



Trinity Lutheran Newsletter

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June/July 2011

Distinguishing Law & Gospel Part 1: Why is it necessary?

by Pastor Boehne

This newsletter article is the beginning of a series of articles on a very important topic for Christians—the distinction between the Law and the Gospel. For this series I will be using the general material of C.F.W. Walther's classic, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*.

For this first part, we take up the simple question, "Why should Christians be able to differentiate between the Law and the Gospel?" As we will see later, God's Holy Scriptures will never be fully opened to a Christian unless they are able to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel. A Christian must be able to open the Scriptures and understand in what manner God is speaking to us.

Here I quote from Walther, "Comparing Holy Scripture with other writings, we observe that no book is apparently so full of contradictions as the Bible, and that, not only in minor points, but in the principal matter, in the doctrine how we may come to God and be saved. In one place the Bible offers forgiveness of sin to all sinners; in another place forgiveness of sin is withheld from all sinners. In one passage a free offer of life everlasting is made to all men; in another, men are directed to do something themselves toward being saved. This riddle is solved when we reflect that there are in the Scriptures two entirely different doctrines, the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel." (p. 6)

The ability to determine the difference between the Law and the Gospel is absolutely necessary to understand what Jesus is saying. For instance, in Matthew 19:16 Jesus is asked, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" The final part of Jesus' answer is, "If you would enter life, keep the commandments." A literal reading of this one verse would determine that if we are to be saved and inherit eternal life we must keep the commandments. This would most certainly mean that no one will ever be saved since no one is able to keep the commandments.

Then in John 6:28, Jesus is asked again, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Here Jesus answers, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." Now what? To be saved is the work of God—namely, faith in Christ. What about keeping the commandments?

These are the type of apparent contradictions that Walther says are solved when one understands Law and Gospel. Through the Law God always tells us what we are to do, e.g. "keep the commandments". However, by the Law no one will ever be saved. Instead, the Law shows us our sin and directs us to the Gospel which tells us what God has done *for us*. The Gospel makes no demands, but only gives what Christ has earned.

This is where a Christian must be able to understand the difference. Next newsletter we will begin looking at the specific differences between the Law and the Gospel.

JUNE/JULY BIRTHDAYS

Sharon Duncan	June 1
Benjamin Boehne	June 2
Grant Armstrong	June 2
Donna Parkhouse	June 6
Jillian Toth	June 8
Mark Kessinger	June 8
Tishia Schramek	June 10
Jordan Kessinger	June 11
Chris Punke	June 13
Dorothy Franke	June 15
Bernie Remmert	June 18
Darrell Punke	June 19
Tylene Joye	June 21
Joshua Faulk	June 23
Ryan Skare	June 27
Tyler Russell	June 27

Bob Jarrett	July 5
Denise Iskrzycki	July 8
Kane Kearfott	July 9
Lydia Boehne	July 10
Isabella Enright	July 12
Diana Uphoff	July 13
Matt Roth	July 13
Krista Carls	July 15
Becky Carls	July 15
Doc Garrels	July 15
Pat Ryan	July 17
Bob Clements	July 19
Gene Schertz	July 19
Adam Burton	July 21
Caitlyn Engelhorn	July 24
Zach Johnson	July 24
Jared Faulk	July 26
Kari Weber	July 26
Luella Armstrong	July 27
Hilda Schertz	July 28
Amy Enright	July 29
Hannah Meyers	July 31

(If there is a birthday we have missed, please let us know.)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Vacation Bible School

June 6th – 10th; 8:30-11:00 a.m.

National LWML Convention in Peoria, IL

June 23rd-26th (Opening Service June 23rd at 7 pm—Anyone is welcome. See Pastor or Claire E. for more information)

Monthly Reading from the Book of Concord

LARGE CATECHISM, PART 2: APOSTLES' CREED

I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints, under one head, even Christ. This group is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, one mind, and understanding, with many different gifts, yet agreeing in love, without sects or schisms. I am also a part and member of this same group. I am brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Spirit through having heard and continuing to hear God's Word. In the past, before we had attained to this, we were altogether of the devil, knowing nothing about God and about Christ. So, until the Last Day, the Holy Spirit abides with the holy congregation or Christendom [John 14:17]. Through this congregation He brings us to Christ and He teaches and preaches to us the Word. By the Word He works and promotes sanctification, causing this congregation daily to grow and to become strong in the faith and its fruit, which He produces.

God's grace is secured through Christ, and sanctification is wrought by the Holy Spirit through God's Word in the unity of the Christian Church. Yet because of our flesh we are never without sin. Therefore, in the Christian Church we daily receive the forgiveness of sin through the Word, to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here. So even though we have sins, the Holy Spirit does not allow them to harm us. (par. 51-55)

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A FEW UPDATES & THINGS UPCOMING

- † **EVERY MEMBER VISITS:** This summer I will again be continuing the task of visiting everyone in the congregation. There will again be sign-ups in the narthex beginning in June. If I didn't visit with you last year, please expect to be in contact with me.
- † **PRESCHOOL EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE:** The committee assigned to explore the possibility of a Lutheran Preschool at Trinity continues to work. At this point we are busy gathering information such as needs, demographics, costs, etc. We hope to have a formal report to the Voters at the July meeting. In addition, there will be a congregation survey after the service on June 26th to get some congregational input.
- † **LITURGY SUNDAY:** On July 17th we will have a special service designed to teach the Lutheran liturgy. Instead of the usual sermon format, the service will include a running commentary explaining all the parts of the liturgy.
- † **SUMMER SERMON SERIES:** For five weeks, beginning July 24th, we will have a sermon series which focuses on the *Sedes Doctrinae* of the Christian faith (Latin for the "Seat of Doctrine"). Each week we will look at a foundational text of Scripture for a particular doctrine. More on this later...
- † **ADULT INFORMATION CLASS:** If there is any interest, I will plan to offer an adult instruction class during the summer. If you are interested in taking such a class or know of someone else interested, please contact me as soon as possible.

June Mission Project – Vacation Bible School

Who can you invite to VBS at Trinity this year? How can you help with teaching these children the Gospel news of salvation in Christ? We look forward to this year's VBS week June 6th -10th, 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. each morning.



July Mission Project – Trinity's Mercy Fund

The last three weeks in July there will be a door offering taken after service for those who wish to contribute to a "Mercy Fund" at Trinity. This is a very specific opportunity for our congregation to respond to local needs. This will be a small fund to be used by the Pastor throughout the following twelve months to assist with local requests for financial assistance. Please note a few things about this fund. First, by receiving this fund as a door offering this allows only for contributions by those who so desire. There is no pressure on any member to give toward the fund. Second, this fund will always be dispersed in the form of small gift cards and never handed out as cash. Third, this fund is entirely different from the El Paso Ministerial Association Fund which is only for people passing through town and not for local residents. Fourth, requests from our own members will not be handled by this fund but will be considered of higher importance and handled through the Elders and Council. Fifth, we will only ask for contributions to the fund once a year. Finally, this fund will be used at the discretion of the Pastor who will be very discerning when it comes to whether or not to grant requests.

GOODBYE AND GOD BLESS

Terry & Carol Woodley
3042 Shawnee Rd.
Crossville, TN 38572
Transferred to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Crossville, TN

CORRECTION-APRIL VOTERS' MINUTES

One item in the April Voters' meeting was miscommunicated. What we meant to ask is if there would be anyone in the congregation who would want to organize a Church wide sale at Trinity's own location. You may speak to Larry Finck or Pastor Boehne if anyone is so interested. Our apologies for the confusion.



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