

This is a spiritual priesthood, held in common by all Christians, through which we are all priests with Christ" (138). The pastor does not differ from laymen except in regard to "a different office which is entrusted to him, namely, to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments" (159).

In the second part Luther examines the Words of Institution of the Lord's Supper word by word, phrase by phrase, to show that it cannot be a sacrifice done by man for reconciliation with God. "To make a sacrifice of the sacrament . . . is to change completely its nature and character" (168). He also shows the role of faith in Lord's Supper:

Here you see clearly that no work of satisfaction or sacrifice of reconciliation is of any use; only faith in the given body and the shed blood reconciles. Not that faith does the reconciling in and of itself, but it lays hold on and obtains the reconciliation which Christ has performed for us. (177)

In fact, Luther teaches that the Lord's Supper is the Gospel!

For if you ask: What is the Gospel? you can give no better answer than these words of the New Testament, namely, that Christ gave his body and poured out his blood for us for the forgiveness of sins. This alone is to be preached to Christians, instilled into their hearts, and at all times faithfully commended to their memories. (183)

In the third part Luther contrasts the true priesthood of every Christian with the laws and teachings that arise from the papal false priesthood. He shows, commandment by commandment, that the pope's priesthood contradicts each of the 10 Commandments. He concludes by comparing the errors of the papal mass and priesthood to events and persons in Scripture.

FUTURE DATES (see wylcms.org for information)

Nov. 12-14: Youth Breakaway, St. Andrew's, Laramie

Nov. 28: Panhandle Youth Gathering, 3:00 PM, Immanuel, Alliance

Dec. 27-28: Youth Retreat, St. Paul, Thermopolis

Feb. 11-12: TTGN AJ Convocation, Ramkota, Casper (registration materials will be available in the December edition of the District Roundup)

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around November 20 (December 2021 issue).



Wyoming District Round-Up

November 2021

District Website: www.wylcms.org

"Here I Stand" on the Word in My Community

"...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS..." (Eph. 1:16)

For **Rev. Ralph Jaeger** (emeritus, Laramie), health

For **Rev. Michael and Jennifer Wittrock** (emeritus) with health needs.

For **Rev. David Caspersen** (emeritus, Cheyenne) as he recovers from heart surgery.

For our active-duty chaplains, **Rev. Lynn Christensen (Japan)**, **Rev. Ryan Mills (Colorado)**, **Rev. Scott Shields (Alaska)**; and national guard chaplain **Rev. Gerald Heinecke (Prince of Peace, Buffalo)**.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

St. Paul's, Sidney is being served by **Rev. Ted Bourret (St. Paul's, Potter and Salem, Gurley)**.

Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon) is serving **Grace, Merriman, NE** (Nebraska District) while it considers its future.

Rev. Noah Fremer (Bethel, Lander) received and returned a divine call to St. John, Garner, IA.

Rev. Neil Carlson (Zion, Chappell and Trinity, South Divide) is considering a divine call to Our Redeemer, Immanuel, and St. John's Lutheran Churches in Herington, KS.

Here I Stand: Godly Virtues

Every community needs its illustrious men and women, its paragons of virtue. We uphold George Washington for his honesty and Abraham Lincoln for his leadership in adversity. Good histories and good literature are full of such examples. We Christians especially seek to emulate virtues of the saints of old: Abraham's faith when all evidence seemed to deny God's promise. The humility and obedience of Moses and the Virgin Mary. The loyalty of the Moabitess Ruth to Naomi and the true God. David's courage and prowess in battle against Goliath. The wisdom of Solomon. The purity and self-sacrifice of Esther. The love of Jesus for sinners.

What is virtue? Virtue is moral excellence. It refers to a person's character and goodness. From ancient times it referred especially to manliness and courage. It is not simply a disposition of heart and mind, but also of body and soul. Virtue refers to the habits of our emotions and thoughts. It refers to the internal and physical readiness to do what is right. It is expressed in our actions, in the conduct of our lives.

Even the ancient pagan world understood that virtue is indispensable for human life and community. We still read the ancient classics because they can teach us much of what the ancient sages learned about virtue from reason and experience. They enumerated four natural virtues: prudence (practical wisdom), fortitude (courage when afraid), temperance (self-control), and justice (the application of divine law). Christians recognized the truthfulness of this list and added three more directly from the Bible: faith, hope, and love.

The Bible is, among other things, a book of virtues. From the historical books to the Psalms and Proverbs, from prophets to epistles, the Bible shows us men and women of faith, both in their vices and sins, and in their faith and godly virtues. God's Word teaches us that although outward virtues often obtain blessings for self and for the neighbor, they cannot merit favor with God. Only Christ has obtained this favor, or grace, before God.

Nevertheless, God commands us Christians to be virtuous in heart and mind, body and soul, and in all the conduct of our lives. The absence of godly virtues leads to sorrow and loss, sin and death. Active and fruitful virtues in Christians, however, bring countless blessings to others, to home and church and community. This is what the Holy Spirit means in 2 Peter 1:5–8: "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with **virtue**, and virtue with **knowledge**, and knowledge with **self-control**, and self-control with **steadfastness**, and steadfastness with **godliness**, and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with **love**. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And how do we supplement our faith with virtue? How do we impart to our children these precious virtues in heart and life? Peter directs us first to the Christ (2 Peter 1:3–4): "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and virtue, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."

The Holy Spirit gives another list of virtues in Philippians 4:8–9, where He then teaches us to learn these virtues first by observing them in the Apostle Paul and others (including good history and literature!), by occupying our hearts and minds with them, and then by practicing and doing them. "Finally, brothers, whatever is **true**, whatever is **honorable**, whatever

is **just**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **commendable**, if there is any **virtue**, if there is anything **worthy of praise**, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." God grant you faith, fruitful virtues, and in the end, eternal life.

REFORMATION 500

Reformation means change, change from errant teaching to true doctrine, change from errant practices to purified liturgy and church customs that better reflect the Scriptures. Such change is hard, as we all know. And no area of the church's life sees more difficulty than the Lord's Supper, where the entire work of Christ is concentrated and delivered to us in Christ's body and blood, given into our mouths to eat and drink.

Luther's theological writings of 1520 had critically examined the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper. While he was at the Wartburg some of his colleagues in Wittenberg and elsewhere began to make changes in their congregational worship. They proposed to give both kinds (body and blood) to the congregation, rather than reserving Christ's blood for the priest alone. They sought to do away with the theory of transubstantiation, the false teaching that the bread and wine no longer remain in the Lord's Supper.

But at the heart of the Roman Catholic error on the Lord's Supper—and at the heart of their ministry and their Christian piety—was the blasphemous teaching on the sacrifice of the mass. They taught that their pastors were the priests of God who offered the Lord's Supper to God as a sacrifice to reconcile the church to Him. This teaching blasphemously denied the atonement of Christ, denied Christ's Words of Institution, and instituted new laws and practices contrary to Holy Scriptures.

In November 1521 Luther wrote against this error, first in Latin, then in German. In *Misuse of the Mass* (AE 36.133–230) Luther began by teaching that Scripture alone is the source of our doctrine. "The holy sacraments and articles of faith rightly demand that they be founded and preserved only through the divine Scriptures" (135), and "the Scriptures cannot err" (137). He especially rejected the idea of allowing the church to have authority over Scriptures,

It is not God's Word just because the church speaks it; rather, the church comes into being because God's Word is spoken. The church does not constitute the Word, but is constituted by the Word. A sure sign, by which we may know where the church is, is the Word of God. (144f)

The main part of the treatise has three parts. In the first, he corrects the idea of a special priesthood of the ministry and teaches that every Christian is a priest because of Christ. "We have only one single priest, Christ, who has sacrificed himself for us and all of us with him. . .