



The SEED

Lenten Thoughts

Each year during Lent I read some of Luther's writings. This year I have decided to read "On Being a Theologian of the Cross, Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518." Of particular interest to me is Thesis 3 and 4. Thesis 3 states: Although the works of man always seem attractive and good, they are nevertheless likely to be mortal sins. Thesis 4 states: Although the works of God are always unattractive and appear evil, they are nevertheless really eternal merits. Look at the comparison.

The Works of Humans

Always look splendid
Appear to be good
Are nevertheless in all
Probability Mortal sins

The Works of God

Always look deformed
Appear to be bad
Are nevertheless in very truth
Immortal sins.

Luther is dealing with the difference between a theology of glory versus a theology of the cross. Luther defines a theology of glory as any way to live a religious life without "dying." Any way to worship Jesus Christ without radical obedience, the Word without the cross, Kierkegaard defines it as "Admiring Christ instead of following Christ." Bonhoeffer defines it as "Cheap grace rather than costly grace." The opposite is the theology of the cross. This is defined as "meeting God where he chooses to find us – in our sorrow, our pain, our weakness." "Hearing God's gracious word manifest in the death of Jesus on the cross." "Following Jesus in his death and resurrection."

Luther was concerned with the vast difference between the two views of theology. He reminded the church that God's revelations can take place only under the form of opposites. God does his alien and wrathful work before he does his proper and loving work; he makes alive by killing, brings to heaven by going through hell, brings forth mercy out of wrath. Luther was quick to "call a spade a spade" in matters of theology. God understands our sinful condition and loves us anyway.

As you can see by the chart above, human works and God's works are in direct opposition. This is of importance when dealing with a theologian of glory. The theologian of glory is bound of necessity to put a false evaluation on human works. There is nowhere else to turn. Furthermore, the theologian of glory is compelled to use the works of the law as a defense against the sheer gift of God. Jesus speaks to this in Matthew 23:27: "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Or consider Paul's words to the Galatians 3:10, "All who rely on the works of the law are under the curse."

The proof for thesis 4 is a few passages much loved by Luther, setting forth his understanding of God's work "under the form of opposites" over against human works. Isaiah 53 heads the list: That the works of God are unattractive is clear from what is said in Isa. 53:2, "He had no form or comeliness," and in 1 Sam. 2:6 "The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up." This is understood to mean that the Lord humbles and frightens us by means of the law and the sight of our sins so that we seem in the eyes of men, as in our own, as nothing, foolish, and wicked, for we are in truth that. Insofar as we acknowledge and confess this, there is no form or beauty in us, but our life is hidden in God (i.e., in the bare confidence in his mercy), finding in ourselves nothing but sin, foolishness, death, and hell, according to that verse of the Apostle in 2 Cor. 6:9-10 "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as dying and behold we live." And that it is which Isa. 28: 2 calls the alien work of God that he may do his work (that is, he humbles us thoroughly, making us despair, so that he may exalt us in his mercy, giving us hope), just as Hab.3:2 states, "In wrath remember mercy."

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There is a fundamental difference in how one sees oneself. The theologian of glory judges by appearances and so classifies works as good or bad. Theologians of the cross, however, cannot see through the "unattractive" and apparently evil works of God. They cannot see through such works because they have been "gotten at" by suffering and the cross. They see God working exactly through the horror of the cross. Thus the works do not become the occasion for pride, but rather humility and despair. The human works that once seemed attractive and good how have no form or beauty and are the cause of sorrow and despair. The good news is that God works in us through the one who was despised and rejected so that we might begin to see the way things are. Our lives are hidden in God, Luther says, and he explains that by saying that we live only in "naked confidence in the mercy of God." So to live is not gloomy or depressing, but rather "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as dying, and behold we live" (2 Cor. 6: 9-10).

Source: Forde, Gerhard O. On Being a Theologian of the Cross. Michigan. Eerdmans' publishing Company. 1997.

Pastor John Albertson

Faith Church News

We continue to pray for Walt Behnke, Jane Wildes, Lawrence Behnke, Von Trumblee, Chuck and Norma Butters, Vic Diercksen, Jim Shimek, Jan Keyes, Marilyn Paulson, Eunice Koeppen, Melinda Dye, Sue Schunter, Helen Hale, Connie Herrington, Claire Diefenderfer, Roger Grimm, Russ Gerst's father, Gary Stephans (friend of Hummel Family) and Bonnie Eckhoff's brother.

Congratulations to Gary and Vickie Behnke who were married on January 23, 2010!

Financial Peace University FPU has been a great success with over 26 families participating in this life-changing look at our relationship with money. We already have a class scheduled for the fall. Sign-up now to reserve your spot!

Games/Social Time will take place on Thursday, February 18th this month at 1:00 pm. Come take a break from the cold for some fun, fellowship time. No experience necessary!

The Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast will be held here at Faith Lutheran on Saturday, February 20th from 7:30 pm - 11:30 am. Please come and support these great kids and have a fantastic breakfast, too!

We will shortly be welcoming some new families to Faith. Prospective members have been invited to choose one of two dates to attend a dinner at a member's home to come and learn what it means to be a member of Faith Lutheran. Dates are Sunday, February 21st & 28th. Special thanks to Diane & Larry Lehtinen and Roxanne & Kerry Koch for hosting these dinners. Please RSVP to Pr. Paul or contact the church office if you are unable to make it.

I would like to thank all those who sent cards and called following my surgery and death of my sister. They were greatly appreciated.

Vic Diercksen

Expectations of Discipleship

Worship Every Week, experience God's Word in Scripture and Proclamation, the Means of Grace found in the Bread and Wine, and the Waters of Baptism.

Commit to being in worship here or as you travel. Pray in daily life, around the dinner table, as you drive, as you wake and as you sleep. Let all of life be a prayer!

Commit to praying every day. Grow in faith. Attend Bible Studies, Read the Bible, Invest in Your Faith, Learn Spiritual Practices, Invite Others to Faith.

Commit to Growing in Faith Every Day. Give. Be Intentional about Giving to Grow God's Kingdom through Faith Lutheran Church.

Commit to giving, work toward a Goal of 10% (Biblical Tithe). Serve. Find a Ministry and Share Your Gifts through Serving Others.

Commit to Serving this Community and Its Mission to the World.

Wednesday Night Bookclub

Mark your calendars for an upcoming opportunity as we begin Wednesday Night Book Club! Join us for a good book, good conversation and just plain fun! The dates are March 3, 10, 17 and 24th at 7:00 pm in the Faith Drama Room and will be facilitated by Lorice Amlin.. Below is a brief synopsis.

Mitch Albom's nonfiction book, [*Have A Little Faith*](#) begins with an unusual request: an 82-year-old rabbi from Albom's old hometown asks him to deliver his eulogy. Feeling unworthy, Albom insists on understanding the man better, which throws him back into a world of faith he'd left years ago. Meanwhile, closer to his current home, Albom becomes involved with a Detroit pastor – a reformed drug dealer and convict – who preaches to the poor and homeless in a decaying church with a hole in its roof. Moving between their worlds, Christian and Jewish, African-American and white, impoverished and

well-to-do, Mitch observes how these very different men employ faith similarly in fighting for survival: the older, suburban rabbi, embracing it as death approaches; the younger, inner-city pastor relying on it to keep himself and his church afloat.

Albom has stated that 10% of the profits from this book will be donated to charity, including the Hole in the Roof Foundation, which helps refurbish places of worship that aid the homeless.

Sunday School Lenten Project

On February 21st, the Sunday School will kick off their Special Lenten Offering Project at 9:45 am in the Sanctuary. All kids and adults are encouraged to wear your "Hope" Sunday School t-shirts to the event.

Each Sunday from February 28th through April 11th, we will be collecting "Gifts of Love" for Four Oaks. Four Oaks is a local organization that helps kids with various issues become successful adults. More information on Four Oaks can be found at www.fouroaks.org.

Items to be collected each week are:

Week 1 - Feb 28th - Toothbrushes/Toothpaste

Week 2 - Mar 7th - Shampoo/Conditioner/
African American Hair products

Week 3 - Mar 14th - Combs/Brushes/Deodorant

Week 4 - Mar 21st - Razors/Shaving Cream/ Gift cards from Wal-mart or Target

Week 5 - Mar 28th - Body Lotion/Face Wash
Body Wash/Bath Loofahs

Easter Sunday - No Sunday School but Gifts of Love will be accepted.

Week 6 - Apr 11th - Wrap-Up & Presentation to Four Oaks.

We would like to invite the entire congregation take part in this giving opportunity as it is a local, worthy charity right here in our community!



Looking Ahead

Looking ahead on the Church calendar, Ash Wednesday will be on Wednesday, February 17th. Our worship service will be held at 7:00 pm.



Lenten Services will again be held on Thursdays, beginning February 25th and we will have a soup supper at 6:00 pm and worship to follow at 7:00 pm.

Make plans to participate this Lenten season.

Sunday School Updates

- ◆ Please wear your HOPE t-shirts for the kick-off on Sunday, February 21st and the wrap-up on Sunday, April 11th.
- ◆ Easter Sunday, there will be no formal Sunday School classes held. HS students will be serving Easter breakfast at 9:00 am. Dixie Dahl & Roxy Savage will be holding SS for Nursery children.
- ◆ Sunday, May 23rd- Last day of SS & teachers appreciation luncheon @ noon.

Wednesday Night Live

Feb 17 - Ash Wednesday Worship no WNL

Feb 24 - "Worship" with Team #1 for cooking and clean-up.

Mar 3 - "Magic Making- Bring a Friend" with Team # 2 for cooking and clean-up

March 10- "Worship" with Team #3 for cooking and clean-up.

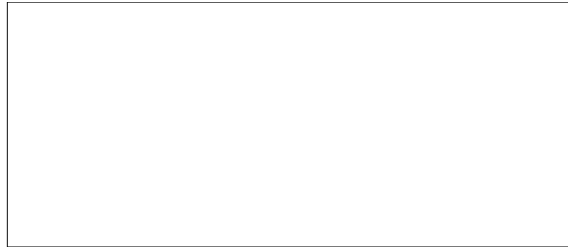


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*We are a community of Faith,
growing in Christ, sharing God's love.*



Worship Opportunities

All are welcome and invited to worship at Faith Lutheran Church.

Worship Services

Sunday Mornings at 8:00 and 10:45 am

Ash Wednesday Service

7:00 pm Worship

Sunday School

for youth and adults at 9:15 am

Choir Practice

Wednesdays at 7:30 pm

WNL Youth Program

Wednesdays at 5:00 pm

Bell Choir Practice

Thursdays at 8:00 pm (during Lent)

Faith has been serving the Marion-Cedar Rapids area for more than thirty years; supporting local ministries such as the Marion Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, and Senior Assistance Programs. We are in partnership with the 10,657 congregations, 28 Lutheran colleges and universities, 8 seminaries, 450 global missionaries and one of the largest non-profit social service networks in the United States; as well as Lutheran World Relief worldwide. All are ministries of the 5.2 million member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Faith Lutheran Church Staff

John A. Albertson
Senior Pastor

Paul M. Amlin
Associate Pastor

Jen Heinsius
Secretary

Diane Lehtinen
Choir Director

Steve Roggow
Bell Choir

Don Schluter
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Angie Miglia
Director of Worship

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Vice President

Todd & Carolyn Mitchell
Directors of Youth

Lois Yoerger
Secretary

Directors of Fellowship

Russ Gerst
Treasurer

Diane Lehtinen
Director of Witness

Dave Koch
Financial Secretary

James Gardiner
Director of Facilities

Mark Siebenga
Directors of Adult Nurture

Director of Youth Nurture

Kerry Koch
Director of Social Concerns

But most of the real work is done by unpaid members of the congregation, often without recognition, who see their service as a response to God.