



A Word from Pastor Schielke

cLaw and Gospel Part 10: A Summary

(Adapted from, "Law and Gospel with Pastor Walther," by Prof. John Pless, The Lutheran Witness October, 2011)

One should avoid going to a restaurant where the chef cannot tell the difference between cyanide and salt. A pinch of salt flavors the food, but a dash of cyanide would be lethal. Distinctions matter. Where they are improperly made, the results can be deadly.

Pastor C. F. W. Walther (1811-87) knew that where God's Law is not rightly distinguished from His Gospel, the spiritual lives of people are endangered, driven either to futility and despair or to Christ-denying self-confidence and arrogance. The end result is the same: unbelief that condemns. Where the Law and the Gospel are mixed together, faith is endangered, and uncertainty rules the day.

Among the many gifts that we received from the Lord through C. F. W. Walther is the biblical truth that God speaks to human beings in two fundamentally different, even opposing, ways. The Scriptures identify this twofold manner of speaking as Law and Gospel. Walther, a careful student of Luther and the Lutheran

Confessions, followed the pattern of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "All Scripture ought to be distributed into these two principal topics: the Law and the promises. For in some places Scripture presents the Law, and in others the promises about Christ."

In a series of Friday evening lectures for seminary students, now published under the title *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, Walther echoes the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions when he writes, "The doctrinal content of all Holy Scripture, both of the Old and the New Testament, consist of two doctrines that differ fundamentally from each other. These two doctrines are Law and Gospel."

Like Luther before him, Walther knew that the ability to rightly distinguish the Law and the Gospel was a hard and difficult art to learn, one that finally could only be taught by the Holy Spirit through God's Word as the believer lived under the cross of spiritual affliction. The ability to know and apply both Law and Gospel comes only

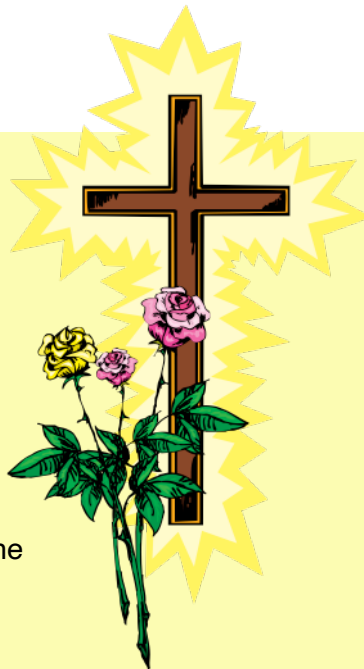


through the experience of hearing and trusting God's Word even as one lives in constant battle with sin and the devil.

Walther knew of this battle. As a university student in Germany he was exposed to the teachings of both Rationalism and Pietism. These two powerful movements blurred the distinction of the Law from the Gospel, leaving people in uncertainty over their standing before God. Rationalism would reduce God's Law to moral precepts capable of being fulfilled with the aid of natural, human wisdom, leaving no room for a Savior who would fulfill the Law in His obedient life and His sacrificial death. Subjecting Holy Scriptures to the judgment of human reason, it rejected the Gospel as obsolete. If God's Word could not be trusted, then the sinner was left with his own strivings to lead a morally decent life. Ethics became more important than doctrine. Pietism focused on the subjective experience of the believer, directing him to the testimony of his own emotions. Again,

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Christ is Risen!



He is Risen Indeed!

"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.

XI. Election

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

5 4. The predestination or eternal election of God, however, extends only over the godly, beloved children of God, being a cause of their salvation, which He also provides, as well as disposes what belongs thereto. Upon this [predestination of God] our salvation is founded so firmly that the gates of hell cannot overcome it. John 10:28; Matt. 16:18.

6 5. This [predestination of God] is not to be investigated in the secret counsel of God, but to be sought in the Word of God, where it is also revealed.

7 6. But the Word of God leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life, in whom all are written and elected that are to be saved in eternity, as it is written Eph. 1:4: He hath chosen us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world.

8 7. This Christ calls to Himself all sinners and promises them rest, and He is in earnest [seriously wills] that all men should come to Him and suffer themselves to be helped, to whom He offers Himself in His Word, and wishes them to hear it and not to stop their ears or [neglect and] despise the Word. Moreover, He promises the power and working of the Holy Ghost, and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation [that we may remain steadfast in the faith and attain eternal salvation].

9 8. Therefore we should judge concerning this our election to eternal life neither from reason nor from the Law of God, which lead us either into a reckless, dissolute, Epicurean life or into despair, and excite pernicious thoughts in the hearts of men, for they cannot, as long as they follow their reason, successfully refrain from thinking: If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, no matter what I do; and again: If I am not elected to eternal life, it is of no avail what good I do; it is all [all my efforts are] in vain anyway.

10 9. But it [the true judgment concerning predestination] must be learned alone from the holy Gospel concerning Christ, in which it is clearly testified that God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all, and that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and believe in the Lord Christ. Rom. 11:32; Ezek. 18:23; 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2.

11 10. Whoever, now, is thus concerned about the revealed will of God, and proceeds according to the order which St. Paul has observed in the Epistle to the Romans, who first directs men to repentance, to knowledge of sins, to faith in Christ, to divine obedience, before he speaks of the mystery of the eternal election of God, to him this doctrine [concerning God's predestination] is useful and consolatory.

12 11. However, that many are called and few chosen, Matt. 22:14, does not mean that God is not willing to save everybody; but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but wilfully despise it, stop their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot perform His work in them, or, when they have heard it, make light of it again and do not heed it, for which [that they perish] not God or His election, but their wickedness, is responsible. [2 Pet. 2:1ff; Luke 11:49. 52; Heb. 12:25f.]

13 12. Thus far a Christian should occupy himself [in meditation] with the article concerning the eternal election of God, as it has been revealed in God's Word, which presents to us Christ as the Book of Life, which He opens and reveals to us by the preaching of the holy Gospel, as it is written Rom. 8:30: Whom He did predestinate, them He also called. In Him we are to seek the eternal election of the Father, who has determined in His eternal divine counsel that He would save no one except those who know His Son Christ and truly believe on Him. Other thoughts are to be [entirely] banished [from the minds of the godly], as they proceed not from God, but from the suggestion of the Evil Foe, whereby he attempts to weaken or entirely to remove from us the glorious consolation which we have in this salutary doctrine, namely, that we know [assuredly] that out of pure grace, without any merit of our own, we have been elected in Christ to eternal life, and that no one can pluck us out of His hand; as He has not only promised this gracious election with mere words, but has also certified it with an oath and sealed it with the holy Sacraments, which we can [ought to] call to mind in our most severe temptations, and take comfort in them, and therewith quench the fiery darts of the devil.

14 13. Besides, we should use the greatest diligence to live according to the will of God, and, as St. Peter admonishes, 2 Pet. 1:10, make our calling sure, and especially adhere to [not recede a finger's breadth from] the revealed Word: that can and will not fail us.

15 14. By this brief explanation of the eternal election of God His glory is entirely and fully given to God, that out of pure mercy alone, without all merit of ours, He saves us according to the purpose of His will; besides, also, no cause is given any one for despondency or a vulgar, wild life [no opportunity is afforded either for those more severe agitations of mind and faintheartedness or for Epicureanism].

Victory in Christ Lutheran Church
April 2025

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



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Academy Field Trip to Rohlhoff's House - Tree Education	2 Women's Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Lenten Dinner 6 p.m. Lenten Service 7 p.m.	3	4	5 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m
6 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Youth Confirmation 12:30 p.m. Council Meeting	7	8	9 Women's Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Lenten Dinner 6 p.m. Lenten Service 7 p.m.	10	11 Spring Cleaning 8 a.m. (On Your Own)	12 Spring Cleaning 8 a.m. - noon
13 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Youth Confirmation 12:30 p.m.	14	15	16 Academy Field Trip to Rohlhoff's House - Flower Education	17 Maundy Thursday Service 7 p.m.	18 Good Friday Service 7 p.m.	19 Prayer Vigil
20 Easter Breakfast 8 a.m. Divine Service 10 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt 11 a.m.	21	22 Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.	23	24	25	26 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
27 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Youth Confirmation 12:30 p.m. Voters' Meeting	28	29 Academy Field Trip to Fort Richardson	30			

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

April 1: 1 Sam. 18-20
 April 2: 1 Sam. 21-24
 April 3: 1 Sam. 25- 27
 April 4: 1 Sam. 28-31
 April 5: 2 Sam. 1-3
 April 6: 2 Sam. 4-7
 April 7: 2 Sam. 8-12
 April 8: 2 Sam. 13-15
 April 9: 2 Sam. 16-18
 April 10: 2 Sam. 19-21
 April 11: 2 Sam. 22-24
 April 12: 1 Kings 1-2
 April 13: 1 Kings 3-5

April 14: 1 Kings 6-7
 April 15: 1 Kings 8-9
 April 16: 1 Kings 10-11
 April 17: 1 Kings 12-14
 April 18: 1 Kings 15-17
 April 19: 1 Kings 18-20
 April 20: 1 Kings 21-22
 April 21: 2 Kings 1-3
 April 22: 2 Kings 4-5
 April 23: 2 Kings 6-8
 April 24: 2 Kings 9-11
 April 25: 2 Kings 12-14
 April 26: 2 Kings 15-17

April 27: 2 Kings 18-19
 April 28: 2 Kings 20-22
 April 29: 2 Kings 23-25
 April 30: 1 Chron. 1-2
 May 1: 1 Chron. 3-5
 May 2: 1 Chron. 6
 May 3: 1 Chron. 7-8
 May 4: 1 Chron. 9-11
 May 5: 1 Chron. 12-14
 May 6: 1 Chron. 15-17
 May 7: 1 Chron. 18-21
 May 8: 1 Chron. 22-24
 May 9: 1 Chron. 25-27

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this deprived struggling Christians with the certainty of salvation through Christ alone. As a young man, Walther had been tyrannized by the uncertainty created in his heart by the demands of Pietism. It was only as he heard the true Gospel of Jesus Christ preached as God's sure and certain promise to be the Lord of real sinners that Walther found peace for his tormented soul.

In *Law and Gospel*, Walther demonstrates how God's Law is different from His Gospel in the way that they are revealed, in their content, in the way they either threaten or make promises, in their effects and regarding the persons to whom they are to be preached. Walther wants Christians to know that the Law of God is not the way of salvation, but it is that Word of God that reveals divine wrath over sin and threatens unrepentant sinners with

condemnation. While the Law of God promises life to those who keep it and threatens punishment to all who break it, it is powerless to make a person righteous in the sight of God. It is only the Gospel that declares sinners to be righteous, not on account of their morality or good intentions but solely because of the work of Jesus Christ who has fulfilled the Law, suffered under its condemnation in our place and was raised from the dead as our Brother.

Walther was insistent on rightly discerning the difference between the Law and the Gospel so that broken sinners might come to know and to trust God's ultimate Word of Good News, the promise that Jesus' blood and righteousness alone give us the forgiveness of sins. That's the Gospel that makes and keeps us Christian, and it is to predominate in all preaching and teaching.

April Birthdays:

3 Troy Wilson

4 Kaitlyn Rodgers

6 Beth Crutcher

14 Esther Schielke

16 Nathan Campbell

28 Randy VanDekerkhove



April Anniversaries:

17 Darin and Melinda Mitchell

28 Eugene and Robin Kroeger



Future Church Cleanings:

Apr. 5 Schmidt

Apr. 11-12 Spring Cleaning

Apr. 26 Schober

May 10 Teague and Purdom

May 24 VanDekerkhove

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VIC Happenings



Season of Lent



Easter Morning

Lenten Services - We have Lenten services on April 2 and 9, which focus on our sins and need for repentance as we look at Christ's journey to the cross.

Maundy 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 - 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.



Join us for our "Restored in Christ" VBS as we examine how God claims us as His own children in Holy Baptism and how the catechism encourages us to remember our Baptism daily with the Word of God.



K-6th grades

Register @ viclutheranchurch.org/vbs

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