

**Bible e-Study - "Living Life Worshipping God" #5**

**Word**

**"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."** Luke 10:42-43

**NUGGET** – We recognize in the words of Jesus to Martha His reference to hearing Him as the 'better' thing and that the cares of this world are a distraction from that 'one thing needed'. (To read the context look at [Luke 10:38-43](#).)

From this and many other passages (i.e. [Romans 10:5-17](#), [John 1:1-5, 14-18](#), [Deuteronomy 31:11-13](#), [Jeremiah 23:16-18](#)) we are told that the Word of the Lord is what is most important for life. So for us as Lutheran Christians we take the admonition of the Lord to Martha to heart and we say that Word and Sacrament ministry is our focus. All that we strive to do in worship and service, therefore, has its foundation and source in God's holy word. That, as we've seen in many places in looking at why we do what we do in worship, is where we draw from for the various elements of worship.

Today we'll be talking about the sermon, which I was taught in seminary '*is a more or less 20 minute presentation of Law and Gospel in a liturgical setting.*' (I tend to the "less" side of that definition.) The sermon focuses on the Word of God for instruction, admonishment, repentance and correction according the Law; and understanding, encouragement, strengthening of faith and above all, hope and joy in the Gospel. That last thing is because we were always instructed to '*allow the Gospel to predominate.*' Looking at both our nugget verse and passage from Romans above make that clear.

So often I hear preachers who try and turn the Gospel into Law and make the Gospel something you do, earn or bring about by your effort. The Gospel, by it's nature, is pure gift, joy, mercy, wholeness and restoration. It is the expression of grace by which God makes clear His love and passion for His creation and His people in Christ Jesus. Luther summed up our focus on the Word many times and places and I want to recall one of those for you now that we read in our first handout when we began this series.

*And this is the sum of the matter: Let everything be done so that the Word may have free course instead of the prattling and rattling that has been the rule up to now. We can spare everything except the Word. Again, we profit by nothing as much as by the Word. For the whole Scripture shows that the Word should have free course among Christians. And in Luke 10 [:42], Christ himself says, "One thing is needful," i.e., that Mary sit at the feet of Christ and hear his word daily. This is the best part to choose and it shall not be taken away forever. It is an eternal Word. Everything else must pass away, no matter how much care and trouble it may give Martha. God help us achieve this. Amen.*

**APPLICATION –**

1. It's been a long time since most of you were in confirmation, but for the next few weeks perhaps take out the sermon notes that are in the bulletin and write out, between the lines, your impressions and thoughts as the sermon is preached as to the division of Law and Gospel.

**PRAY** – Give thanks to God for sending us His Living word, Jesus Christ, and for His faithful servants, from Moses to John, who wrote the Word as He desired it to be for us.

## GOING DEEPER

### Invocation – Prayer of the Church

3. *What is included in Divine Service - Liturgy*
  - a. ~~Preparation~~
    - i. ~~Invocation~~
    - ii. ~~Confession / Absolution~~
  - b. ~~Service of the word~~
    - i. ~~Introit~~
    - ii. ~~Kyrie~~
    - iii. ~~Gloria~~
    - iv. ~~Collect~~
    - v. Gradual
    - vi. Hymn of the day
    - vii. Sermon
    - viii. Creed
    - ix. Offering
      1. Offertory
    - x. Prayer of the church

The gradual, from the Latin for ‘step’ (as it was sung from the chancel steps), is seasonal. It does not change weekly. It is meant to provide a thread of continuity through a season of the church year and is usually placed between the Old Testament and New Testament readings. Originally taken only from the psalms, now the gradual uses other text of Holy Scripture as well, as it gently moves us from season to season in the church year. The verse of the day, with the alleluia, is a choral or spoken introduction to the gospel lesson and again, like the collect and the introit, is unique and chosen to compliment the season as well as the readings for the day.

#### Hymn of the day

[Ps 40:3, Mt 26:30, 1 Cor 14:26, Rom 15:9 and Eph 5:19](#). These all speak of the use of hymns in settings of praise, worship or fellowship. Hymns make use of the power of words, especially God’s word, set to music, which enhance our understanding of our relationships with God, creation and others. Music and words combined also have the power to aid memory. So when we use God’s word set to music we have a great aid to memorizing Holy Scripture. Article 24 of the Apology of the Augsburg confession says, *[XXIV.] Concerning the Mass*

Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. In fact, the Mass is retained among us and is celebrated with the greatest reverence. Almost all the customary ceremonies are also retained, except that German hymns, added for the instruction of the people, are interspersed here and there among the Latin ones. For ceremonies are especially needed in order to teach those who are ignorant. Paul advised [[1 Cor. 14:2, 9](#)] that in church a language that is understood by the people should be used.<sup>1</sup>

The Sermon. As we said when speaking about the pulpit, the Word of God is the core of Lutheran worship. Without the proclamation of God’s Word there is no way to know the forgiveness of our sins. St. Paul in Colossians 3:16 speaks of the need to be admonished and taught from the Word of God. That is what a sermon is for, teaching, guiding and recalling the promises of God. Going back into the Old Testament we find

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<sup>1</sup>Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord : The confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (69). Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

that God had it mind for people to be taught His word and how that was to be a help in people lives. Look at [Lev 10:10-11](#), [Deut 4:1-10](#), [2 Chron 15:3](#). These all speak of the need for teaching God's word to God's people.

As St. Paul says in Romans 10:14 ***“But how are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”*** The sermon is there to put our focus on God's Word for daily living and renewal in Christ.

The creeds we commonly use in worship are the Apostles and the Nicene. Once or so a year we may also use the Athanasian Creed, usually on Trinity Sunday. Simply put the creeds are a summary statement of Christian belief and doctrine. If you look at the structure of each of the creeds they all say what is true regarding the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We use these creeds in worship to remind ourselves of who God has revealed Himself to us to be.

These creeds serve as the basic core of all our teaching, doctrine and expression of what Holy Scripture has revealed to us. These are the statements against which all doctrine and teaching must be measured. Anything taught in opposition to or against these creeds puts a person outside the ranks of being a Christian. The creeds are considered universal or catholic (catholic with a small 'c'). That is, to be considered an orthodox Christian, or one who claims to be a Bible believing person, a person must claim allegiance to these creeds.

They are the bedrock, the foundation statements of Christianity; they proclaim clearly that God is the creator of all, that Jesus is the Son of the living God and that the Holy Spirit is sent from both the Father and the Son together. We repeat them Sunday after Sunday so that anytime anyone asks, what do you as a Christian believe, we can each have a ready answer.

The Offering and the offertory. Much of what we've looked at to this point in the Divine Service has been about our receiving of the gifts of God. We've heard God's gift of absolution. We've heard God's word reveal to us more of who our God is and we've heard His message of salvation for our lives in the sermon. Now, in response to His giving, we have the opportunity to respond in a similar fashion, by giving back to Him.

We now return to God a portion, from the first fruits of our labors, that He has He has provided to us through our health and abilities. *“He gives us all we need to sustain this body and life,”* so Luther reminds us in the Small Catechism. Since all we have is from Him, it is right and good that we should acknowledge that by making an offering to Him of what He has allowed us to gain. 1 Cor 16:2 reminds us, *“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.”* Our willing and cheerful offering reflects the first portion of what we have been given so that everything that we spend for ourselves, after our offering to God, is second to God, thereby keeping Him first in our lives.

We sing or say an offertory so that our hearts and minds remain focused on God and His work and action in our daily lives. See [Psalm 116:12-13; 17-19](#). The offertory aids us in keeping our act of offering directed toward God and His generous and kindly provision for us, and in making our offering a joyful response from our hearts to Him. We give to God our best and first because that is what He has given us, His first-born

Son for our salvation and the best in the perfect sacrifice Jesus Christ, for the atonement of our sins.

Prayers of the Church. Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* This might seem to need no explanation, we come to church and we pray! However, as we have noted, we have had various prayers that we pray pertaining to specific parts of our worship so far in the Divine Service. Now, in these prayers of the church, we, together, stand between the world and God as His royal priests ([1 Pet 2:9](#)). *Together* we appeal to God that His will be done for us, our family and friends and the general welfare of this world that God has put us in as His people.

These prayers have their foundation in [1 Timothy 2:1-4](#) "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone..." Our prayers are both a response (along with our praise and offerings) to God's goodness and a seeking after God that He would bless, preserve, extend and defend His church. For this reason, since the 4th century the congregation has often participated in the prayers using a responsive format like we sometimes do.

We have divided up our prayer concerns on the prayer list so that we don't overlook these aspects of daily life. It is always a joy to return thanks to God for His answers as well, so we begin the list with thanks for answered prayer.