

Without the Word, Works of Darkness

Consequently, Holy Scripture, in its accounts of the fathers, gives praise primarily to faith in the Word; for the Word of God sanctifies everything, inasmuch as it is holy, yes, holiness, truth, and wisdom itself. And the life that is governed by the Word is the true, righteous, wise, and eternal life. But if it lacks the Word, it also lacks truth, light, and wisdom before God, and all its doings are works of darkness.

Thus although marriage is an unclean kind of life because the copulation of the man and the woman cannot take place without carnal uncleanness, tending cattle is a filthy business, and the life of the government and of subjects is highly impure and abounds in vices—many sins flock together there, excesses of individuals as well as personal vices in addition to those that are general—nevertheless God has richly honored all this and has ordained it in His Word. And if you hold fast to the Word, you have already been cleansed of all your uncleanness.

Finally nobody lives without sins. But so great is the power of the Word that it devours all these, so that you can say: “I live my married life with my wife and children in peace, in fear of and trust in Thee; and thus I know that all is well.” For in 1 Tim. 2:15 Paul says about the life of spouses that “woman will be saved through bearing children.” How? “If they continue in faith.” This is the first power of the Word.

Next the Word not only brings it about that the kind of life itself is saintly and pleases God but also stirs you up to all kinds of virtues and highly praiseworthy works; for it is not idle, provided that it is in your heart according to its true meaning and understanding. But it will remind you to think about calling upon and praising God. It will make you a priest and prophet of God, one whose sacrifices will be most pleasing to God because His eyes have regard for faith. The horrible monks do not see this effect either.

In the third place, if the devil notices that you have the Word and are confident that your life is pleasing and acceptable to God on account of the Word, he will not rest but will put in your way trials and afflictions of every kind even in the most trivial matters. You will experience faithlessness on the part of the household, the hatred of your neighbors, and the death of your children or of your wife. All these things will happen in order that your faith may be exercised. But if the Word is not there, impatience and displeasure follow because of such an irksome and miserable kind of life, just as we hear many who exclaim that they entered into marriage not because God led them but because the devil urged them to do so.

(Luther's Works vol. 5, p.4).

First Vespers for Advent One November 28, 2020



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“Wherever a preacher sees open vice in a city, he dare not hold his peace; he dare not preach to please man but must rebuke this vice. I dare not remain silent when I behold all types of vice, such as fornication, greed, usury, lying, and deceit; for that would be depriving people of the Light. However, if a pastor reproves the bakers for making their loaves of bread too small, this will be construed as slandering the shoemakers, the tailors, the butchers, and all the other trades. It is not enough that they sin; but they refuse to admit this, and they presume to defend themselves. In this way they reveal their love for darkness. But I appeal to you to turn to God and change your ways. If you have sinned, humble yourself and say: “If I have been making my loaves of bread too small, I shall make them larger in the future.” Do not refuse admittance to the Light. But if you refuse to listen to reproof, then I ask you to come forth and preach in my stead. It is my duty to be a preacher of the Light and to point out your sins to you; it is your duty to cease sinning and to shun the works of darkness. We sorrow greatly that almost every nook and corner of our city bids fair to become a cesspool. But be on your guard. If you want to be children of the Light, you must walk in the Light forsake your evil ways, and refrain from grumbling and sulking. If you do not care to hear us, leave the church.

If you want to be a preacher of darkness, you must be one at your own peril. I for my part will preach of the Light. And the Word I proclaim is not mine; it is God’s. He admonishes you through His servants not to defraud your neighbor or to wrong anyone in your station. But everyone does with his wares what he will, unconcerned whether he violates God’s commands with his actions or not; thus he even makes an idol of his sins and converts light into darkness. But listen, my fellow, don’t grumble too much. Otherwise we might preach the Law to you still more sharply from the Catechism. Not only that; we might also take steps to have you seized by the nose and thrown into a dungeon. Therefore stop your muttering against the Word of God; it is too powerful for you.

(Luther’s Works vol. 22, p.399)

Office Hymn for Advent



Creator of the Stars of Night

1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, Thy
 peo - ple's ev - er - last - ing Light: Je - sus, Re - deem - er,
 save us all And hear thy ser - vants when they call.

- 2 Thou, grieving that the ancient curse
Should doom to death a universe,
Hast found the healing, full of grace,
To cure and save our ruined race.
- 3 Thou camest, the Bridegroom of the bride,
As drew the world to eventide,
The spotless Victim all divine
Proceeding from a virgin shrine.
- 4 At whose dread name, majestic now,
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow;
All things celestial thee shall own,
And things terrestrial, Lord alone.
- 5 O thou, whose coming is with dread
To judge and doom the quick and dead,
Preserve us from the ancient Foe
While still we dwell on earth below.
- 6 To God the Father and the Son
And Holy Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be
From age to age eternally. Amen.



A - men.

Text: 9th-century Office hymn; trans. John Mason Neale (1818–66), alt.
 Tune: *Conditor alme siderum* (Sarum plainsong, Mode IV)

The Order of Vespers, p. 224

- Hymn..... #13
- + “O Lord, open my lips... p.224
- + “Praise to you, O Christ,
King who comes to save us” p.225
- + Psalmody with antiphons
- Psalm 24
- Psalm 50
- Psalm 85 (insert)
- Psalm 143
- Psalm 145
- Reading
- Romans 13:8-14
- Common Responsory p.226
- “Teach me your way, O Lord...”
- Office Hymn (inside)
- “Creator of the Stars of Night”
- Verse/Response (spoken by Pastor)
- Sermon
- + Antiphon
- L. Behold the name of the Lord *
 is coming from afar, and His Glory fills
 the whole world.
- + The Magnificat p.228-230
 (antiphon is repeated)
- + The Prayers..... p.231
- Kyrie (“Lord, have mercy...”)
- Lord’s Prayer
- L. “The Lord be with you.” (left)
- R. “And with your spirit.”
- Collect of the Day (back)
- Special Prayers, Collect for Grace
- + Benedicamus & Blessing p.222