body walked through walls and occupied space already filled by the wood of the wall. In the same way he can be present in the bread. Christ comes to us in the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper strengthens and increases faith constantly. Faith precedes participation, or else the Lord's Supper is taken to damnation instead of salvation. Faith is a gift from God just as the Lord's Supper. The importance of The Lord's Supper is in the Words, not the action itself. Through the sacrament we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation--for life and salvation follow from forgiveness of sins.

"The reality of fellowship in the church always precedes theological understanding."

-Wolfhart Pannenberg