

Lutheran Confessions

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration

XI. Eternal Election, 42-45, 48, 52

42] Thus many *receive the Word with joy, but afterwards fall away again*, Luke 8, 13. **But the cause is**

not as though God were unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom *He has begun the good work*, for that is contrary to St. Paul, Phil. 1, 6; **but the cause is that they wilfully turn away again from the holy commandment [of God], grieve and embitter the Holy Ghost, implicate themselves again in the filth of the world, and garnish again the habitation of the heart for the devil.** With them the last state is worse than the first, 2 Pet. 2, 10, 20; Eph. 4, 30; Heb. 10, 26; Luke 11, 25.

43] Thus far is the **mystery of predestination** revealed to us in God's Word, and if we abide thereby and cleave thereto, it is a very useful, salutary, consolatory doctrine; **for it establishes very effectually the article that we are justified and saved without all works and merits of ours, purely out of grace alone, for Christ's sake. For before the time of the world, before we existed, yea, before the foundation of the world was laid, when, of course, we could do nothing good, we were according to God's purpose chosen by grace in Christ to salvation, Rom. 9, 11; 2 Tim. 1, 9.** 44] Moreover, all *opiniones* (opinions) and erroneous doctrines concerning the powers of our natural will are thereby overthrown, because God in His counsel, before the time of the world, decided and ordained that He Himself, by the power of His Holy Ghost, would produce and work in us, through the Word, everything that pertains to our conversion.

45] Thus this doctrine affords also the **excellent, glorious consolation** that God was so greatly concerned about the conversion, righteousness, and salvation of every Christian, and so faithfully purposed it [provided therefor] that before the foundation of the world was laid, He deliberated concerning it, and in His [secret] purpose ordained how He would bring me thereto [call and lead me to salvation], and preserve me therein. ... 48] Moreover, this doctrine affords **glorious consolation under the cross and amid temptations**, namely, that God in His counsel, before the time of the world, determined and decreed that He would assist us in all distresses [anxieties and perplexities], grant patience [under the cross], give consolation, excite [nourish and encourage] hope, and produce such an outcome as would contribute to our salvation. ...

52] **But a distinction must be observed with especial care between that which is expressly revealed concerning it in God's Word, and what is not revealed.** For, in addition to what has been revealed in Christ concerning this, of which we have hitherto spoken, God has still kept secret and concealed much concerning this mystery, and reserved it for His wisdom and knowledge alone, which we should not investigate, nor should we indulge our thoughts in this matter, nor draw conclusions, nor inquire curiously, but should adhere [entirely] to the revealed Word [of God]. This admonition is most urgently needed.

(Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.

Prayer

O God, who sees that we put not our trust in anything that we do, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN** (*Collect for Sexagesima*)

Word of God: St. Luke 8:4-15 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

1. What is "the good news of the kingdom of God?" (8:1)
2. What kind of response did Jesus' preaching produce? (v.4)
3. Why would Jesus tell this parable when things were going so well?
4. What do we find the sower doing? What is his sole desire?
5. Why is he so negligent in scattering his seed so that much of it is wasted? Couldn't he have been a better steward of his seed? Look at Jesus' untiring work and determination in Luke 8:1.
6. The conclusion of Jesus' parable is "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (v. 8).
 - A. Catechumen = "one who hears." Why did the church choose that title?
 - B. What does "...let him hear" mean? **** Furthermore see Luke 8:18.
7. Before giving the explanation, Jesus explains the reason for using parables to the disciples (who, interestingly, do not understand). The parables divide people into what two groups? (See verse 10 and 18) Isa 6:8-13
8. How is it that the disciples(church) know the secrets of the Kingdom (verse 10, Heb 4:2)? Did they do something to get it? (2 Cor 3:14-16)
9. The parable describes four outcomes of this scattered seed/Word. What prevents the seed? A. Path , B. Rock, C. Thorns, D. Good soil
10. Divide the four outcomes into the two groups.
11. Give examples of people today who receive the Word like the seed planted on the path? On the rock? Among the thorns? Compare to the 6th petition meaning, "...the devil, the world and our sinful nature...."
12. What three things are praised about the reception of God's Word on the good soil? (v.15)
13. Who makes the heart "good and noble?" Likewise, the soil to be good? (Luke 1:53, lest Luke 18:11 and Luke 12:1)
14. What will be the result of those who hear the Word and believe(faith)?
15. Knowing that not all who hear will believe, to whom and how should we preach the Word? (Luke 24:47, Acts 1:8, Luke 5:4)

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn #369, stanza 2-3
Office of the Keys, 3
Psalm 1:2
Or Luke 8:18

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses
"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise
"Praise to you, O Christ.
Lamb of Our Salvation." p.225

Reading
St. Luke 8:4-15 (back)

Hymn
"Through Jesus' Blood and Merit" #369

Catechesis on... (back)
St. Luke 8:4-15
Liturgy
Catechism

--prayer based on reading
+ Responsive Prayer for Catechesis (insert)

Ten Commandments
Lord's Prayer
Apostles' Creed
Psalm 73
Collect of the Day
Prayers based on the text
The Collect for Peace
Benedicamus
Benediction

Catechesis on St. Luke 8:4-15

And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: ⁵“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. ⁷And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. ⁸But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.”

When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

⁹Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?” ¹⁰And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.’

¹¹Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹²Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. ¹³But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. ¹⁴Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.” (NKJV)

Hypocrites

Ap VII and VIII, “For we grant that in this life hypocrites and wicked men have been mingled with the Church, and that they are members of the Church according to the outward fellowship of the signs of the Church, i.e., of Word, profession, and Sacraments, especially if they have not been excommunicated.”

False Teachers

Ap VII and VIII, 48, “Impious teachers are to be deserted [are not to be received or heard], because these do not act any longer in the place of Christ, but are antichrists. And Christ says Matt. 7, 15: *Beware of false prophets*. And Paul, Gal. 1, 9: *If any man preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed*.

LC, III, first Petition, 47, For because we see how full the world is of sects and false teachers, who all wear the holy name as a cover and sham for their doctrines of devils, we ought by all means to pray without ceasing, and to cry and call upon God against all such as preach and believe falsely and whatever opposes and persecutes our Gospel and pure doctrine, and would suppress it, as bishops tyrants, enthusiasts, etc.

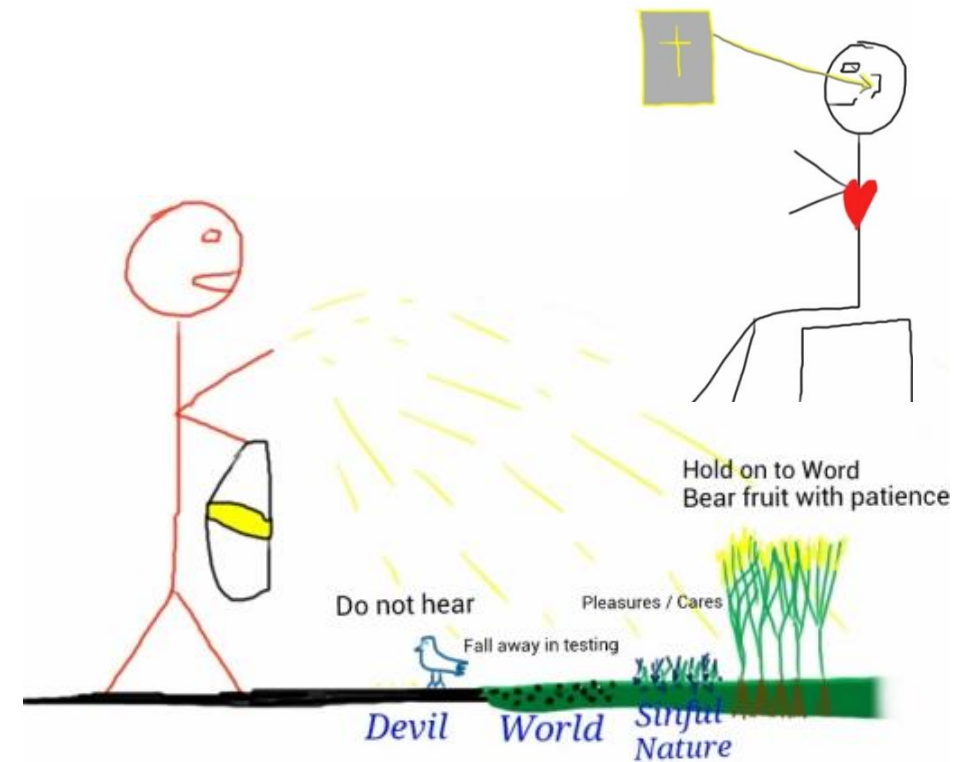
Persecution/Good Days

LC, III, third Petition, 68, But for our own sakes we must pray that even against their fury His will be done without hindrance also among us, that they may not be able to accomplish anything and we remain firm against all violence and persecution, and submit to such will of God.

The Fruits of the Word of God

Ap VI, 77] But we have already frequently testified that repentance ought to produce good fruits; and what the good fruits are the [Ten] Commandments teach, namely, [truly and from the heart most highly to esteem, fear, and love God, joyfully to call upon Him in need], prayer, thanksgiving, the confession of the Gospel [hearing this Word], to teach the Gospel, to obey parents and magistrates, to be faithful to one’s calling, not to kill, not to retain hatred, but to be forgiving [to be agreeable and kind to one’s neighbor], to give to the needy, so far as we can according to, our means, not to commit fornication or adultery, but to restrain and bridle and chastise the flesh, not for a compensation of eternal punishment, but so as not to obey the devil, or offend the Holy Ghost; likewise, to speak the truth. These fruits have God’s injunction, and ought to be brought forth for the sake of God’s glory and command; and they have their rewards also.

Catechesis On St. Luke 8:4-15



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Office of the Keys, 3

The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops

In the Confession and in the Apology⁹ we have set forth in general terms what we have to say about ecclesiastical power.

⁶⁰ The Gospel requires of **those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction**, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent. ⁶¹ By the confession of all, even our adversaries, it is evident that **this power belongs by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters,¹ or bishops.** ⁶² Accordingly Jerome teaches clearly that in the apostolic letters all who preside over the churches are both bishops and presbyters. He quotes from Titus, “This is why I left you in Crete, that you ^(tr-523) might appoint presbyters in every town,” and points out that these words are followed by, “A bishop must be married only once” (Titus 1:5-7). Again, Peter and John call themselves presbyters. And Jerome observes: “One man was chosen over the rest to prevent schism, lest several persons, by gathering separate followings around themselves, rend the church of Christ. For in Alexandria, from the time of Mark the Evangelist to the time of Bishops Heracles and Dionysius, the presbyters always chose one of their number, set him in a higher place, and called him bishop. Moreover, in the same way in which an army might select a commander for itself, the deacons may choose from their number one who is known to be active and name him archdeacon. For, apart from ordination, what does a bishop do that a presbyter does not do?”

⁶³ Jerome therefore teaches that **the distinction between the grades of bishop and presbyter (or pastor) is by human authority.** The fact itself bears witness to this, for the power is the same, as I have already stated. ⁶⁴ Afterwards one thing made a distinction between bishops and pastors, and this was ordination, for it was decided that one bishop should ordain the ministers in a number of churches. ⁶⁵ But since the distinction between bishop and pastor is not by divine right, it is manifest that **ordination administered by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right.** ⁶⁶ Consequently, when the regular bishops become enemies of the Gospel and are unwilling to administer ordination, **the churches retain the right to ordain for themselves.** ⁶⁷ **For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing, and ordaining ministers.**

This right is a gift given exclusively to the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church. It is as Paul testifies to the Ephesians when he says, “When he ascended on high he gave gifts to men” (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12). He enumerates pastors and teachers among the gifts belonging exclusively to the church, and he adds that they are given for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ. Where the true church is, therefore, the right of electing and ordaining ministers must of necessity also be. **So in an emergency even a layman absolves and becomes the minister and pastor of another.** It is like the example which Augustine relates of two Christians in a ship, one of whom baptized the other (a catechumen), and the latter, after his Baptism, absolved the former. ⁶⁸ Here the words of Christ apply which testify that the keys were given to the church and not merely to certain individuals: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

⁶⁹ Finally, this is confirmed by the declaration of Peter, “You are a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9). These words apply to the true church which, since it alone possesses the priesthood, certainly has the right of electing and ordaining ministers. ⁷⁰ **The most common custom of the church also bears witness to this, for there was a time when the people elected pastors and bishops. Afterwards a bishop, either of that church or of a neighboring church, was brought in to confirm the election with the laying on of hands; nor was ordination anything more than such confirmation.**

From the “Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope,” paragraphs 59-70

Apology, XIII,

...For the ministry of the Word has God’s command and glorious promises, Rom. 1, 16: *The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* Likewise, Is. 55, 11: *So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please.* 12] If ordination be understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands a sacrament. **For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry [that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by men]. 13] And it is of advantage, so far as can be done, to adorn the ministry of the Word with every kind of praise against fanatical men, who dream that the Holy Ghost is given not through the Word, but because of certain preparations of their own, if they sit unoccupied and silent in obscure places, waiting for illumination, as the Enthusiasts formerly taught, and the Anabaptists now teach.**

⁹ Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII; Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII.

¹ Cf. 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1.