



LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD



25th

ANNIVERSARY

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Tell of Jesus *and His Love*

At the 104th annual convention of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod, we adopted a five-year strategic plan under the theme *Tell of Jesus and His Love*. It is drawn from this passage in the Gospel of Mark: [Jesus said to the man formerly demon possessed and whose demons entered a herd of 2,000 pigs that stampeded over a cliff into the sea:] “*Go home to your people, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you*” (5:19). Jesus gave this direction to the man because he desired to remain and travel with his Savior. Instead, Jesus told him to go back home and live in his godly vocations among the people of his community and, when given the opportunity, speak of what Jesus had done for him.

You have had no less of a miracle, though perhaps not as dramatic...

When faith in Christ was created in you, perhaps at your baptism, the Spirit drove out Satan and his kingdom from your heart. You were born again into Christ and His kingdom. But we all have various abilities to speak of the faith we now have. Some of us can approach total strangers and turn the conversation into an opportunity to speak of Jesus and the salvation He has secured for all sinners. Most of us do not have such abilities. Many of us would have a hard time speaking boldly to even friends, relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors.

Recently I viewed a monthly “WELS Connection” video shown in a WELS church served by one of our ELS pastors. What a delight it was to hear a WELS pastor’s approach in his church to help his members tell of Jesus. Pres. Schroeder introduced it by saying it could be summarized in five words: “Do you have a pastor?”

Before speaking about how we can all so easily employ this evangelism method, let me point out something I have observed visiting many ELS congregations the past few months. Our pastors are all consistently preaching Christ and Him crucified and Jesus our Righteousness. What a treasure this is. Frankly, if this is not happening, the preacher should go silent. Sadly, I have heard the last few decades from a few conservative Lutherans the notion that the Gospel need not be preached in every sermon. Wrong! It is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). We are blessed in the ELS that our pastors know this and strive always to send their hearers home trusting their sins are all forgiven and they are dressed in Jesus’ everlasting holiness.

Going back to: “Do you have a pastor?” Who of us in our daily vocations and interactions with others could not ask that question? If the answer is “No,” connect them with your pastor. Our pastors gladly make hospital, nursing home, home, and office visits on a regular basis and would love to be connected in that way with those experiencing any kind of difficulties in this broken world.

In your daily callings, you hear from such individuals who are dealing with difficult things in this life: devastating diagnoses; loss of someone dear through death, divorce, unreconciled differences; loss of employment or house, etc. Is it not easy to ask: “Do you have a pastor?” Having a pastor who can bring comfort and consolation from God’s Word under any circumstances is an offer not easily dismissed.

I encourage you to watch the video ([WELS Connection - July 2021 on Vimeo](#)) and look for ways to employ this guilt-ridden-less approach to tell of Jesus and His love by connecting sinners like you to your pastor.

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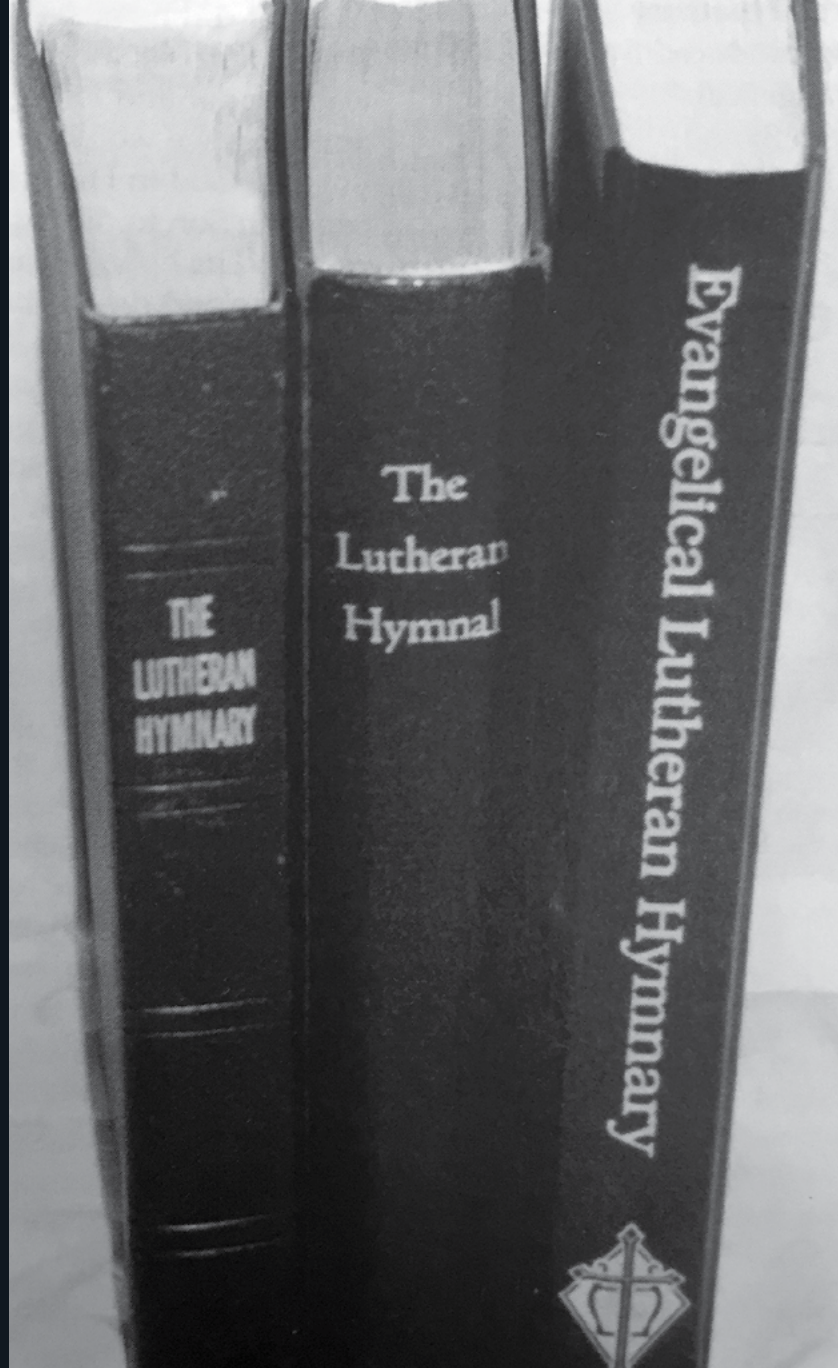
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The Better Question

Luke 10:23-37
(Parable of the Good Samaritan)

by **REV. KYLE MADSON**, Editor
THE LUTHERAN SENTINEL, Norseland, Minn.

(Jesus), how many times must I forgive my neighbor when he sins against me?

(Matthew 18:21)

(Jesus), who will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

(Matthew 18:1)

The Gospel accounts are full of Jesus responding to such “bad questions,” questions that are operating from a presumed truth that is not true. The parable of the Good Samaritan is Jesus responding to just such a question.

“Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Now, the question desires to obtain something valuable. What’s more valuable than eternal life – life with God, not separated from Him? This sounds priceless, doesn’t it? What sacrifice, what effort, what work might go into obtaining such a lavish thing? It’s not a scoff-worthy question at all. It’s predictable. It seems right in line with how things go.

So Jesus lets the question ride. He goes with it.

What is written in the law? How do you read it?

The lawyer is no dolt. He’s got the answer well in hand: *Love God above all things. Love your neighbor as yourself.*

“Love God. Love people.” That sounds like a very uncomplicated way to obtain eternal life, right? Jesus concurs: *“(YOU) Do this and you will live (eternally).”*

And these two uncomplicated instructions have a subject – *a doer. You!* You, love God. You, love people. This uncomplicated version of “obtaining eternal life” puts you and me right in the crosshairs! And eternal life is valuable enough that we will do the necessary inspection work, hoping to rule out any unfortunate missteps. You and I – we’re going to have to “check our work.” We are left to audit our “love.” Do I love God? Do you love your neighbor?

But an honest self-audit of our “love” is not so kind and gentle as we often imagine. Rather, it leaves us in the same dark place as St. Paul from his confession in Romans 7:

For I delight in the law of God (of “love”) according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

(Romans 7:22-24)

That’s St. Paul’s audit... SAINT Paul! The best he’s got to offer are good intentions and wretched results.

WHO WILL DELIVER ME FROM THIS BODY OF DEATH?

The question that means to earn eternal life turns into a desperate plea of rescue from death! But this spiral to the bottom of ourselves also gives us a better, in fact a life-giving, question: Who has been a neighbor to me?

An unlikely One, that’s who. One who has no reason to stop for you and yet does. A Compassionate One. One who is moved to intervene because of your helplessness and my hopelessness. In fact, the answer to this better question, as routine and “old” as it has become, has been spoken together by Christians for centuries the world over in the Apostle’s Creed. Who has been a neighbor like this FOR ME?

I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, Our Lord.

I believe in the One who became my Neighbor by being conceived and born of human flesh FOR ME.

I believe in the One who suffered and died FOR ME – The One who rescued me from my dying and my death with His riches: not gold or silver but His holy precious blood – His compassionate suffering and death.

I believe in the Neighbor who has promised to come back for me – the One who according to the great expense He has provided will bring me with Him for all time and eternity.

This Parable of the Good Samaritan is certainly a picture of love and charity. What it is not is an invitation to find in ourselves the charitable one. Rather we find ourselves learning the question, “Who is this Samaritan Neighbor FOR ME?” In that question, the sinner is given Jesus! In Jesus there is love and charity so full and so complete that it delivers eternal life!

The One who shows us mercy is our Neighbor. And in His abundant mercy, we are free to go, *and do likewise.*

How do the reformed come to their view of the Lord's Supper?

I have a Nelson's NKJV Study Bible (a well-known Reformed publisher). The footnote to Matthew 26:16 says: "This is My body' means 'This symbolizes My body.'" The footnote on Mark 14:24 states, "This is My blood' means that the contents of this cup represented Jesus' blood that would be shed for our sins." I am somewhat confused. **Though the Reformed Church seems to believe in Christ's atoning sacrifice, and even the unity of Christian fellowship expressed by the Lord's Supper, how then do they come to the conclusion that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper only represent or symbolize Jesus' body and blood?**

Answer:

Lutheran and Reformed Christians have debated the Lord's Supper since the days of the Reformation. One of the most famous debates of that era, the Marburg Colloquy (CALL-oh-kwee), took place in 1529. There Martin Luther himself met with Ulrich Zwingli, the leader of the Anabaptists, in order to address the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. In the middle of the debate at Marburg, Luther famously pulled back the tablecloth where he was sitting, took a piece of chalk, and wrote on the table, "*This is My body.*"

Reformed Christians—those Christians who trace their theological heritage chiefly through Calvin and Zwingli—generally hold to two major arguments to explain their representational view of the Lord's Supper. The first argument has to do with what Jesus said. The second has to do with where Jesus' body is.

With regard to what Jesus said, Reformed theologians believe that, when He gave the words of institution, Jesus was speaking in metaphors. They will point to examples from John's Gospel, where Jesus says, "*I am the vine; you are the branches*" (John 15:5). Clearly Jesus is not literally a vine growing in the garden but was only comparing Himself to one. So, on the night He was betrayed, when Jesus took bread and said, "This is my body," He wasn't saying that the bread was His literal body, but He was comparing His body to the Passover bread, which was about to be broken when He died on the cross the next day.

The other argument that Reformed theologians make about the Lord's Supper deals with where Jesus' body is. They teach that "the finite is not capable of the infinite." Since Jesus' body has ascended to heaven and is seated at God's right hand, they reason, Jesus' body and blood therefore cannot be present in the Sacrament of the Altar. In support of this line of reasoning, John 6:63 is often cited: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing."

For those reasons, then, many Christians who otherwise take God's Word at face value find themselves engaging in all kinds of verbal

gymnastics in order to make the word "is" mean "represents" in the Lord's Supper. Instead of a proclamation of the Gospel where God's people receive the forgiveness of sins and are strengthened by it, with the Reformed interpretation, the Lord's Supper becomes merely an ordinance to be kept, a fellowship meal where participants eat and drink in remembrance of Christ's death for their sins.

This is why many Reformed churches still practice some measure of close communion and recognize the fellowship that takes place at the Supper, even though they do not acknowledge the presence of Christ's body and blood! They still understand that at the Lord's Supper, believers are professing their faith in Christ and expressing their unity in that faith with each other.

It's worth noting that Scripture itself tells us what we receive when we come to the Lord's table. In I Corinthians 10, the apostle Paul says, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*" (10:16, NKJV). We do not commune with the bread and the cup, even though the bread and cup are still there. We commune with the body and blood of Christ.

The debate about the Lord's Supper between Lutherans and the Reformed won't be ending soon, but that doesn't mean God's Word hasn't spoken clearly. Through the pages of Scripture, the Lord reveals the wonders of His sacrament and the assurance of His mercy and forgiveness, all wrapped up in the words of Jesus, "This is My body..."



Do you have a question for Pastor Van Kampen?

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---> Send them via "snail mail":
1700 Cardinal Ln,
Green Bay, WI 54313



Dr. Martin Luther in

1521

At the Wartburg, Part 1

by **REV. ERLING TEIGEN**, Professor Emeritus
BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE, Contributing Writer

The story of Martin Luther’s “kidnapping” has given rise to impressions of intrigue and daring adventure and his ten months at the Wartburg castle near Eisenach evoke pictures of restful solitude—perhaps from Luther’s descriptive names “My Patmos” and “Land of the birds.” The reality is different. The “kidnapping” was prearranged and carried out by friends of the Elector, and Luther was aware in advance that something would be done to rescue him from the emperor’s death sentence. Far from a restful vacation, Luther worked very hard while he was hidden away.

Luther’s quarters in the twelfth-century castle were right above the apartment of the caretaker-guard, Hans von Berlepsch, who had played the part of one of the kidnapers. Luther had a room (15 x 20 feet in size) with a writing table and other furnishings and a very small bedroom adjoining it. It was also the task of Berlepsch to convert Luther from his monkish, professorial appearance to that of Junker Jörg (Knight George). To that end, the monastic garb was replaced with the clothing of a knight and Luther also grew a full head of hair to cover his tonsure, the shaved bald spot marking him as a monk.

At first, Luther was confined to his room, which he began to consider his jail, calling it “My Patmos” after the Greek island where St. John was exiled and wrote the book of Revelation (1:9). Later, when he had gotten his “new look,” he was permitted to wander the grounds and even went hunting with the guard (he didn’t like that activity at all and never went again).

While Luther’s location was kept secret so that his opponents only guessed (wrongly) where he was, the lines of communication with Wittenberg (150 miles distant) were kept open and he could send and receive letters and messages.

Having undergone the strict isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic, we know how important it is to stay busy under such circumstances, and Luther did keep very busy. One of his projects was continuing to work on a Latin church postil, a book of sermons for the clergy he had begun before going to Worms. At the Wartburg, he worked on a postil in German to be used for devotions by laypeople. He also completed a commentary on the Magnificat, Mary's Song in Luke 1 (in Luther's Works, volume 21).

Controversy with Roman Catholic theologians continued. Luther exchanged attacks with the Leipzig professor Jerome Emser as well as responding to public charges made against him by the faculties of two Roman Catholic universities, Paris and Louvain (Belgium).

Luther's response to the Louvain professor, Jacob Latomus, provides a picture of Luther's frame of mind during the first part of his Wartburg stay.

The faculty of Louvain had condemned Luther's writings in 1519, to which Luther responded in 1520. In 1521, Latomus published a defense of his university's condemnation of Luther, taking up some of the statements that were thought to be heretical. Luther considered it essential to respond and he used the occasion to take up some of the most crucial issues in his writings up to that time—the relationship between the law and gospel, sin and grace, faith and good works. Luther wrote this lengthy response in eight days, remarkable in that he did not have his library at hand and responded with writings from the fathers that he had memorized, as well as many Bible passages. Martin Brecht writes that Luther's "refutation was one of the most consistent and clearly systematized expositions of the central reformation doctrine of grace and human nature" (Brecht II, 7).

To the scholastic theologians, one of Luther's most provocative and dangerous teachings was that redeemed Christians commit real sins; Christians do not merely have weakness or inclination to sin as the Roman church taught. Latomus had focused on three statements made by Luther: "The saints [believers] do not live without sin"; "Sin remains after baptism"; and "Every good work of the saints is sin."

Luther's defense was, "Sin is simply that which is not in accord with God's law." To be under condemnation for one's sin is to be under God's wrath, but where there is forgiveness there is no more wrath and condemnation. But God's wrath over man's sins was poured out on Christ so that God has been fully satisfied. No longer is mankind under God's wrath; through faith, sin is no longer imputed or charged against the believer. Christians in this life still have sinful flesh, but under God's

grace they are spiritual; in God's sight they are saints. Where their sin is no longer imputed, they are no longer under condemnation. And yet, their flesh is still weak and they sin. Luther's teaching is summarized by a Latin statement: *Simul iustus et peccator* (At the same time saint and sinner). That is at the heart of the biblical teaching on justification through faith.

Luther points out Latomus' inferior logic and knowledge of language. Latomus misquotes scripture, or quotes in part, leaving out what is inconvenient to his position. But much of it comes down to a faulty belief that sin has many different meanings in the Bible. "Sin," Luther says, is often used metaphorically or figuratively, as in "Christ was made sin." The Roman theologians took every use of the word "sin" as a metaphor and called each a separate meaning of "sin." But for Luther, the Bible has only one meaning for "sin"—"simply that which is not in accord with God's law" (LW 32, 195).

In his commentary on Romans, Luther writes about the Christian, "Therefore I am at the same time a sinner and a righteous man, for I do evil and I hate the evil which I do" and "a sinner in fact, but a righteous man by the sure imputation and promise of God" (LW 25: 258 and 260).

Thus, at the very outset of his stay at the Wartburg, Luther has his focus set on this most foundational truth of God's word: sinner, yet righteous through faith, a justified saint.

Luther did much more during his time at the Wartburg—far more than feeding the birds from his lofty window above Eisenach. He wrote letters to Wittenberg and other places. He had in mind his dear Christian people in various places in Germany and beyond—as far away as Livonia (Latvia)—and he prepared sermon books for laity to read as devotional material. At the same time, he carried on his defense of Christian teaching against those who distorted God's word. His translation of the New Testament (done in the last eleven weeks of his stay at the Wartburg) was a great part of his legacy.

Luther was not sidelined when he was hidden away at the Wartburg, but it became a highly fruitful part of the Lutheran Reformation.

Notes:

Luther's time at the Wartburg is treated in detail in Scott Hendrix, *Martin Luther*; Martin Brecht, *Shaping and Defining the Reformation* (Vol 2 of his 3 volume *Martin Luther*); and Ernst Schweibert, *Luther and His Times. Against Latomus* is found in Luther's Works, volume 32

The Bible's 'Prayer Book'



Praying the Psalms

by **REV. TONY PITTENGER**, Contributing Writer
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Port Orchard, Wash.

Psalm 70 is traditionally paired with Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan and we usually hear it in our churches during September.

We see a man is attacked, robbed, stripped, and beaten. His own people, priests and Levites, offer no help. They pass him by. He's going to die like this.

But then another man approaches. Even though they come from different places, even though they should be sworn enemies, this man, a Samaritan, saves the dying man's life. He bandages his wounds, applies healing ointment, and transports the man to an inn, where he then pays all the expenses for the victim's recovery and rehab.

We are the naked, dying traveler and the Good Samaritan is Jesus. Against that backdrop, let's look at Psalm 70, a psalm for the wounded, for the beaten, for all of us who have been duped into sin and who have lost the purity we once had...

...a psalm for the traveler robbed, stripped, and already half dead...

Three times the phrase "make haste" is used. **Chuwsh** is the Hebrew word. David, the au-

thor, is saying: "Hurry. Please, O Lord! Hurry up! Save me quickly."

Those three "hurries" are emphasized at the end of the psalm by expressing the same request in the opposite way: "O Lord, do not delay."

"O God" and then "O Lord," David says at both the beginning and the end, using the formal name for God but then the intimate and personal name Lord.

Psalm 70 (NKJV)

Make haste, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O LORD! Let them be ashamed and confounded Who seek my life; Let them be turned back and confused Who desire my hurt. Let them be turned back because of their shame, Who say, "Aha, aha!" Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified!" But I am poor and needy; Make haste to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.

David invokes the Lord God against his enemy, against the one who seeks his life, the one who ever and always seeks his destruction.

But David did not always see his foe for the enemy he always was. When it was a glimpse at the bathing beauty Bathsheba, David failed to invoke God's name, failed to see how Satan was tempting him, didn't hurry to find refuge and didn't rush to pray "make haste to help me, O Lord!"

Blinded by the bathing beauty, David didn't see the devil who was "seeking his life."

Do you? Do you recognize the devil in the temptations he places in your path? Do you remember that he is the one who "seeks your life" and "desires your hurt"? Do you know him when he whispers "who is my neighbor?" Do you see when this serpent tells you to cross the street instead of showing mercy to the one

who needs it?

Psalm 70 teaches us to pray with David, "Make haste, O God, to deliver me!" We learn and re-learn to pray, "Make haste to help me O LORD!"

If these words have a familiar ring to them, that might be because "Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O LORD, make haste to help me" are some of the first words of the Church's morning Matins worship, and as part of the Vespers liturgy, they are some of the last words of the Church's day.

Our prayer for swift rescue is answered in Christ. Faith drives us to seek Him, to rejoice and to be glad in Him just as His love drives Him to find us, revive us, and heal us.

Let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified!"

FORTIFYING BELIEVERS

With a Proper Interpretation of Holy Scripture

by **DR. ANDREW DAS**, Contributing Writer
ELMHURST UNIVERSITY, Elmhurst, Ill.

Have you ever had a conversation about the Bible only to hear, “That’s just your interpretation”? It’s a great conversation killer. Sometimes a person may not want to get into an argument or hurt your feelings. Or they may not like what you’re saying. After all, some truths can be uncomfortable, especially on subjects like hell, women’s roles, homosexuality, or one way to salvation. Anyone squirming yet? Some may want to interpret these hard truths away.

Often lurking behind “that’s just your interpretation” is a dangerous assumption: that any interpretation is fine. If there is no clear meaning in a text, the words can mean whatever you want. But is that really the case? Are there right and wrong interpretations? Or are we lost in a sea of subjectivism with no certainty possible?

If you or a loved one are in a college or university setting, you may recognize this objection. Socrates confronted just such a view in Plato’s *Cratylus*, as did Thomas Reid among the eighteenth-century philosophers. Reid responded with a common-sense realism. More recent responses to what is called “post-structuralism” include E. D. Hirsch’s *Validity in Interpretation* (Yale University Press, 1973) and Kevin J. Vanhoozer’s *Is There a Meaning In This Text?* (Zondervan, 1998)—hint, hint: ideal for the university student grappling with these issues.

Doesn’t the speed limit sign mean that driving faster is against the law? That’s not just my interpretation but the correct one, whether or not I abide by

it. When I fill out my tax forms, isn’t there a right way to do it? We all draw on the same language with specific meanings of words and a grammar and syntax to convey what we mean. Otherwise, we would not be able to understand each other or converse.

Reading requires interpretation—not a bad thing in itself—and there are interpretations that are wrong. In Luke 10:28, Jesus tells the scribe he had answered correctly in how he interpreted what is written in the law. Paul admonishes the young preacher about “teaching correctly the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15; CSB). The Apostle assumes that the young man will be able to teach correctly. The Bible stands against modern skepticism! If you confess the Apostle’s Creed on a Sunday morning or read the Lutheran Confessions, these creeds maintain that what the Bible teaches is clear and is to be confessed.

Maybe the objector was implying that you misinterpreted a passage (subtext: you’re wrong). We might ask: “So where did my interpretation go wrong?” “What is your interpretation, and what reasons do you have for it?” Good interpretation takes time, effort, and patience.

Now a valid interpretation does not require us to know everything about a text. Luke tells Theophilus that he has investigated sufficiently about Jesus for Theophilus to know and be certain. Again, we don’t have to know everything to know enough with certainty.

So how can I be sure that my interpretation of a text is correct, especially with a text two or three thousand years old,

written in another language, and from another culture? The first order of business is to have a good translation of the Scriptures from their original languages. Some translations are very literal to the original and yet miscommunicate because of stilted English. Others use wonderful, idiomatic English, but at the expense of what the original had said. A translation needs to be optimal, both readable and accurate with respect to the original.

Andi Wu of the Global Bible Institute analyzed English translations and identified one very close to that “sweet spot” between readability and faithfulness to the original, the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) (<https://csbible.com/wp->). It’s also the one mainstream translation that a WELS translation committee worked tirelessly to vet and improve over several years.

With a good translation in hand, the next step is to engage the biblical text, asking the reporter’s “who, what, when, where, why, how” questions. To begin with, God inspired individual human beings to write to particular people for particular purposes. If we were reading a letter of Paul, say, to the Galatians, as we hear the letter, whom do we see around us? Jews or non-Jews? How would these first-century listeners understand the words? Not wanting to import our own modern notions into the biblical text, what did Paul’s words mean for those intended recipients?

To do that, we need to know roughly when the biblical document came about. For the first-century New Tes-

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tament, what can we learn about its history and culture, especially when the biblical author assumes a familiarity with that world? For the Old Testament, what do we know about the Ancient Near East?

What genre of literature are we reading? We read historical accounts differently than we do poetry, narratives, or letters. Is the author using figurative language or metaphors, or is the author speaking literally? We would interpret a Psalm with its lyrics differently than we would the historical accounts in Joshua.

Where is the passage located? What is its immediate context? Good interpretation always works from the inside out: word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, unit of thought, book, related books. So what comes just before and what comes just after? (That's one of the problems with printing readings in a bulletin!) That immediate context is essential. Then, how does that passage function within the book itself? Finally, where does it fit within a body of writings (whether Paul's letters, the Pentateuch, or Luke-Acts)? Where else is the writer discussing a topic? How does the author use a word elsewhere? What has been said leading up to and preparing for this point?

We always need to ask how a passage relates to the central point or main thrust of the document. What was the author trying to communicate as a whole? Paul was writing to unite a divided church in 1 Corinthians, and he was doing it with the counter-cultural, self-denying power of a man on a cross. How does each paragraph and chapter relate to that central thesis? This requires a little inductive work and reconstruction, but it's essential.

Since God inspired these Scriptures, other passages will be helpful in filling out the truth. If we come across an apparent contradiction, we know we need to dig deeper. What Scripture teaches should dovetail with the rest of Scripture.

A good study Bible is vital. It will have introductions to biblical books, footnotes for cultural or textual details, maps, related passages, and reference charts. And as the eunuch recognized in Acts 8:30-31, it is helpful to receive instruction for matters that are unclear. Thanks to training and work with the Scriptures, a pastor is a sort of modern-day Philip. His Bible class will help.

Many passages yield their meaning quickly. Other passages are more difficult. Peter recognizes about Paul's letters that some things are hard to understand (2 Peter 3:15-16), but Peter does not say impossible! Then he faults those who misinterpret Paul by actively twisting his words. *No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit* (2 Peter 1:20-21). Since Scripture is not of men, we are not to interpret it according to our own fancy.

The Bereans in Acts 17:11 examined the Scriptures daily to see whether what Paul was saying was so. Every time our convictions are challenged as a mere interpretation, we can respond "more nobly" by "examining the Scriptures" together to find out if it is truth or error (Psalm 119:105).

Dr. Das is Professor of Religious Studies and Assistant Dean of the Faculty at **Elmhurst University** in Illinois, an internationally recognized biblical scholar, and a member of **St. Timothy**, Lombard.

Learn more about... Fortifying Believers with a Proper Interpretation of Holy Scripture



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Article / Neelak S. Tjernagel

Holy Scripture is the Word of God
blts.edu/library/essays/biblical-essays



Video / John Eidsmoe

"How a False Worldview Has Eroded Biblical Inerrancy within Churches"
blc.edu/2018/06/an-apologetics-and-worldview-seminar

Video / Ryan MacPherson

"Is the Old Testament Reliable? The Evidence Within the Text"
blc.edu/2019/06/apologetics-and-worldview-seminar

Video / Andrew Das

"Preparing Our Young People for the University"
blc.edu/2020/08/the-christian-church-amid-seismic-shifts

Coming up in the next issue...

The final article in the series:

Engaging Unbelievers in Conversation Leading toward the Gospel Proclamation of Forgiveness in Christ

Nov-Dec, 2021

25th ANNIVERSARY

Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary

We Sing and Profess the Faith of Our Forebears

by **PROF. MARK DEGARMEAUX**, Contributing Writer
BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE, Mankato, Minn.

We in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod inherited an unbroken and rich legacy of liturgy and hymns that traces back to the Lutheran Reformation in Germany and Norway, back to the medieval and early Christian church, and even into the Old Testament. We sing the words of Moses, David, Mary, Simeon, Ambrose, Luther, Gerhardt, Kingo, Koren, and many more.

Norwegian immigrants brought with them hymnbooks with a Scandinavian flavor of Lutheranism, with hymns like: *On My Heart; He That Believes and Is Baptized; Behold a Host; Built on the Rock; and Like the Golden Sun Ascending*. Hymnwriters like Thomas Kingo, Dorothe Engelbretsdatter, and Hans Adolf Brorson were well loved. Like all Lutherans, they also embraced hymns of early German Lutherans such as Martin Luther, Nicolaus Selnicker, Paul Speratus, and Paul Gerhardt.

The truths of our hymns and liturgy go beyond tradition or ethnic heritage. Lutherans in Africa, Asia, Australia, and South America also sing many of these hymns, translated into their own languages, sometimes with other music and sometimes with the same music we sing.

Our immigrant ancestors at first sang their hymns in Norwegian or German or Swedish or Slovak, but eventually they needed hymns in English. They borrowed hymns from other traditions, particularly Presbyterian and Anglican, but they also wanted their rich doctrinal Lutheran hymns. An amazing amount of translation work was done in the early 1900s.

The **Lutheran Hymnary (LHy)** of 1913 was a tremendous effort to bring many of the familiar Norwegian and Danish hymns into English as well as the “Bugenhagen” Service (Rite One in ELH). It was produced by three Norwegian-American church bodies. We owe “mange tusen takk” (many thousand thanks) to translators like Carl Døving, George A. T. Rygh, Oluf H. Smeby, Harriet Reynolds Krauth Spaeth, and Peer Strømme. Now we can sing *Ye Lands, to the Lord; Praise to Thee and Adoration; and Behold A Host* in our own language.

The **Lutheran Hymnal (TLH)** of 1941 was produced by the Synodical Conference of North America (Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Synod, ELS, and Slovak Synod). From here we have the Common Service (Rite Two), Matins, and Vespers. It also included translations of more German and some Slovak hymns, plus *I Pray Thee, Dear Lord Jesus*, translated by Norman A. Madson.

These two hymnbooks carried forth the legacy that had already been familiar in our synod for many years. The **Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary (ELH)** is the continuation of these two previous hymnbooks in common use in our synod. ELH came about in the 1990s when our synod directed the worship committee to study the possibility of producing a hymnbook for our use after expressing interest several times in previous decades. The “Bugenhagen” and Common Service liturgies are familiar with some additional liturgical forms and newer music. The Office of Prime and Compline have become popular devotional forms for meetings. (The Beatitudes from Matthew 5 have become much more familiar to us through the Office of Prime.)

Many of the hymns are sung and recognized by Lutherans around the world with the addition of our Scandinavian heritage and some newer texts and music from Lutherans in America. The poetry reflects a variety of times when hymns were written and translated: ancient Latin



chants, Reformation chorales, English metrical psalms, American Lutheran hymns from the last 50 years. We can sing *Savior of the Nations, Come*; *A Mighty Fortress*; *Built on the Rock*; *Thy Strong Word*; and *The Tree of Life*, spanning 1700 years of Christian hymnody from Latin, German, Scandinavian, and American heritage. We can sing or read the psalms with Moses and David and Solomon, taking us back into the Old Testament. These are things the worship committee gathered from the treasury of our heritage that is shared by Christians of all times and all places.

The worship committee also recognizes the hymnbook as an instrument for personal and home devotions. For that reason, as many hymn stanzas as possible were included. Prime and Compline (ELH p. 108 and 128) also suit this purpose. *The Small Catechism* (ELH p. 31) is included and can be used for devotion, meditation, and instruction. *The Augsburg Confession* (ELH p. 7) is a strong statement to review our Christian faith and our Lutheran doctrine. The hymnbook is a book of doctrine, faith, and devotion.

While *ELH* certainly reflects our unique heritage, it has a broad enough scope that it can be used by Lutherans in many different places. It is a wondrous blessing and encouragement to hear congregations singing the truths of Scripture in hymns and liturgy, sometimes in four-part harmony, sometimes even a cappella. These words and this music are a blessed heritage that we treasure and will pass on to the coming generations.

How did this all come about?

The synod asked the worship committee to investigate producing our own hymnbook, but they allocated no money. So the committee asked people to give a donation to “sponsor a page” in honor or memory of loved ones, etc. This gave us our initial start.

The committee met with no budget. The synod provided travel costs, lodging, and some other expenses, which were minimal. We like to joke that the hymnary was built

on “apples and chicken salad.” We often met at Prof. Dennis Marzolf’s home and had chicken salad for lunch, and Pastor Harry Bartels ate an apple faithfully every day. The other person of the three-member committee was Mark DeGarmeaux.

Computers were just coming into use. Software was expensive. Email was not common. The process would be very different today. We sent paper copies and floppy disks through the mail to each other and to the publisher in four different states. We did our best with the time and technology while also performing our other full-time duties. Everything went through the synod’s doctrine committee for review. In the end, the synod helped to fund the printing of the book.

No perfect hymnbook

Sometimes I joke with people that in my office, I have a hymnbook that has no mistakes in it. We received a mock-up of *ELH* to know what the cover and the book would look like. All the inside pages are blank. There are no mistakes in that copy!

Hymnbooks can often be controversial. They sometimes lead to church mergers. They sometimes lead to church splits. Sometimes they have a short life, sometimes very long. Kingo’s hymnbook was used in parts of Denmark for 250 years. Landstad’s hymnbook was used in Norway (with some revisions) for over 100 years. We are thankful the *ELH* has been well received in our synod and even used in some places outside our synod. Some purchase it for their choirs to use. The Bach and Lindeman hymn settings, the many stanzas, and the Scandinavian hymns all give something that is not as common in other Lutheran hymnbooks today. We are glad to have them all.

We are blessed with a rich heritage of theology and music, and we pray that God will continue to use it to bless our people today and in generations to come.

SHARING WHAT'S REALLY VALUABLE



So if you have not been faithful with unrighteous mammon, who will entrust you with what is really valuable? Luke 16:11 EHV

Under God's grace, we've been entrusted with much, earthly wealth being a small portion of his bounty. But knowing and acknowledging that our Lord provides all and cares for us daily is vital to honoring "The Giver of all." Needless to say, our Lord is watching and wondering how we will respond to his gifts, and that includes what we do with them. In the context of the verse above, our Lord tells us a simple truth about our earthly management of his gifts. He states, "*He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much*" (Luke 16:10).

But this very distinct line of what makes a good manager or steward starts with simple things. Take for example that which we take for granted, our daily bread. Our Lord Jesus taught his followers a vital and blessed petition: "*And gives us this day our daily bread.*" Our understanding of this petition is enhanced as we also pray with the author of Proverbs (30:8b-9 EHV), "*Do not give me poverty or riches. Give me food in the amount that is right for me. Too much, and I may feel satisfied and deny you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Too little, and I may become poor and steal and profane the name of my God.*" Our prayer today is simple: we ask only for the faith to know and believe that all we have is a gift from the Lord and to use it to share what is really valuable, namely, the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Thus we are told how our stewardship of the Gospel is connected to our stewardship of all his gifts when our Savior warns, "*So if you have not been faithful with unrighteous mammon, who will entrust you with what is really valuable?*" (Luke 16:11 EHV).

It appears here that our faithfulness in the least things, more literally unrighteous mammon, is a good indicator of whether or not we can be trusted with what is "really valuable." Our faithfulness in the stewardship of both kinds of riches defines us as individuals, as a congregation, and as a synod. What is our Lord referring to when he makes this statement? Ultimately it is the gift of heaven. But this phrase also embodies the means through which what is really valuable is imparted, namely the Gospel.

Do you see why our attitude towards money is important? It is not that the church wants your money. It is a matter of the heart. Our awareness of our own shortcomings as managers helps us sharpen our stewardship of what is truly valuable, and it leads us today to turn to our Lord for His mercy and say, "*God be merciful to me, a sinner.*"

Thanks be to God! By grace our Lord offers you that which is valuable above all else. He would have you believe and know that "*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). Our Lord Jesus was able to completely atone for our sins because He completely fulfilled the holy law in our place, obtaining the perfect righteousness we need before the Father. The temptations to trust in other gods, including money and power, were fully faced and handily defeated by him. Yet, to redeem us, our sin became His sin. Our punishment, the one we deserved, was poured out on Him. He was forsaken by God, condemned, so that we would not be. And by his atoning death, we are forgiven. His resurrection affirms that all this is true.

Isn't it amazing how our Lord works through earthly means for heavenly good? Consider the earthly means of applying water through Baptism. Consider earthly means of the bread and wine with which we receive the remission of our sins. These earthly means sanctified by the Word bring to us the heavenly gifts, the true riches, as the Holy Spirit working through earthly means creates and sustains faith in our hearts.

Freed from sin and its guilt, we are free to serve the One who gives all. That is why, by grace, we can plan boldly and present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, knowing what Paul said to the Corinthians is true for us: "*He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again*" (2 Corinthians 5:15).

by **REV. DANIEL BASEL**, Giving Counselor
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD, Mankato, Minn.



CALEB STRUTZ

JOEL HANSEN

SKYLER HEPLER

MAX KERR

CALEB VONDEYLEN

MATTHEW LEHNE

CALEB HELMEN

CODY ANDERSON

Bethany Seminary Begins a New Academic Year 2021–2022

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary began the new academic year on August 23, 2021 with an opening service at Good Shepherd Chapel. For the opening service, Professor Klebig preached on Philippians 1:4–6, explaining the miracles that brought the students to seminary, the miracles that would carry them forward, and the miracles they would be a part of in others. Concerns over the future, particularly a future in the public ministry, are justifiable from a human perspective as we rightly recognize that we are not up to the task of performing this great work. But God has worked repeated miracles in us, bringing us back from spiritual death, working faith to receive forgiveness in our hearts, delivering us the peace and comfort of the Gospel through Word and Sacrament. Just as we have received many miracles, we have been called to be the messengers of the Gospel who bring these miracles to others. As we embark in this great work, the prayers of more people than we know go with us, as we work together to bring the miracle of God's Kingdom to earth.

The teaching staff for the seminary this semester is as follows: **Brian Klebig**, **Nicholas Proksch**, **Timothy Schmeling**, and **Gaylin Schmeling**. Professor Brian Klebig is teaching communication; Professor Nicholas Proksch is teaching in the areas of New Testament, homiletics, and hermeneutics; Professor Timothy Schmeling is teaching Old Testament and homiletics; and Professor Gaylin Schmeling is teaching courses in dogmatics, church history, and homiletics.

The seminary enrollment this year numbers twelve. There are four vicars, three seniors, two middlers, and three juniors. The vicars are **Colin Anderson** at Saude, Jerico, and Redeemer Lutheran Churches (Lawler and New Hampton, Iowa); **Peter Bockoven** at Parkland Lutheran Church (Tacoma, Washington); **Abraham Faugstad** at King of Grace and Trinity Lutheran Churches (Waukon and Calmar, Iowa); and **Nicholas Lilienthal** at Grace Lutheran Church (Weston, Ohio).

Vicars not pictured:

Colin Anderson, Peter Bockoven, Abraham Faugstad, Nicholas Lilienthal

Call for Nominations for Candidates for President of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

The Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, herewith issues to the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod this call for nominations for candidates for the position of president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. Procedurally, the Board shall ask the congregations of the synod through its official representatives (signed by the president/chairman and secretary) to submit nominations for the office (ref. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Handbook section 415 Article 2 item A1a).

Pursuant to the bylaws of the seminary, the candidate shall be an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Further, he shall have a shepherd's heart, pastoral experience, traits for the development of the seminary, leadership

ability, and an interest sufficient for the direction of the academic affairs of the seminary.

The nominee will be proficient and qualified to teach in the areas of church history, dogmatics, and practical courses. He will have a terminal degree or be willing to pursue one. Nominations should be sent no later than **October 31, 2021**, to **Rev. Herb Huhnerkoch** via email or mail:

herbhuhn2016@gmail.com

Rev. Herb Huhnerkoch
5872 Key Lime Way,
Fort Myers, FL 33919

MEETING MY BROTHERS & SISTERS:

Grace Lutheran Church

Madison, Wisconsin

by **REV. CORY HAHNKE**, Contributing Writer
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Madison, Wisc.



Grace Lutheran Church in Madison started when a group of families on the west side of Madison desired to start a church. Rev. Wilhelm Petersen accepted the call and work started in 1960. The church grew and thrived. In 1980, Pastor Granke and then Vicar Ferkenstad did exploratory work south of Madison in Oregon and helped to daughter Faith Lutheran. Other pastors who have served Grace include Rev. Matt Luttmann, Rev. John Petersen, Rev. Jesse Jacobsen, and Rev. Ted Gullixson.

After some years of declining membership, in 2015, Pastor Cory Hahnke was called to serve both Grace and Our Saviour's in Madison with hopes of revitalizing both churches. With that in mind, two years ago, Grace opened its doors to ReMitts, a group of about 20 women who sew mittens from recycled sweaters. Last winter, they reached the half million mark in donations to local food pantries. The mittens all have a tag that reads "Made with love at Grace Lutheran Church."