

Lutheran Confessions

Formula of Concord, SD, II. Free Will, 54

Through this means (namely, the preaching and the hearing of his Word) God is active, breaks our hearts, and draws man, so that through the preaching of the law man learns to know his sins and the wrath of God and experiences genuine terror, contrition, and sorrow in his heart, and through the preaching of and meditation upon the holy Gospel of the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ there is kindled in him a spark of faith which accepts the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake and comforts itself with the promise of the Gospel. And in this way the Holy Spirit, who works all of this, is introduced into the heart.

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

A. John's Knowledge Concerning Jesus

Matthew 3:13-17, "I need to be baptized by you... He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son...." John 1:29, 36, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:30-34 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 31I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

B. John's Prophecy about Jesus

Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (Luke 3:7)
Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (v.10)
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (v.11)
His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. (v.12)

C. Jesus' Works

And he(Jesus) went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. 24So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them" (Mt 4:23-24). Jesus heals leper(8:3), a Centurion's servant(8:13), many(8:16), 2 demon-possessed men(8:23f), paralytic(9:6), *raises* a dead girl(9:22), heals 2 blind men(9:27f), and a demon-possessed mute(9:32f).

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

Lord, we implore You, give ear to our prayers and lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You now live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN** (*Collect for 3rd Sunday in Advent*)

Word of God: Matthew 11:2-11 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

1. Where was John? Why was he there? (See Matthew 14:1-5, Luke 3:18-20)
2. Why did John send his disciples? He was in prison! For those who claim John didn't really have a question, but framed the question for the benefit of his disciples, to whom does Jesus respond in verse 4? "Go and tell _____...."
3. Prior to Matthew 11, did John know who Jesus was? Look at the following passages, what does John know about Jesus? (See box to the left, part A.)
4. Although it is possible that John the Baptist could have doubted (*and thus fell from faith*), it is more likely that he is inquiring about "how" (*Jesus fulfills the promises of the Christ*) and not "whether" (*Jesus is the Christ*). (A) Verse 2 refers to Jesus' actions as "the deeds of the CHRIST." (B) John sends his disciples TO JESUS for an answer. (C) Jesus' response is primarily GOSPEL, not Law (v.4-6). [*Similar to the difference between Mary's question (Lk 1:34) and Zechariah's question (Lk 1:18).*]
5. While John had been in prison what had he heard concerning Jesus? What are "the deeds of the Christ" (v. 2)? See box to left, part C. or you might also peruse from Mt 4:12 - 11:2.
6. Compare John's prophesy and Jesus' fulfillment. What could have been confusing to John? (See box to the left, part B. and C.)
7. At Matthew 3:3, John cites Isaiah 40:3. What message did John miss from the rest of chapter 40? (See 1Pet 1:10-11, even prophets search their own prophecies)
8. How does "One who is coming" describe Jesus? (Matthew 21:9, 23:39)
9. How does Jesus respond to John's question? (v. 4-6, See Isaiah 35:5-6) Why are six proofs listed? What will be the seventh proof? (Matthew 28)
10. Does Jesus answer John's question about the lack of judgment and wrath? Why does Jesus say, "And blessed is the one who is not offended by me?" (2 Peter 3:9)
11. How did the common people regard John? (See Matthew 14:5)
12. How is John not at all like a reed shaken by the wind? (Matthew 14:4)
13. How is John not at all like someone in soft, fine clothes in a castle? (Mt 3:4)
14. Is John a prophet? Yes (Luke 1:41-45). How is John even more than an Old Testament prophet? (Mt. 11:13-14, Malachi 3:1, Mt. 17:9-13*, Mt. 23:25-27)
15. When it comes to "(sinners) born of women," no one is greater than John. Who is excluded from comparison?
16. How is a New Testament believer greater than John? (Mt 13:17, Mt 14:1-12)
17. What are the deeds of the coming Christ today which show forth who Jesus is? (See 1 Cor 4:1-5)

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn "Rejoice, All Ye Believers"

ASBH #67

Lord's Prayer, Conclusion & meaning

Romans 8:3-4

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses

"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise

"Praise to you, O Christ.
King who comes to save us." p.225

Reading

St. Matthew 11:2-11 (back)

Hymn

"Rejoice, All Ye Believers"
(Augustana #67, St. Lucy-Dec 13)

Catechesis on... (back)

St. Matthew 11:2-11

Liturgy

Catechism

--prayer based on reading

+ Responsive Prayer for Catechesis (insert)

Ten Commandments

Lord's Prayer

Apostles' Creed

Psalm 100

Collect of the Day

Prayers based on the text

The Collect for "The Children of the Church"

Benedicamus

Benediction

Catechesis on St. Matthew 11:2-11

And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples³ and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵“The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶“And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”⁷ As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸“But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ⁹“But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰“For this is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.’ ¹¹ “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (NKJV)

Alien Work of God by the Law

The Law of God breaks the heart and prepares the way for the Gospel

“For since the mere preaching of the Law, without Christ, either makes presumptuous men, who imagine that they can fulfill the Law by outward works, or forces them utterly to despair, **Christ takes the Law into His hands, and explains it spiritually**, Matt. 5, 21ff ; Rom. 7, 14 and 1, 18, and thus reveals His wrath from heaven upon all sinners, and shows how great it is; whereby **they are directed to the Law, and from it first learn to know their sins aright**—a knowledge which Moses never could extort from them.... Therefore the Spirit of Christ must not only comfort, but also **through the office of the Law reprove the world of sin**, John 16, 8, and thus must do in the New Testament, as the prophet says, Is. 28, 21, *opus alienum, ut faciat opus proprium*, that is, He must do the work of another (reprove), in order that He may

[afterwards] do His own work, which is to comfort and preach of grace. For to this end He {*Holy Spirit*} was earned [from the Father] and sent to us by Christ, and for this reason, too, He is called the Comforter...” (FC SD V 10-11).

“...to repent means nothing else than truly to acknowledge sins, to be heartily sorry for them, and to desist from them. **This knowledge comes from the Law**, but is not sufficient for saving conversion to God, if faith in Christ be not added, whose merits the comforting preaching of the holy Gospel offers to all penitent sinners who are terrified by the preaching of the Law” (FC SD V 8-9)

Proper Work of God by the Gospel

The Gospel proclaims Forgiveness

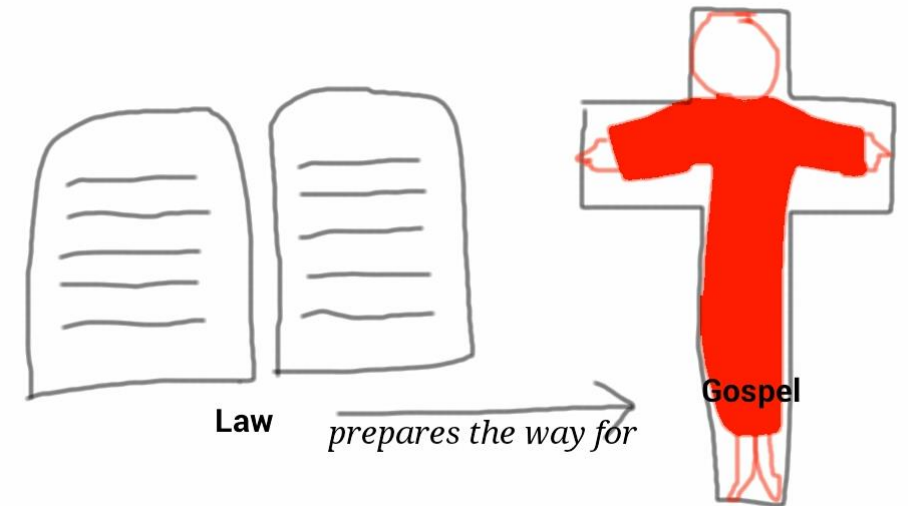
“He calls it God’s alien work to terrify because **God’s own proper work is to quicken and console**. But he terrifies, he says, **to make room for consolation and quickening** because hearts that do not feel God’s wrath in their smugness spurn consolation. ⁵² In this way Scripture makes a practice of joining these two, terror and consolation, to teach that these are the chief parts of penitence, contrition and the faith that consoles and justifies. We cannot see how the nature of penitence could be presented more clearly and simply (Ap XII, 51-52).

“For the Gospel proclaims the forgiveness of sins, not to coarse and secure hearts, but to the bruised or penitent, Luke 4, 18. And lest repentance or the terrors of the Law turn into despair, the preaching of the Gospel must be added, that it may be a repentance unto salvation, 2 Cor. 7, 10 (FC, SD V, 9).

Offense of the Gospel

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Catechesis On St. Matthew 11:2-11



The **Law** of God breaks the heart of proud unrepentant sinners.
The **Gospel** quickens and consoles the broken repentant sinners

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