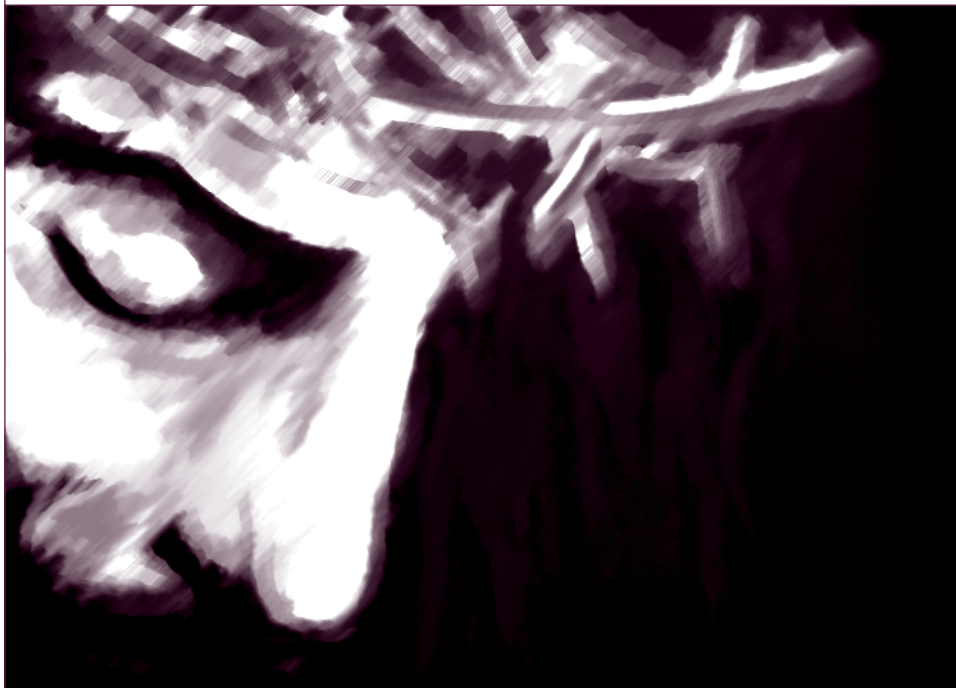


LENT

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.
But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.

ISAIAH 53:3-5

february 2005, VOL. 47 NO. 8

"He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:3-5).

"I'M SO SORRY..."

Not so long ago, I had opportunity to attend the funeral of a Christian woman, a mother. As I stood in the funeral parlor, I heard many well-meaning people offer the above phrase to family members. "I'm so sorry for your loss."

I understand that it is difficult to find words to say when you see someone sorrowful because of the separation of temporal death. However, as those who trust in Christ, we know by faith that in Him death is become only a temporary separation. Are we really sorry that our all-knowing Lord chose to end the earthly sorrows of one of His saints? Have we really lost those who

die in Christ? No! Aren't we really trying to say that we are sorry that they must endure that acute pain of separation? (Perhaps we should say it in a manner which doesn't leave the impression that those who die in Christ are lost, or that we are sorry they have gone to be with the Lord!)

As we travel through another Lenten season, we will be met along the way by different emotions. When we see the sufferings of our Savior Jesus through the eyes of the inspired writers, we may find ourselves angry with those who treated so rudely the One we love. We may feel a lump in the throat and in the pit of the stomach

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Editor: Paul Fleischer, 1741 E. 22nd Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001-4138, E-Mail to paulgf@qwest.net; Assistant Editor: Paul R. Koch; Artists: John Fox, Matthew Schaser; Staff: Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Wayne Eichstadt, Warren Fanning, Daniel Fleischer, Joel Fleischer, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, Roland H. Gurgel, John Klatt, Paul Krause, Joseph Lau, Bertram Naumann, Paul D. Nolting, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Peter Reim, Andrew Schaller, Michael Schierenbeck.

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when we hear how nails were driven into our Lord's hands and feet. We may be tempted to feel sorry for Jesus.

If we had been there, would we have said to one of the disciples or Mary, "I'm so sorry for your loss"? Would we, knowing that His death was planned by God and willingly laid down to rescue us? No, a thousand times, no!

We may well have expressed our sympathy, but it would seem a shame to speak of Jesus' death as a 'loss' or to appear to question God's plan! Jesus' death resulted in eternal gain—for Mary, for the disciples, and for you and me!

If we feel sorrow this Lenten Season,

let it not be a pitiful sorrow FOR Jesus. As we gather to worship on Ash Wednesday and throughout the Lenten Season, may God grant that we sorrow over our sin. It was our sin that made His sufferings and death necessary.

Instead of feeling pity for Jesus in His suffering and death, may God the Holy Spirit lead us both to sorrow over our sin and to find renewed confidence in Christ for forgiveness.

May we say, "Lord, I'm so sorry that I have sinned against You in thought, word and action—but I thank You that You have forever lifted my sorrows through Jesus' sufferings and death."

Thou hast suffered great affliction
And hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion,
Fully to atone for me;
Thou didst choose to be tormented
That my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee! (TLH #151:6)

—Pastor Andrew Schaller



How Much Blood

*Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience
peace*

Or wash away the stain.
(Hymn #156—TLH).

In the Old Testament period, priests were required to offer two lambs as a burnt offering, one in the morning and one in the evening, every day of the week. Every Sabbath Day (on the seventh day of the week), they offered two more lambs in addition to the daily offerings. Every New Moon they offered seven additional lambs, plus two bulls and one ram. At the Feast of

Trumpets, celebrated at the seventh New Moon, they offered the daily offerings, the New Moon offering, plus another seven lambs, another bull, and another ram. At the Feast of Unleavened Bread, celebrated once a year, they offered the daily offering, plus seven more lambs, one goat, two bulls, and one ram. At Pentecost they offered two more bulls, one kid goat, a ram, and seven more lambs. On the Day of Atonement they offered two more bulls, three rams, seven more lambs, and one goat. At the eight-day-long Feast of Tabernacles they offered the daily offerings each day,

plus a total of seventy bulls, fourteen rams, ninety-eight lambs, and seven goats.

All of this gives us a year-long grand total of one thousand forty-two lambs, ninety-nine bulls, twenty-one rams, and nine goats.

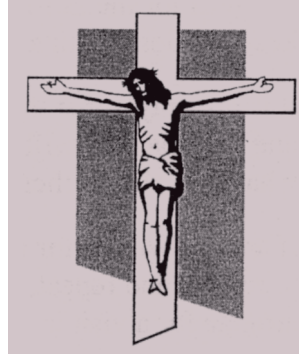
Add in the Passover—which required one lamb to be sacrificed for each household in Israel—and you would have sacrificed thousands and thousands of animals by year's end. So, in the one thousand years between the time of the Judges in the Old Testament and Christ's coming, a conservative estimate would be around a million animals sacrificed, not counting the Passover lambs.

Historians tell us that at the Passover the temple steps would be slippery with the blood of the thousands of lambs sacrificed that day.

"Richer" Blood Required!

Yet God did not count these sacrifices themselves as a worthy payment for sin. Scripture declares that " ... it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). And again, " ... every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins" (Heb 10:11). No matter how many animals were offered, they were still only animals. Furthermore, they were offered up by sinners. The thousands of gallons of blood of these sacrifices were not even sufficient to pay for the sins of the priests, much less for the people of Israel.

What about our blood? Still not enough. In recent years blood banks have been so desperate for blood donors that some are now offering \$20.00 for your donation. At \$20.00 a pint, the six quarts of blood in your body are still



worth only \$240.00. A person can't even bail himself out of jail with \$240.00. But it is written, " ... you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18f).

How much blood is required to pay for sin? Just the innocent blood of God's own Son! Christ's priceless, all-sufficient sacrifice would completely satisfy God's will, and would pay not only for the sins of one nation but for the sins of all nations, as it is written, " ... we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

Which was just the point of all of these animal sacrifices! They were, "a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Col. 2:17; cf. Heb. 10:1). These bloody Old Testament pictures pointed to that bloody New Testament Friday when the Son of Man would be lifted up on a tree. Because of these sacrifices, Old Testament believers knew instantly what John the Baptist was talking about when he pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29).

When Christ came, we are told that God took away " ... the first [i.e., the Old

Testament sacrifices] that He may establish the second [that is, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross]" (Heb. 10:9); so that it is written, " ... such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily ... to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up

Himself" (Heb. 7:26f).

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse removed;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice
And sing His bleeding love.
(TLH #156:2&5)

—Pastor Joel Fleischer



"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (Isaiah 40:11, NIV).

Held Close to His Heart

Can you imagine a more beautiful picture of Jesus' tender love for us? He carries us close to His heart. You might think of a mother who holds and cuddles her little child, or of any parents who are willing to do anything to care for and protect their child. Of course, that love does not end when the child grows up. Parents continue to hold their children close to their heart long after they are grown and even after they have moved away.

That is the way God describes His own tender love for us. "He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart." His love for us is so deep, so protective, so enduring that it really is beyond description. But this passage of Isaiah gives us a very comforting picture of it.

During this Lenten season, we see the profound depth of that love in action.

This verse is part of a prophecy

given through Isaiah about how the LORD Himself would come to save us. Think about it: the Son of God was actively involved with His people throughout the Old Testament. All the way back to creation He was showing His love, for "all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (Jn. 1:3). As God, the Son already knew everything that mankind was going to do. He knew, already then, that He would have to come down to suffer and die at the hands of men in order to save them from their corruption. Yet in His love He still created the people He would have to redeem.

Throughout the Old Testament, the pre-incarnate Jesus appeared to His people to reassure them that He was coming to save them. He appeared to Abraham (in the form of the Angel of the Lord) in order to spare Isaac, the one through whom He would come to

Earth. And He did so on the very mountain where He would give his life to spare us all (Gen. 22). He appeared to Moses as the One who would free His people from slavery in Egypt, even as He would also be the Passover Lamb whose blood would free us all from the slavery to sin and the devil and save us from eternal death (Ex. 3ff).

Amazing Love!

The Son of God was there when His people murmured and complained against Him. He was there when they all-out rejected Him, making idols to worship as their gods. Despite all this, the Son of God came down to us just as He promised, enduring the hatred and rejection of His own people. He gave Himself to be crucified by the very creatures He had made. All this so that He can continue to "carry us close to His heart." For "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (Jn. 1:12). Is there any greater proof of His love?

Today our Savior continues to carry us close to His heart. He is still with us at all times according to His promise. He still forgives us. He still watches over us to protect us and keep us in the faith unto the end. He truly "tends His flock like a Shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young."

When we see this amazing, tender love of our Savior, especially during this Lenten season, Isaiah tells us how to respond. In the verses before our text, he says, "You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!'"

May we be so filled with the love of God that we too proclaim far and wide, "Here is your God!" Show people everywhere what a great God we have, and the joy and peace that comes from knowing that He holds us close to His heart.

—Pastor David Reim



THE THIRD WORD FROM THE CROSS—

*"Woman, behold thy son!
... Behold thy mother!"
(John 19:26-27)*

"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

As Jesus hung upon the cross, there were many who hung around the cross. Besides His friends (of whom there were fewer), there were the mockers and scoffers.

The sight of Jesus hanging upon the cross—as well as the sound of evil

voices mocking her Son—surely brought to Mary's mind the prophecy of Simeon. "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Lk. 2:34-35).

The name "Mary" means "bitter." Here at the cross Mary tasted the bitter helplessness of a mother who could neither take the place of her Son nor alleviate His suffering.

But greater than the mother-love of Mary is the love of her Son, whom she also knew as her Savior. For she had said in the Magnificat, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior" (Lk. 2:47). Neither she nor we have ever been called upon to exercise sacrificial love to the extent Jesus did. Yet in the midst of His suffering there is exhibited what the Scriptures record, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (Jn. 13:1).

In His last hours, Jesus did not forget His mother but provided a protector for her. The Savior provided her with another "son." He said to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" Jesus called her "woman" and not "mother" because He would have her think of

Him in relation to her atonement by Him rather than in a narrower familial relationship.

Mary could lean on John as a son. But the concern was to be mutual. John too—as the disciple "whom Jesus loved"—was also in need of support. "Then saith He to the disciple (John), Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

In these words we learn, first of all, that our welfare is the constant and abiding concern of our Savior. He knows our pain and sorrow, even in His own. He did not die on the cross in our place to forgive us our sin and win heaven for us only then to forget us while we are waiting for the eternal dawn. Here He also helps us to appreciate that He helps, strengthens, and encourages us through one another.

We do not live on an island. At the cross we learn to appreciate the mutual love and care that exists within a fellowship, as well as the responsibility that members of the body of Christ are to have for one another.

If in His deepest suffering Jesus loved His own so much that He would provide for their mutual welfare, how also ought we to care for and love one another— and thus reflect Jesus' love, whereby He has loved us all!

.....



Ladies Aid, Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church, Red Wing, Minnesota

"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"
(Matthew 27:46)

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

When we consider the seven words of Christ from the cross, we cannot but be amazed at the richness of the blessings that flow to us from Him. It is truly a hard heart that cannot be crushed by what we see or be softened by what we hear as Jesus hung on the cross. That is no less true of the fourth word that our Savior spoke.

The reality of the Father's love in promising a Savior is overwhelming to the penitent who knows what was lost by the sin of Adam and Eve, and who recognizes the on-going nature of sin in one's own life. The manner of Jesus' conception by the Holy Ghost and birth of the Virgin Mary is no less overwhelming because it is so contrary to nature. But we believe the miracle, and gladly so, for it declares to us that Jesus is without sin. That He should bear the sins of the world and suffer for all people is beyond reason.

But one of the most overwhelming events, and some of the most incomprehensible words recorded in the Scriptures are these spoken by Jesus from the cross in mid-afternoon. It was at three o'clock in the afternoon—the very hour when the lambs for the evening sacrifice were slain—that Jesus said, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

If there is nothing else that strikes



the penitent sinner with the enormity of sin, surely it is these words which express the forsakenness of Jesus by His Father.

There is no hell on Earth when we understand what hell is. There may be things on Earth that mimic hell, but hell in the real sense is being forsaken by God. Being forsaken by God is the epitome of punishment. God is not in hell, nor can those in hell call upon God. The Father forsook His Son! Who can grasp it? Penitent sinners cannot grasp it but are thankful that that is the way it was. Much less can the denier of Christ—to whom the preaching of the cross is foolishness—understand it (see 1 Cor. 1:18).

The question Jesus asks underscores the reality of His suffering and shame. What He endured was not a charade. It was real! In the very question we can appreciate the severity of what it is from which we have been delivered.

The answer to the "Why?" of Jesus lies in the Father's determinate will to spare sinful mankind the dreadfulness of eternal condemnation. For us, it is not

a flippant proposition of "Better He than we." Nevertheless, the blessed truth is that because Jesus suffered it, none who believe in His meritorious atonement will suffer it. Having been reconciled to God through the merit of the Lord Jesus, we have peace with God!

We still cannot fathom it, but as Christians we—in faith—simply believe that the Father forsook His Son

in order that all who believe might have the daily assurance (in life, as well as at the moment of death!) that the Father will not forsake us.

Thanks be to God the Father, and to His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, and to the Spirit for giving us a faith which is beyond comprehension.

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer*



The Discourses of Christ

Spiritual Freedom—John 8:30-36
Part One

“The Truth Shall Make You Free”

Growing up on my parents' farm, I remember watching my father trying to remove a calf from its pen. It seemed almost impossible to get that calf to go through the gate and leave its confinement. It apparently could not see the opening and was bewildered by attempts to drive it in that direction. The calf literally tried to climb the walls rather than go through the open gate. The pen was that calf's world; it knew no other.

That memory was brought to mind by the discourse of Christ in which He spoke to a crowd about freedom. The people in Jesus' audience were confined—not in a pen of wood and concrete, but by a spiritual slavery.

Christ held before them an open gate, a way out of that slavery. But they were offended at the idea that they

were confined. Indeed, they were enraged at Christ's attempts to guide them through the gate to freedom—so much so that they tried to kill Him (John 8:59)!

The crowd's response to Jesus is a testimony to the slavery that naturally binds and restricts mankind. All people come into the world in bondage to sin. Their will is corrupted so that they naturally want to do what is evil. They know that there is a God, yet they cannot live in a way that pleases Him. Their conscience tells them that they are sinning against Him and that He will judge them, yet they cannot stop sinning.

A preacher once summed up man's bondage to sin in this way: "Man is in trouble with God beyond his worst nightmares, can't do anything about it,

and doesn't want to."

But Christ offers release from this slavery. The key to that release is the truth, and the truth is in Christ's word. "If you abide in My word," He said to those in the crowd who believed in Him, "you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The Gospel Liberates!

What is it about the truth that makes it liberating?

First of all, the word of Christ tells man the truth about himself. It reveals man's true condition as that of a lost and condemned sinner. The knowledge of sin does not by itself free anyone, but it is a step toward his freedom when the slave recognizes the nature of his slavery.

The unbelievers in the crowd insisted that they were not slaves. "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone," they said. They were satisfied with their condition and saw no need to try to change it. Jesus told them the truth that they were sinners and therefore slaves to sin. "Whoever commits sin is a slave

of sin." Because they were slaves of sin, they could claim no place or standing in God's house.

The truth that gives freedom—that grants release from slavery to sin—is the gospel.

The gospel of Christ provides release from sin, for in it He offers cleansing from the guilt of sin. The gospel tells us that Christ took our guilt on Himself and suffered the punishment for our sins. It assures us that He took away all our sins by His sacrifice of His life on the cross.

Christ's truth actually gives freedom, because the forgiveness of sins that it offers is received by faith. The gospel doesn't lay out a plan by which we may work our way out of the slavery in which we find ourselves. It offers us our freedom as a gift and moves us to rejoice in the gift and take it by believing.

We see this in the account of this discourse of Jesus. We are told that as Jesus was speaking to the crowd, many believed in Him. In the midst of that unbelieving, hateful crowd many were moved to repentance and faith in Jesus. The door to freedom was opened to



Mrs. Jessica Lau, Asst. Manager of the CLC Book House (ILC, Eau Claire, Wis.), serves Pastor Steven Karp, Calgary, Alberta, during last summer's Convention.

them, and they passed from death to life.

Christ not only offers and gives release from slavery, but also a place in His Father's house. Slaves have no permanent place in a household; they can be sold. It is the son who has a permanent place. The Son of God has made us

God's children and heirs. As such, we have a place in God's house forever.

What astonishing grace: that God should take us poor slaves and make us His children and heirs!

—Pastor John Klatt



CROSS PURPOSES



**“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will
by no means pass away”
(Matthew 24:35)**

On an internet website (described by a pastor of the CLC as a mainstream liberal website) was an image showing a hand thrusting a bayonet through a Bible. This picture, available as a poster or on a tee shirt, is captioned, "This is the enemy—no more wars for religion."

Antipathy toward Christianity and against the Bible is not new. Historically, the Bible has been banned and burned. Unbelief knows that it cannot win the battle through calm discussion and open comparison of its own tenets to the Word of God. Hence it "thrusts a sword" through the Bible.

Such blatant hatred of Scripture is a result of people who have not studied it, do not know what it says, do not understand the purpose of it, and/or have no desire to know. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).

There is a response to this hatred toward the Lord and His Word: "Why do

the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure" (Ps. 2:1-5).

But we suggest that blatant hatred is not as dangerous as the deceptiveness of those who twist or distort what



Scripture says to satisfy the dictates of their own reason. Last election season we saw politicians violate the eighth commandment continually. Nonetheless, they quote Scripture for their own purposes. They err, not knowing the Scriptures! (see Matthew 22:29) To quote Scripture does not mean that one respects it or believes it. The devil quoted Scripture when he tempted our Lord Jesus (Matthew 4). Does that make Satan religious?

Within the Church?!

Or what about those within the church who carry their Bibles and clothe themselves in clerical garb, but who abuse the office they hold by denying inspiration, the virgin birth, justification by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, and who further bend Scripture to satisfy reason and the whims of society?

Such are dangerous. They are driving a sword through the Scriptures just as surely as the heathen do. In so doing they are driving a sword through the heart of people who are deceived by them. This is why Scripture says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17,18).

So what about us? To judge others without questioning ourselves is hypocrisy. We believe the Scriptures. We are committed to the Scriptures. It is the rule and source of our faith and hope. We accept it as the whole counsel of God. We know and teach and believe that it is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). We know that the Law

" ... Or what about those within the church who carry their Bibles and clothe themselves in clerical garb, but who abuse the office they hold by denying inspiration, the virgin birth, justification by grace through faith in Christ Jesus ... ?"

of God is good even as it exposes our sin, and that the love of God is greater in having taken away our sin. We know that Scripture's purpose is to make us wise unto salvation "through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). We believe that it is our mission to share this message and to stand fast in the truth once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Through the Word of the Lord we are justified and sanctified.

So then, do we practice our faith? Do our actions support our words? Is our professed love for the Word evident by our forsaking error and confessing truth? Does our confident hope unto salvation translate into holding forth Jesus before the world? Does our confession of God declare our faith in the only God there is, the Triune God? Finally, does our expression of religion identify us as Christ-believers in contrast to the religion of the masses? Does our appreciation of the Word translate into regular use of Word and Sacrament?

Swords will not destroy the Word of God. We have God's promise that His Word shall endure! Even false teaching and indifference will not destroy the Word of God. God's Word shall endure! But false teaching and indifference on our part may cause us to lose it. God's Word will endure, but will it endure among us? That is the question.

In order for us to retain God's Word

among us, we must fight the enemy within, namely, our natural flesh and our tendency toward indifference. A case can be made that if the Word is lost to us and to our children and grandchildren, we will not be able to blame others. We who have had the truth—and professed love for it—will by indifference have been the perpetrators. God forbid!

"And this I pray, that your love may

abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Php. 1:9-11).

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer*



The Free Imperial City of Augsburg at the beginning of the 16th century.

475th Anniversary of THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION (1530-2005)

Getting to the Root of the Problem (Romans 5:12-19)

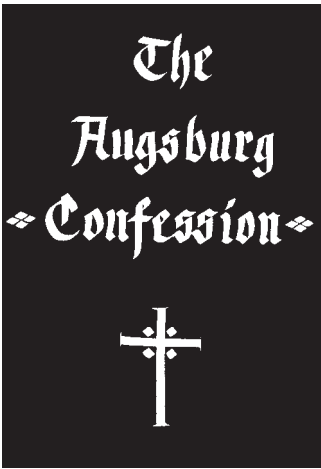
The idea that man is sinful from birth is unacceptable to many. But with the denial of original sin there come many other insidious heresies. If there is no original sin, then the baptism of infants declines in importance and necessity. If there is no original sin, then the work of Jesus is underestimated and His power to save is also limited.

The Reformers faced the same argument centuries ago, and from Scripture they formulated their response in the second article of THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

In current times the notion of original sin is becoming less and less popular. We do well to revisit what God has revealed in Romans 5:12-19 and to affirm the truth, as we face the same battle that was taking place 475 years ago when THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION was written.

The Cause of sin—one man, one tree

Just as we have inherited many physical traits from our ancestors, so also we can trace our sinful nature back



to our first parents. The Scriptures are very clear that "through one man sin entered the world." The act of eating from a tree might seem to be harmless, but it was disobedience to God. The Lord had given Adam but one command, and Adam disobeyed it.

Through that one act of disobedience the world was changed forever. Sin entered the world and brought with it all sorts of tragedy. Adam would eat bread "in the sweat of [his] brow." Eve would have pain in childbirth. They both felt shame and guilt for the first time. The worst result of sin was death—temporal and eternal separation from God.

Spiritual death was evident as Adam and Eve exhibited the symptoms of guilt and shame and blame. That spiritual deadness was passed down to their descendants. Seth was born in the image of Adam (Gen. 5:3), rather than in the image of God (righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4:24). Physical death was to follow. That death sentence was passed down to their descendants as well.

Even though there was no law until

WE BELIEVE & CONFESS

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION
A CONFESSION OF FAITH PRESENTED IN AUGSBURG BY
CERTAIN PRINCES AND CITIES TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY
CHARLES V IN THE YEAR 1530

Psalm 119:46

*"I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings, and shall
not be put to shame."*

ARTICLES OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE

I. Original Sin

It is also taught among us that since the fall of Adam, all men who are born according to the course of nature are conceived and born in sin. That is, all men are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mothers' wombs and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God. Moreover, this inborn sickness and hereditary sin is truly a sin and condemns to the eternal wrath of God all those who are not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.

Rejected in this connection are [those] who deny that original sin is sin, for they hold that natural man is made righteous by his own powers, thus disparaging the sufferings and merit of Christ.

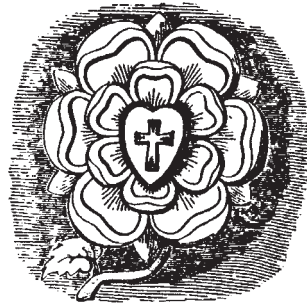
Sinai, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come" (Rom. 5:14). The fact that people died—even without any written law to sin against—is proof positive that they were infected with sin, because if there is no sin, then there is no death.

We can carry this a step further by considering the death of infants. If they did not have inherited sin, they would not die. Since death is no respecter of age, we conclude rightly that sin is responsible. We also see that inherited sin reveals itself in actual sin throughout our lives.

The Cure for sin—one man, one tree

Thanks be to God that the cure for death goes all the way to the root of the problem! This cure also involves one Man and one tree. This God-Man Christ Jesus did not approach the tree in disobedience, but rather in obedience. It was a tree that had been formed into an instrument of death. At the tree in the Garden of Eden one man had ruined the world. At the cross on Calvary one Man would fix everything. The first man turned life into death. The Second turned death into life.

Adam and Christ are opposite in many ways (as is detailed in Romans 5:15-18). You can see the difference in the effect of the two. Adam brought a guilty verdict upon all; Christ brought a "not-guilty" acquittal to all—which is then received by a believer personally through faith. Despite their differences we dare not deny the similarity, namely, that their respective actions affected all of mankind.



When we come upon the question of whether or not there is original sin, we have two choices, as did the Reformers. We can deny its existence or we can rejoice in God's cure.

The denial of the existence of original sin has ties to several false beliefs—two of the more prominent ones are the rejection of infant baptism and decision theology. The denial of original sin will also take away from the magnitude of Christ's work.

On the other hand, we may freely confess that we came into this world as sinners (as passages such as Psalm 51:5 and John 3:6 clearly show). Yet such an admission is overwhelmed by the joy that comes through knowing the completed work of Christ. Through His righteous life and atoning death, all sin has been paid for. We rejoice that the Lord has given us Holy Baptism, through which the Holy Spirit works even in the hearts of the tiniest sinners.

Know well both the cause and the cure for original sin.

—*Pastor Michael Schierenbeck*



#2: "I don't know God very well."

Though God knows you, it is also true that most folks don't know God very well. The world is full of wrong ideas about God—false notions that are slanderous to Him and misleading to you.

Yet God has not been hiding Himself from you. You may have thought about God from time to time, and even as a youngster you wondered about His part in the Universe. When someone told you that the trillions of stars and millions of galaxies (and all that empty space between them!) all came from nothing, you could hardly believe it, for you knew that God created the Universe.

And when you were told that humans evolved from another species such as apes, and apes evolved from . . . (who knows what?), you didn't swallow it, because it didn't even make sense. You felt in your bones that God created you, just as He created your parents, grandparents, and forefathers all the way back to Adam and Eve.

God has given us much information about Creation—and it's all in His book of records, the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1). In the Bible He tells us some utterly amazing things about Himself, about our world, and about us humans.

Let's "fast-forward" now to the future. Just as God created the

Universe, He has plans for closing it down. "He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

That sounds pretty serious—because it IS serious. You are going to be judged by Jesus, and so am I and so is everybody else. I am ready for that, because I know Jesus personally; He has assured me that He has squared away all my transgressions, all my sins and iniquities. Satan's entire hellish work upon me and in me has been cancelled out by Jesus' blood and righteousness.

So on Judgment Day when Jesus asks, "By what right do you expect Me to take you into My home in heaven?" I am going to answer, "I expect You to take me into heaven with You, Jesus, because You promised that You would get me in, and I'm depending on You to keep Your pledge to me."

Dear reader, what will be your answer?

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

—Paul R. Koch



—The Bread of Life—

Daily Bible readings for home devotions; March, 2005

Due to Jacob's deceitfulness, God had to purify him by cross and trial to make him a fit vessel for His holy, gracious purposes.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Genesis</u>	<u>A thought from the reading</u>	<u>Hymn</u>
1	28:10-22	Surely, the Lord is in this place	135
2	29:1-14	Selfishness gives way to devoted service	395,2-5
<i>When Jacob is out-foxed in craftiness, Jehovah protects him.</i>			
3	29:15-30	Jacob serves for Leah and Rachel	622
4	29:31-35	and Jehovah graciously blesses them all	518,6
5	30:1-13	"Am I in the place of God?"	518,3-4
6	30:14-24	God has endowed me with a good endowment	518,1
7	30:25-43	God uses the wisdom of this world, too	366,1-4
8	31:1-16	And deliver us from evil	458, 5-8
<i>Jacob throws himself upon God and receives the name Israel.</i>			
9	31:17-32	But God said to Laban, "Be careful!"	13
10	31:33-42	God has seen my affliction	529,1-3
11	32:1-12	I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies	34,1-2
12	32:13-21	At long last, brother honors lost brother	464,1-3
13	32:22-32	I will not let You go unless You bless me	365
14	33:1-17	The reconciliation of brothers is wonderful	464,4-6
15	34:1-17	One sin leads to another, as usual,	404,1-2
16	34:18-31	but two wrongs do not make a right.	404,3-4
17	35:1-4	Put away your gods and purify yourselves	402,3-5
18	35:5-15	"I am God Almighty."	249
19	35:16-29	Each generation buries its parents	395,6-8
<i>As the danger of inter-marrying with the heathen grew, God moved His people into Egypt and used a friendly king to prosper them.</i>			
20	37:1-11	(Palm Sunday) Love should play no favorites	439,1-3
21	37:12-20	Whoever hates another is a murderer	439,4-6
22	37:21-36	God moves in a mysterious way	514,1-3
23	39:1-6	A believer may be well liked	514,4-6
24	39:7-12	"How can I sin against God?"	429,1-2
25	39:13-18	So he fled for his spiritual safety	395,3
26	39:19-23	because the Lord was with him.	226,1-4
27	40:1-15	(Easter) "within three days...will restore you"	205
28	40:16-23	Now it came to pass on the third day....	35,1-4
29	41:1-13	I remember my faults this day	319
30	41:14-24	God will give mankind the answer	30,3-4
31	41:25-32	God shows what He is going to do	30,5-6



CLC EXPLORATORY SERVICES

(Last revised: December, 2004)

This is a list of "start-up" congregations who are being served by an off-site pastor. Some meet in homes, others in rented facilities. Visitors are warmly welcomed. Those who are considering a move, or are just traveling through the area, are encouraged to contact these groups and worship with them.

LOCATION	PASTORAL CONTACT	LAY CONTACT
Alaska, Fairbanks	Mr. Jay Hartmann 907-452-1236	
Alaska, Anchorage	Rev. David Fuerstenau 907-225-2842	
California, Pasadena (Los Angeles area)	Rev. David Povolny 650-964-5915	Mr. Mike Collins 818-883-1749
California, Modesto	Rev. Nathan Pfeiffer 510-581-6637	
Florida, Orlando	Rev. John Schierenbeck 863-299-4084	Mr. Paul Kuehne 407-977-5949
Florida, Coral Springs (North Ft. Lauderdale)	Rev. Paul Larsen 941-423-1822	Mr. Bob Doriot 954-429-0063
Iowa, Sioux Center	Rev. James Albrecht 507-853-4417	Mr. Roger Ver Mulm 712-722-2805
Michigan, Cadillac	Rev. Tim Holland 616-532-0198	Mr. Bob Remus 231-832-2687
Minnesota, Chaska (Twin Cities SW Metro)	Rev. David Schierenbeck 651-454-1915	Mr. Adam McLaughlin 952-445-7317
Missouri, Liberty (NE Kansas City area)	Rev. Todd Ohlmann 636-225-3458	Mr. Jim Priebe 816-781-4702
New Mexico, Albuquerque	Mr. Robin Vogsland 505-892-6934	
North Dakota, Mapleton (Fargo area)	Rev. John M. Johannes 678-376-9948	Mr. Gary Pansch 701-277-1727
Ohio, Cleveland	Rev. Walter Schaller 248-457-0682	
Tennessee, Monterey	Rev. Nathanael Mayhew 866-962-9034	Mr. Wayne Everhart 270-618-4387
Texas, Austin	Rev. Luke Bernthal 281-353-2533	Mr. Chuck Kurth (512) 794-8991
Texas, Weslaco	Rev. Matthew Gurath 956-968-9555	Mr. Buddy Hovda 956-565-2851
Virginia, Fairfax (Washington DC area)	Mr. Glenn Oster 803-926-0603	Mr. David Loop 703-250-2020
Washington, Withrow	Rev. Terrel Kesterson 509-327-4203	Mr. Ray Lillquist 509-683-1192

Dedication Service in Red Wing



Celebratory musicians (l-r): L. Fischer, B. Hay, B. Gullerud, B. Kranz, M. Kranz, R. Abbott, G. Schreyer, K. Olmanson, M. Meyer

Sunday, September 26, was a day of great rejoicing for the members of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church, Red Wing, Minnesota, as they offered praise and thanks to God for the new handicapped-accessible entryway and upstairs restroom, additional Sunday School room in the basement, new sanctuary carpeting and pictures, air conditioning for the sanctuary, paved driveway for the parsonage, extensive new landscaping, new church sign, and a new organ.

Much of the labor for these projects was volunteered by members of the congregation over the past two years.

Former pastor of the congregation, David Lau (now professor at Immanuel Lutheran Seminary, Eau Claire, Wis.), addressed worshipers at the 9:30 a.m. dedication service on the basis of Hebrews 13:14-16, speaking on "How These Things Can be Used to the Glory of God". He reminded the worshipers that (1) Through Jesus we continue to bring the sacrifices of praise and thanks-



Rick Grams (current pastor) with former pastor, David Lau

giving; (2) We remember to do good and share our blessings; (3) We look forward to the permanent city of God.

Another former pastor of the congregation, Robert Mackensen, now retired and a member of Our Redeemer's, also addressed the congregation with appropriate memories and thoughts from the Word of God for the occasion. Mr. Barry Hay, a member of Faith, Markesan, served as guest organist for the morning service. Our Redeemer's choir sang "Celebration of Joy." A potluck dinner followed Sunday School and adult Bible Study.

A 4:00 p.m. Organ and Song Concert provided an additional oppor-

tunity to hear the new Johannes Prelude two-manual organ (manufactured in the Netherlands) and to sing favorite hymns that the congregation had selected.

Nine CLC organists (Bonnie Cornish, Lane Fischer, Grace Schreyer, Karla Olmanson of Immanuel, Mankato; John Reim, Barb Gullerud, Beth Kranz of Messiah, Eau Claire; Barry Hay of Faith, Markesan; Marie Meyer of Our Redeemer's, Red Wing), one trumpeter (Mark Kranz, Messiah, Eau Claire), and one French horn player (Roberta Abbott, Redemption, Lynnwood, Wash.) led the congregation with selected preludes—and then an assortment of twenty-seven hymns covering the entire church year.

A freewill offering was designated for CLC Missions. A light lunch and refreshments followed the concert.

*—Marie Meyer,
member of Our Redeemer's
congregation, reporting*



Peter Bergs (back) and Jim Voight work on the new foundation for the Red Wing addition

Remodeling work begins on opposite side of the church (right); Our Redeemer's parsonage (left)

