

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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AUGUST 2017

Pastor Craig Engel

The Struggle Against Sin

I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!
Romans 7:18-19, 24-25

“I wanted to be done with that _____ (insert sinful thought, desire, word or act), but there I went and did it again.” Does it surprise you that even when you are a Christian, and have a heart that wants to follow God, you still struggle against sinful impulses, and too often fall to them?

You are not the first Christian to feel that way. Almost 2000 years ago the apostle Paul wrote: “I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”

Right before that verse, he explained why this was so. He wrote, “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.”

When God brings people to faith in Christ, he covers them with Christ's forgiveness and counts them as completely holy. He creates in them a new heart that loves the Lord and wants to walk in his ways. But as long as we are in this life, the old, sinful self that we have from birth still wants to do what is evil and fights against the good desires of the new heart God created within us.

So Christians still struggle against sin every day. They often stumble and do sinful things their new hearts don't want

to do. And it frustrates them! Paul wrote, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?”

But there's good news: “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Though we struggle each day, each day God forgives us because of Jesus' perfect sacrifice that was complete payment for all our sins. At last, Jesus will come and take us to be with him in heaven. There will be no sin there, around us, or inside us, to fight against or drag us down.

Keep looking forward to that day. Meanwhile, let your daily struggle with sin make you appreciate even more how good it is to have Jesus as your Savior, and to be covered by his mercy and forgiveness. ☒

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Galatians 5:17

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Worship Notes

In the month of August, we continue to hear how the words and works of Christ call people to repentance and faith and follow Jesus. The themes of the divine services in August proclaim important parts of that life of the believer.

- August 6th – Earthly Wealth Is Meaningless
- August 13th – Faith Finds True Treasure in the Promise of God
- August 20th – Jesus Warns...The Word Brings Division
- August 27th – Jesus Warns...The Door to Heaven Is Narrow

Synod Convention

Every two years, our church body meets in convention to hear and consider our collective efforts in the past two years and to make plans to walk together and work together for the next two years. This year, pastor is serving as a delegate at the convention. He will return to Willmar on the night of August 3rd. For those interested, the convention will be live streamed. Watch the bulletin for more information.

Thursday Evening Divine Service

The final Thursday service will be August 31st.



Sunday School Teachers

Weekly Sunday morning instruction in Bible History resumes on September 10th. If you would like to serve our children and their families as a teacher or a helper, please speak with pastor.

Lutheran Hymnody

On June 20th, pastor made a presentation at Grandviews Vinyard in Belview. Several members of our attended the event as well. As we observe the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, pastor will share some of the presentation in the newsletter.

Festival Services for the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation

Our Minnesota District is planning two special festival services to commemorate the grace of God in the Lutheran Reformation. They will be held on November 5th. One will take place at Martin Luther College in New Ulm. The other service will be at St. Croix Lutheran High School in West Saint Paul. More information will be shared in upcoming newsletters and bulletins.

MEALS WHEELS

If you are interested in helping with delivering meals, we are signed up for the weeks of August 7-12 and 14-18. Please consider serving in this way. Let Jan Krueger know ASAP if you can help.

We also are assigned October 30-Nov. 4 and Nov. 6-11.

Cut Hymns List

The WELS Hymnal Project invites feedback on its initial decision about which of our currently-published hymns (Christian Worship and Christian Worship: Supplement) will be kept for the new hymnal and which will be cut. Our current list of hymns will be published in nine segments. Each segment will indicate which hymns are designated to be kept and which are designated to be cut. Each segment includes a feedback form where we invite you to indicate any hymns (up to ten) from those designated to be cut that you would like to see kept. This list is being published in concurrence with a series of nine monthly articles published in Forward in Christ. To view which

hymns will be kept and cut, and to offer feedback, go to: <http://www.welshymnal.com/research/cut-hymns-list>. If you would like to see a printed list of hymns designated to be kept or excluded, please talk to pastor.

Worship Conference Presentation

Diane Kremin and Marissa Marxhausen attended the WELS National Conference on Worship, Music and the Arts in June. On Sunday, August 6th, they will talk about the conference during Bible study.

Music Academy Recital

Twenty-nine students who attended our music academy will present a recital on Saturday, August 5th, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Our members are invited to attend the recital. There will be snacks and refreshments served following the recital.

Bible Academy

The final Bible academy night will be on Wednesday, August 2nd.

Emily's Last Sunday

Emily's last Sunday for the summer will be on August 6th. She will head to her home in Wisconsin for a bit and then return to New Ulm to begin school on August 19th. We thank Emily for all of her efforts in our Bible and Music Academy and serving in the Divine Service.



"Behold,
THE LAMB OF GOD,
who takes away
THE SIN
OF THE WORLD!"

JOHN 1:29, ESV

Martin Luther:



The Professor And Preacher

From *The Life and Faith of Martin Luther*, by Adolph F. Fehlaue.
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After a short stay in Erfurt, Luther was transferred back to the University of Wittenberg to teach theology. Although Wittenberg was an insignificant town of only two thousand people, Luther was pleased to go to Wittenberg. There he would have the opportunity to intensify his study of God's Word. Wittenberg would be his home for the rest of his life. But, more important, in Wittenberg he would learn to know the true and only way to salvation. Through the study of God's Word he would learn that salvation has been obtained for all people through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. All who believe in Christ as their Redeemer are saved. Eventually this wonderful message of salvation would be proclaimed throughout the world.

An Important Decision

Luther was assigned a little room in the upper story of the Black Cloister. This tower room would be his work room for most of his life. Here, through the study of God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he would find peace for his soul and for untold numbers of others. Thanks to Luther's work, many would again be able to hear the gospel of salvation in all its truth and purity. "God moves in

mysterious ways his wonders to perform."

One day Luther was visiting with his good friend Dr. John Staupitz in the garden of the Black Cloister. During the conversation Dr. Staupitz said to Luther, "Brother Martin, you must become a doctor of theology and a preacher. That will give you plenty to do." Staupitz had learned to know Luther as a gifted and dedicated man who had leadership ability. He had in mind that Luther should become the head professor in the religion department at the university and also serve as preacher in the university chapel. This was a great honor, but the work and responsibilities that John Staupitz wanted him to assume frightened Luther. Martin gave Staupitz many reasons why he felt that he could not carry out the assignment, but his friend would not consider any of them as valid reasons. Finally, Luther said, "All this work and these responsibilities will kill me. I will be dead in less than three months." Staupitz replied, "God will surprise you. He will be there to help you. Would it be so bad to die in a service that will give life to others?" Jokingly he added, "And, the Lord has need for capable people also in heaven."

Luther finally agreed to pursue his studies in religion and to prepare himself for the position as head professor of religion and as preacher in the university chapel. He studied diligently. In October 1512 he received his doctor's degree in theology. When the degree was conferred on him, he had to swear to preach the Word of God faithfully. This troubled him very much. Later in life he said, "I was made a doctor of theology, but I did not yet know the light."

Light in God's Word

Martin Luther took his vow very seriously. As professor and preacher he had to expound the Scriptures to the students. This required careful and thorough preparation. From 1513 to 1517 he

lectured on Genesis, the Psalms, Romans, and Galatians. Gradually, as he studied the Bible in its original languages, Luther learned to know Christ as St. Paul knew him. But it was not easy for Luther to discard the beliefs and fear that had been implanted in his mind up till now by his parents, his teachers, and the church. But the more he studied the Bible the more he realized that it is God who declares a person righteous through the righteousness earned by his Son. Jesus Christ kept the Law that man could not keep, and he gave his life to pay the punishment for the sins of all. In Paul's Epistle to the Romans he read: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as is written, The just shall live by faith." This passage now took on an altogether new meaning. Man does not become righteous by doing good works. Instead, salvation is a free gift of God through faith in Christ. Man is justified not by works, but by faith alone!

The more he searched the Scriptures, the more Luther's doubts and fears left him, and peace came to his soul. And that saving message of the gospel he had found in the Bible he also proclaimed in his lectures and sermons. It could not be otherwise. Students flocked to his classroom to hear God's Word expounded as they had never heard it explained in the past. They especially appreciated the thoroughness with which Dr. Luther prepared his lectures and the straightforwardness with which he spoke to them. There was never any doubt about his views on a subject. The faculty members of the university were also impressed by Luther's understanding and clear interpretation of the Scriptures.

Luther was a very busy man. In

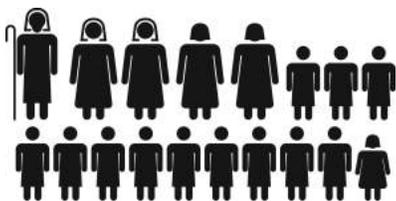
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addition to lecturing and preaching at the university, he also was overseer of ten Augustinian monasteries. When the pastor of the City Church in Wittenberg became ill, Martin Luther was assigned to serve as pastor of that large congregation. This increased his work load very much. Luther was an eloquent preacher, but, more importantly, he had a wonderful message for the people—the gospel of salvation through faith in Christ. More and more people came to hear him. Often he had to preach every day of the week, and sometimes twice a day. Although Luther was teaching and preaching that man is justified by faith in the atonement of Christ, and not by works, he still considered himself a faithful member of the church. He was even convinced that the pope would agree with him. ☒

Bible Quiz

Jacob had two wives, two concubines (his wives' maids), 12 sons and one daughter. Who gave birth to the daughter, Dinah?

- A. Zilpah C. Leah
B. Bilhah D. Rachel



Answer: See Genesis 30:19-21

Oh...The joy of
SUMMER!!



LUTHERAN HYMNODY

Last month we heard how Lutheran hymnody is brutally honest about our three great enemies: the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. This month, we will look at some examples of how Lutheran hymnody proclaims God's law harshly to us.

The hymn, *Salvation Unto Us Has Come*, has been called the true confessional hymn of the Reformation. It's author, Paul Speratus, wrote the hymn in 1523 and it was one of the eight hymns found in the first Lutheran hymnal. Martin Luther shed tears when he heard it sung by a street-singer outside his window in Wittenberg. It is in this treasure of a hymn, that we hear just how harshly Lutheran hymnody proclaims God's law to us. (Note: The original hymn was written with 14 stanzas. Christian Worship includes 6. Look it up online and read all 14 stanzas! It is well worth the investment in time.) Consider the second stanza as an example of how Lutheran hymnody thunders the curse of God's law:

What God does in his law demand
And none to him could render
Caused wrath and woe and ev'ry hand
For man the vile offender.
Our flesh has not the pure desires
The spirit of the law requires,
And lost is our condition.

Just pause and ponder what it is God's law does. Stop and consider what it does not do. It doesn't give me a jumpstart. It doesn't work in me the desire to follow God. It doesn't create in me a pure heart. It doesn't fill me up with goodness that I am enable to do the good things God demands. No. The law points its finger at me and says, "Do this! Don't do that!" And I don't. And I won't. And I can't. God says, "Do this." And I can't do it. God says, "Don't do this." And I can't stop doing it. The law curses me. It puts me under the sentence of wrath and death and hell. It calls me vile, impure and lost. It leaves no room for me to think, "Well, if I just apply myself. If I just work a little harder at being good. If I just do more good than bad, then God will have to be OK with that." No. The law extinguishes any hope I have of ever offering any kind of good to God.

Later in the hymn, Speratus highlights another way the Law is preached in our singing. He writes,

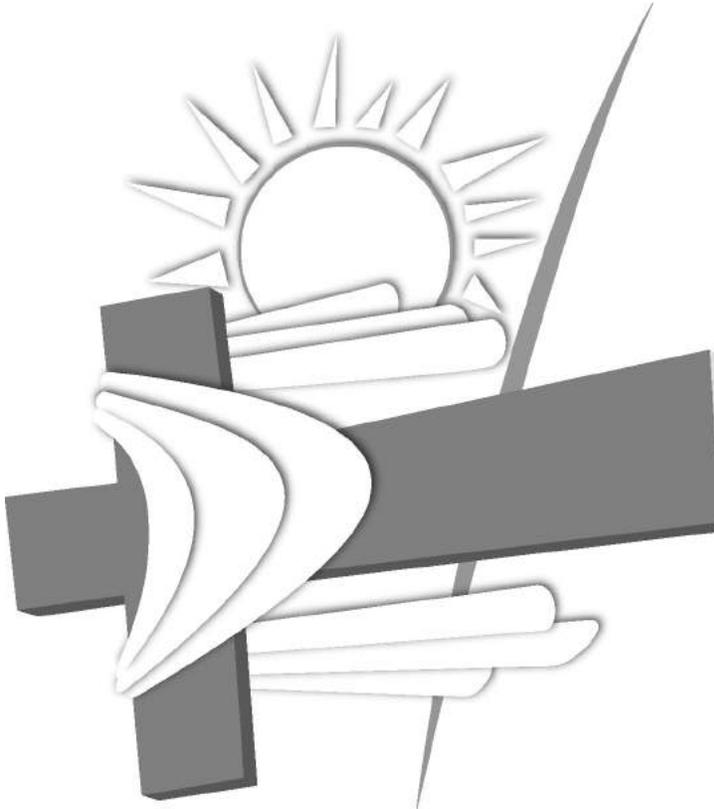
The law reveals the guilt of sin
And makes us conscience-stricken...
...The Law no peace can ever give,
No comfort and no blessing.
...The law is but a mirror bright
To bring the inbred sin to light
That lurks within our nature.

When Lutheran hymnody sings like this, it doesn't do so solely for the sake of making one feel bad. It isn't some kind of depressing funeral dirge meant to plunge one further into despair. It isn't Lutheranism version of a death-bell tolling. No. Not at all. (This is why I suggested reading all 14 stanzas of the hymn!) When Lutheran hymnody is announcing God's law plainly, it is much like the work of a doctor. Often, a doctor has to injure us before he can heal us. He has to tell the truth of our condition before he can apply the cure. If you stubbed your toe one moment and in the next experienced a heart attack and when you got to the ER the doctor there said that what you really needed was to be more careful where you walk, you wouldn't be hearing what you really needed to hear. As much as you don't want to hear you had a heart attack, it is exactly what you need, for it exposes just how sick you are and how much you need help that you can't provide. Here is Lutheran hymnody's purpose in preaching God's law harshly: it exposes our great need for a Savior; it kills me to death; it clearly reveals my inability to save myself.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**“...the LORD has
laid on him the
iniquity of us all.”**
Isaiah 53:6b