

Lutheran Confessions

Augsburg Confession: XXVIII The Power of Bishops

Again, according to the Gospel or, as they say, by divine right, there belongs to the bishops as bishops, that is, to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, **no jurisdiction except to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked men, whose wickedness is known, and this without human force, 22] simply by the Word. Herein the congregations of necessity and by divine right must obey them, according to Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me.* 23] But when they teach or ordain anything against the Gospel, then the congregations have a commandment of God prohibiting obedience, Matt. 7, 15: *Beware of false prophets; 24] Gal. 1, 8: *Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed; 25] 2 Cor. 13, 8: *We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*** (See Also Apology, VII and VIII, 47-50)**

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, IV. Good Works

8] Nor is there a controversy as to how and why the good works of believers, although in this flesh they are impure and incomplete, are pleasing and acceptable to God, namely, for the sake of the Lord Christ, by faith, because the person is acceptable to God. For the works which pertain to the maintenance of external discipline, which are also done by, and required of, the unbelieving and unconverted, although commendable before the world, and besides rewarded by God in this world with temporal blessings, are nevertheless, because they do not proceed from true faith, in God's sight sins, that is, stained with sin, and are regarded by God as sins and impure on account of the corrupt nature and because the person is not reconciled with God. *For a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, Matt. 7, 18, as it is also written Rom. 14, 23: *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.** For the person must first be accepted of God, and that for the sake of Christ alone, if also the works of that person are to please Him.

9] **Therefore, of works that are truly good and well-pleasing to God, which God will reward in this world and in the world to come, faith must be the mother and source; and on this account they are called by St. Paul true fruits of faith, as also of the Spirit.**

(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

Grant to us, Lord, we implore You, the Spirit to think and do always such things as are right, that we, who cannot do anything that is good without You, may by You be enabled to live according to Your will; 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 Trinity 8)*

Word of God: St. Matthew 7:15-23 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

1. A Prophet is someone who speaks forth God's Word. (Note: A prophet does not simply foretell, but applies God's Word to past, present and/or future.) How are we to treat...
 - A. ...false prophets? (v.15, also see Romans 16:17)
 - B. ...true prophets? (see Luke 10:16, Heb 13:17)
2. From the outside, what can't we see or determine? (Ps 44:21)
3. How can we recognize true and false prophets? (v.16, 20)
4. "Prophets" can refer to all God's people(Mal 2:7, Acts 2:17-18) or those with particular calls to preach(Eph 4:10-12, Jn 20:22-23). Read the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer and its meaning(LW, p.302).
5. What are the "fruits"?
 - A. Not "signs and wonders." (v. 22) See Mt 24:24, Dt 13:1-3
 - B. Not an outwardly holy life. (See Mt 23:1-3). Though people and especially pastors, are required to live in a godly way, only those works are good, which are done in faith(Heb 11:6) and which flow from the fruits of faith: love(Mt 22:37-40).
 - C. The only true "fruit" is teaching! Isaiah 8:19-20 (If they do not speak according to this word...); Jer 23:31 (the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, 'the Lord declares.');
6. Compare "They come to you"(v.15) with "Called and ordained."(Jer 23:32).
7. What is the will of the heavenly Father? Read 3rd Petition of Lord's Prayer and it's meaning (LW, p.302)
8. God's will includes not only repentance worked by the Law, but also faith worked by the Gospel! "Repent and believe/be baptized" (Acts 2:38)
9. Are we saved by our own self-determined means? (Mt 15:9 Their teachings are but rules taught by men; Is 29:13) or apart from faith. Mal 2:13-18)

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn #331, st. 7-8
7th and 8th Commandment & meaning,
p. 300
Malachi 2:7

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

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

+ Ascription of Praise
"Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia." p.225

Reading

St. Matthew 7:15-23 (back)

Hymn

"Here is the Tenfold Sure Command" #331

Catechesis on... (back)

St. Matthew 7:15-23
Liturgy
Catechism

--prayer based on reading

+ Recite Word by Word insert

Ten Commandments
Lord's Prayer
Apostles' Creed
Sacrament of Holy Baptism
Matthew 28:19
Mark 16:16
Confession & Absolution
John 20:22-23
Sacrament of the Altar
Words of Institution

Collect of the Day
--prayer based on reading

R. AMEN
Benediction
R. AMEN

Catechesis on St. Matthew 7:15-23

False Prophets and Fruits

15“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”

21“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (NKJV)

Our Doctrine and Practice

--Our Lord Jesus calls certain men out of their vocation into **the Office of the Ministry**(Augsburg Confession V) in order that they will devote themselves to **providing the Gospel and the Sacraments**, the means through which the Holy Spirit works justification through faith in Christ(AC IV). Although we do hold to the necessity of a divine call into the Pastoral Office before we receive a minister(AC XIV), the call itself does not insure orthodoxy. “**We should forsake wicked teachers** because **they no longer function in the place of Christ**, but are antichrists. Christ says (Matt. 7:15), “Beware of false prophets. (Tappert). *Apology of Augsburg Confession, VII and VIII* --We know that someone is a false teacher by **examining their teaching(fruits)**. “²¹According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the **bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the**

ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest. All this is to be done not by human power but by God’s Word alone. ²² On this account parish ministers and churches are bound to be obedient to the bishops according to the saying of Christ in Luke 10:16, “He who hears you hears me.” ²³ On the other hand, **if they teach, introduce, or institute anything contrary to the Gospel**, we have God’s command not to be obedient in such cases, for Christ says in Matt. 7:15, “Beware of false prophets” (AC XXVIII. The Power of Bishops).

Absolution

Prior to the words of forgiveness(p. 158) the pastor says, “As a called and ordained servant of the Word...” in order to show that he is an occupant of the Pastoral Office, acting in Christ’s stead, and one who God desires to use to create and strengthen faith.

Salutation

--At the beginning of the Service of the Word(before the collect of the day, p.164) and the Service of Lord’s Supper(preface, p. 170), as well as before the prayers in the order of Matins(p.219) and Vespers(p.231), is the Salutation:

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you. (And with your Spirit)

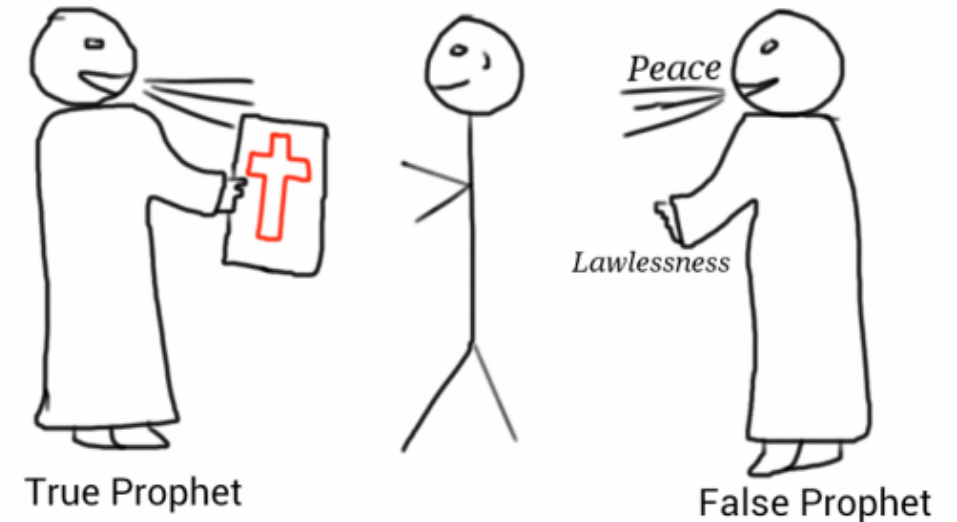
--“The Lord be with you” is not just an empty greeting, but a present reality and an encouragement to faith. The Lord is not dead, he is risen from the dead. For those who believe and are baptized Jesus Christ is with you. When the Lord is with you, you have a mighty fortress, a trusty shield and weapon.

--The response of God’s people to the called minister, saying, “And with your Spirit,” is the word of faith saying, “**You are the called minister. Through His call, the Lord has poured out his Spirit on you so that you might teach us God’s Word. Pray to the Lord on our behalf.**”

The Catechism

--The 1st Petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “Hallowed be Thy Name” draws a distinction between the teaching of true prophets, by which we ought to lead holy lives, and the teaching of false prophets, which produces lives contrary to God’s Word. --The Office of the Keys(LW, p.305) highlights the importance of the called ministers of Christ, and the Table of Duties list the responsibilities for “Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers,” and “What Hearers Owe Their Pastors.”

Catechesis On St. Matthew 7:15-23



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The Seventh Commandment

“In short, **thievery is the most common craft and the largest guild on earth.** If we look at mankind in all its conditions, it is nothing but a **vast, wide stable full of great thieves**” (LC I 228).

- There are those who steal openly by breaking in and taking what belongs to another.
- There are employees who steal from their employer by their unfaithfulness, laziness, or negligence in working.
- There are employees who pilfer from their employer or others a little each day.
- There are employers who steal from their employees by not paying them a fair wage.
- There are government officials, business leaders, or positions of influence who misuse their authority to acquire privileges and benefits for themselves.
- There are those who receive goods and services, but do not pay their bills, but lie and deceive in order to get out of it.
- There are those who lie about their earnings to get out of paying taxes.

Stealing

“Enough has been said concerning the nature of stealing. It is not to be confined to narrow limits but must extend to all our relations with our neighbors. To sum up, as we have done in the previous commandments: On one hand, we are forbidden to do our neighbor any injury or wrong in any way imaginable, whether by damaging, withholding, or interfering with his possessions and property. We are not even to consent to or permit such a thing, but are rather to avert and prevent it” (LC I 250).

Ephesians 4:28, “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”

Leviticus 19:35, “You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume.”

Psalms 37:21, “The wicked borrows and does not repay, but the righteous shows mercy and gives.”

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, “... If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

Threats and Promises

The one who has stolen should repent and make full restitution of what was stolen. If a person will not return what is stolen, then the guilt of his sin remains on him, for that is not true repentance.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, **10nor thieves**, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Ezekiel 33:14-15, “Again, when I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, 15if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die.”

Help Your Neighbor Keep What is His

“On the other hand, we are commanded to promote and further our neighbor’s interests, **and when he suffers want we are to help, share, and lend to both friends and foes**” (LC I 251).

Philippians 2:4, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

1 John 3:17, “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

2 Corinthians 9:7, “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Hebrews 13:16, “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Acts 20:35, “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

1 Timothy 5:8, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

1 John 3:17-18, “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

The Poor

“But **beware how you deal with the poor**, of whom there are many now. ²⁴⁷ If, when you meet a poor man who must live from hand to mouth, you act as if everyone must live by your favor, you skin and scrape him right down to the bone, and **you arrogantly turn him away whom you ought to give aid**, he will go away wretched and dejected, and because he can complain to no one else, he will cry to heaven. Beware of this, I repeat, as of the devil himself. **Such a man’s sighs and cries will be no joking matter. They will have an effect too heavy for you and all the world to bear, for they will reach God, who watches over poor, sorrowful hearts, and he will not leave them unavenged.** But if you despise and defy this, see whom you have brought upon yourself.... ²⁴⁹ Our responsibility is only to instruct and reprove by means of God’s Word. To restrain open lawlessness is the responsibility of princes and magistrates. They should be alert and resolute enough to establish and maintain order in all areas of trade and commerce **in order that the poor may not be burdened and oppressed** and in order that they may not themselves be charged with other men’s sins” (LC I 246-249).

It is the LOVE of riches

Luke 12:21, “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”
(Then comes the bigger barns parable.)
Proverbs 30:8-9, “Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches—Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.”

God’s Promise to Us Concerning Goods

Matthew 6:11, “Give us this day our daily bread.”
Psalm 145:15-16, “The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”
Psalm 37:25, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.”
Matthew 6:31-33, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²“For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But **seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**”
Hebrews 13:5, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”
1 Peter 5:6-7, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

“Anyone who seeks and desires good works will here find ample opportunity to do things which are heartily acceptable and pleasing to God. Moreover, he graciously lavishes upon them a wonderful blessing: We shall be richly rewarded for all the help and kindness we show to our neighbor, as King Solomon teaches in Prov. 19:17, “He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.” ²⁵³ Here you have a rich Lord. Surely he is sufficient for your needs and will let you lack or want for nothing. Thus with a happy conscience you can enjoy a hundred times more than you could scrape together by perfidy and injustice. Whoever does not desire this blessing will find wrath and misfortune enough” (LC I 252-253).

The Eighth Commandment

“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25).

Our Neighbor’s Honor and Good Reputation

“Over and above our own body, spouse, and temporal possessions, we have yet another treasure, namely, **honor and good report** [the illustrious testimony of an upright and unsullied name and reputation], with which we cannot dispense. For it is intolerable to live among men in open shame and general contempt. **256]** Therefore God wishes **the reputation, good name, and upright character of our neighbor** to be taken away or diminished as little as his money and possessions, that every one may stand in his integrity before wife, children, servants, and neighbors. **257]** And in the first place, we take the plainest meaning of this commandment according to the words (*Thou shalt not bear false witness*), as pertaining to the public courts of justice, where a poor innocent man is accused and oppressed by false witnesses in order to be punished in his body, property, or honor. (LC, I, 255-257).

Do Not Tell Lies(Falsehood)

Colossians 3:9, “Do not lie to one another...”

Leviticus 19:15-16, “You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go about as a **talebearer** among your people; **nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor:** I am the Lord.”

Deuteronomy 19:15, “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established” (Mt 18:16).

Speak the Truth

Eph. 4:25, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor...”

1 John 2:21, “I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

Matthew 5:37, “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”

In Religious Matters

Deuteronomy 12:32, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

1 Corinthians 15:14-15, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found **false witnesses of God**, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.”

1 Timothy 5:19-20, “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.”

Tell Lies(#1) and Slanderous Lying(#1 & #2)

1. **In FACT:** Something false is presented.
2. **In HEART(or purpose):** The person knows it is false, and thus there is the intent to deceive or harm.

A. Slander – False in both (1)Fact and (2)Heart.

1 Peter 3:15b-16, “But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

B. Gossip – True Facts, but evil in (2) Heart, so that judging without office, without desire to help a sinner, or not for consultation purposes.

Proverbs 11:13, “A **gossip betrays** a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.”

Romans 1:29b-30, “They are whisperers, **backbiters**, haters of God, violent, **proud, boasters**, inventors of evil things....”

Proverbs 24:28, “Do not be a witness against your neighbor **without cause....**”

Matthew 18:15, “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone....”

Speak Well of Him

Ephesians 4:15, “but, speaking the truth **in love...**”

Proverbs 31:8, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...”

1 Peter 4:8, “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’ {*Prov 10:12*}

Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”
(Also see 1 Cor 13:6-7)