



A Word from Pastor Schielke

Law and Gospel Part 9: Gospel Reductionism

(The following has been adapted from an article written by Rev. Michael Strong, used by permission)

Gospel Reductionism – what does that fancy phrase mean, and why should I care? It isn't a common term. Many people within my church body, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and most people outside of the LC—MS have never heard it. But it expresses a teaching that is contrary to the orthodox Christian faith.

The "Christian Encyclopedia" defines gospel reductionism this way. Gospel Reductionism uses "the Gospel as the norm of theology) in such a way as to suggest that... freedom should be allowed within the church in matters that are not an explicit part of the Gospel." In short, this means that the gospel (the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection for the sins of the world) overrides everything else in the Bible. Non-gospel events and teachings such as miracles, creation, or even the Law, because they are not gospel, can be freely denied because they are not strictly gospel. Those who hold to the gospel reductionist position see the Bible as containing the Gospel and a lot of peripheral piffle. Things that are non-

essential, dare I say, are unimportant.

Of course, the Bible-believing Christian understands that gospel reductionism undermines the Law of God. The Law is not Gospel. Since it is not Gospel according to gospel reductionists, it may be ignored. Do what you want, fornicate, slander, curse like a sailor, steal, etc. Those things are not important anymore. Just believe the gospel. That's scandalous but practiced today in many churches.

The fruit of Gospel Reductionism is present in many denominations. God's commandment, "You shall not murder" (Ex 20), since it is not Gospel can be ignored. Killing unborn babies and the elderly is permissible. Despite God's condemnation in Romans 1 that homosexuality is sinful, and since the commandment "You shall not commit adultery" is not Gospel, those exhortations take a back seat, and the church becomes more and more permissive about things which God forbids.

Is there an answer to this heresy? Yes, there is. It's simple, it's straightforward, and we need to remember and use it when confronted with gospel reductionism. Here is the answer.

Since Jesus predicted His resurrection from the dead and fulfilled it (I Cor. 15), He is God. Since He is God, what He says is authoritative. And because Jesus believed and taught His disciples that the Bible is God's word and regarded it as authoritative when it spoke, so should we. For example, in John 10, Jesus said, "Scripture (that's the Old Testament He is referring to) cannot be broken." In Matthew 13, Jesus references the ten commandments and rebukes the Pharisees by saying, "Why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

Reducing the Bible, God's Word, to only the Gospel, rather than the entire Bible being the Word of God, is not something Jesus did. He took the entire Bible to be the Word of God. The whole Old Testament was authoritative for Jesus. And to not put too fine of a point on it, so should it be for us also. "Beloved... it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3).



Ash Wednesday - Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5, with Ash Wednesday. During the Lenten season, we focus on our sins and repent of them as we look towards Jesus' trial, punishment, and death for our sins as the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for us.

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57

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The Formula of Concord - The Formula of Concord (FC) was the last of the confessional documents written by the Lutherans in the 16th century. Finished in 1577, the FC consists of twelve articles presented in two parts. The first part, the Epitome, is a brief presentation of each point of doctrine and the controversy surrounding it while the Solid Declaration presents a more detailed discussion. Over a dozen authors contributed portions of draft versions of the FC, but the most influential authors of the final document were Jakob Andrea and Martin Chemnitz. The need for the FC arose after the death of Martin Luther in 1546. Over time, the Lutherans became divided over several points of doctrine. Several political peace treaties also forced the Lutherans to entertain and accept certain points of Reformed theology which had been developing in Switzerland. Thus, the FC was pivotal in clarifying the Lutheran position over and against both the Roman Catholic position and, more significantly, over the Reformed position. It is the FC that most clearly distinguishes Lutheran teaching on several important points and against the various Protestant bodies we see around us even today. Over the next months, you will find the articles of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord in our newsletter. It's good for all of us to have at least some familiarity with this important doctrinal statement.

X. Church Rites - Continued

NEGATIVE THESES: False Doctrine concerning This Article.

8 Accordingly, we reject and condemn as wrong and contrary to God's Word when it is taught:

9 1. That human ordinances and institutions in the church should be regarded as in themselves a divine worship or part of it.

10 2. When such ceremonies, ordinances, and institutions are violently forced upon the congregation of God as necessary, contrary to its Christian liberty which it has in external things.

11 3. Also, that in time of persecution and public confession [when a clear confession is required] we may yield to the enemies of the Gospel in such adiaphora and ceremonies, or may come to an agreement with them (which causes injury to the truth).

12 4. Also, when these external ceremonies and adiaphora are abrogated in such a manner as though it were not free to the congregation of God to employ one or more [this or that] in Christian liberty, according to its circumstances, as may be most useful at any time to the Church [for edification].

XI. Election

1 Concerning this article no public dissension has occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession. But since it is a consolatory article, if treated properly, and lest offensive disputations concerning the same be instituted in the future, it is also explained in this writing.

AFFIRMATIVE THESES: The Pure and True Doctrine concerning This Article.

2 1. To begin with [First of all], the distinction between praescientia et praedestinatio, that is, between God's foreknowledge and His eternal election, ought to be accurately observed.

3 2. For the foreknowledge of God is nothing else than that God knows all things before they happen, as it is written Dan. 2:28: There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.

4 3. This foreknowledge extends alike over the godly and the wicked, but it is not the cause of evil, neither of sin, namely, of doing what is wrong (which originally arises from the devil and the wicked, perverse will of man), nor of their ruin [that men perish], for which they themselves are responsible [which they must ascribe to themselves]; but it only regulates it, and fixes a limit to it [how far it should progress and] how long it should last, and all this to the end that it should serve His elect for their salvation, notwithstanding that it is evil in itself.

Victory in Christ Lutheran Church
March 2025

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
2 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Youth Confirmation 12:30 p.m.	3 Ladies' Night 6:30 p.m.	4	5 Lenten Dinner 6:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.	6	7	8
9 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	10	11	12 Women's Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Lenten Dinner 6 p.m. Lenten Service 7 p.m.	13	14	15
16 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	17 Spring Break No School	18 Spring Break No School	19 Spring Break No School Lenten Dinner 6 p.m. Lenten Service 7 p.m.	20 Spring Break No School	21 Spring Break No School	22 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
23 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Youth Confirmation 12:30 p.m.	24	25	26 Women's Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Lenten Dinner 6 p.m. Lenten Service 7 p.m.	27	28	29
30 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Youth Confirmation 12:30 p.m.	31					

March Birthdays:

- 6 Gary Rohloff
- 7 Jeremy Higby
- 12 Hayden Rohloff
- 13 Eugene Kroeger
- 15 Brooke Elledge
- 15 Terri Schmidt
- 21 Dennis Haney
- 21 Christine Morgan
- 23 Kerri Schielke



Future Church Cleanings:

- March 8 - Brad Rohloff Family
- March 22 - Schielke Family
- April 5 - Schmidt Family
- April 11 & 12 - Everyone for Spring Cleaning

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VIC Happenings



Season of Lent

Lenten Services - We have Lenten services on March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2, and April 9 which focus on our sins and need for repentance as we look at Christ's journey to the cross. "All things are the work of the hand of the Lord." (Psalm 102:25). Themes for the upcoming weeks: *The Hand of The Lord Who...*

3/5 ... *Freely Forgives*
3/12 ... *Creates and Saves*
3/19 ... *Casts Out Demons*
3/26 ... *Heals the Sick*
4/2 ... *Raises the Dead*
4/9 ... *Holds All Things*
4/17 ... *Serves and Feeds Us*
4/18 ... *Was Pierced For Us*
4/20 ... *Is Risen!*

Spring Cleaning - We will have our annual spring cleaning on Friday, April 11, and Saturday, April 12.

Maunder Thursday Service - This service is April 17 and goes through Christ's trial and sentence to the cross.

Good Friday Service - This service is April 18 and is a Tenebrae service, a service of darkness. It is about his sentence and death on the cross.

Prayer Vigil - Saturday, April 19

Easter Breakfast - April 20, we will be serving breakfast from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Easter Service - This is a celebration of Christ's win over death and the devil.

Easter Egg Hunt - This is following the Easter Service for all children 12 years and younger.

The Bible readings for March and part of April are listed below.

March 1: Deuteronomy 5-7	March 14: Joshua 12-15	March 27: 1 Sam. 1-3
March 2: Deuteronomy 8-10	March 15: Joshua 16-18	March 28: 1 Sam. 4-8
March 3: Deuteronomy 11-13	March 16: Joshua 19-21	March 29: 1 Sam. 9-12
March 4: Deuteronomy 14-16	March 17: Joshua 22-24	March 30: 1 Sam. 13-14
March 5: Deuteronomy 17-20	March 18: Judges 1-2	March 31: 1 Sam. 15-17
March 6: Deuteronomy 21-23	March 19: Judges 3-5	April 1: 1 Sam. 18-20
March 7: Deuteronomy 24-27	March 20: Judges 6-7	April 2: 1 Sam. 21-24
March 8: Deuteronomy 28-29	March 21: Judges 8-9	April 3: 1 Sam. 25-27
March 9: Deuteronomy 30-31	March 22: Judges 10-12	April 4: 1 Sam. 28-31
March 10: Deuteronomy 32-34	March 23: Judges 13-15	April 5: 2 Sam. 1-3
March 11: Joshua 1-4	March 24: Judges 16-18	April 6: 2 Sam. 4-7
March 12: Joshua 5-8	March 25: Judges 19-21	April 7: 2 Sam. 8-12
March 13: Joshua 9-11	March 26: Ruth	April 8: 2 Sam. 13-15

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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship

Newsletter Article – March 2025

God's Instruments, God's Stewards

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)

Some pastors refer to these words as “the most forgotten words in the Scriptures.” They are forgotten because they follow the familiar and critical words before it. The preceding two verses that overshadow Ephesians 2:10 are words of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). These are words preached regularly. They are assigned as confirmation verses. They carry with them the very heart of what it means to be a redeemed child of God!

Precisely because the previous verses are so central to salvation, they often overpower our practice of stewardship! We have been saved by grace. This is certain and sure because of Jesus. Works play no role in our salvation. No credit taking for us! Grace is freely given. Faith is miraculously created by the Spirit and joyously received. This truth is so wonderful and so encompassing that we often miss out on WHY we are redeemed.

The grace of God revealed in Jesus calls us to faith. But St. Paul doesn't stop with grace and faith. He continues to the logical conclusion. Just like the creation declares the handiwork of God, the redemption of sinners like you and me declares His greatest handiwork! Redeemed stewards are created to reflect the grace and mercy God showers on us to others.

As Lutherans, we understand that good works flow from faith in Jesus Christ. They are the fruit of the tree of salvation into which we have been grafted by grace. Sanctification and stewardship are both on-going and active confessions of what the Lord has done in us. These works are not always spectacular. Many times, they are simply parents showing Jesus to their children. They are compassionate actions that live out the truth of the Gospel to co-workers and even complete strangers. While they can be grand endeavors, more likely they are simple, beautiful works which highlight what Jesus has done in us.

These works aren't random either. They have been planned by God. God planned to use you as a faithful steward as you walk the road that leads you through your daily life. There are no chance encounters or coincidences. They have been planned by the Lord of the universe for the benefit of His creation. Good works are what point to God's greatest work: Jesus!

He calls you and me to walk in this faith, which flows from this grace, which has been poured out on us in Jesus. But even this is not to our credit. We are simply called to be faithful stewards of God's grace so that we may share it with those who need it as much as we do. God's Spirit carries us along in this. We are just the steward — the instrument in His hand to accomplish His plan and glorify Him!

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