

## Lutheran Confessions

### Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration XI. Eternal Election, 34-41

34] However, that many are called and few chosen is not owing to the fact that the call of God, which is made through the Word, had the meaning as though God said: “Outwardly, through the Word, I indeed call to My kingdom all of you to whom I give My Word; however, in My heart I do not mean this with respect to all, but only with respect to a few; for it is My will that the greatest part of those whom I call through the Word shall not be enlightened nor converted, but be and remain damned, although through the Word, in the call, I declare Myself to them otherwise.” 35] For this would be to assign contradictory wills to God. … 37] For this reason also Christ causes the promise of the Gospel not only to be offered in general, but He seals it through the Sacraments which He attaches as seals of the promise, and thereby confirms it [the certainty of the promise of the Gospel] to every believer in particular.

38] On this account, as the *Augsburg Confession* in Art. 11 says, we also retain private absolution, and teach that it is God’s command that we believe such absolution, and should regard it as sure that, when we believe the word of absolution, we are as truly reconciled to God as though we had heard a voice from heaven, as the *Apology* explains this article. This consolation would be entirely taken from us if we were not to infer the will of God towards us from the call which is made through the Word and through the Sacraments.

39] There would also be overthrown and taken from us the foundation that the Holy Ghost wishes certainly to be present with the Word preached, heard, considered, and to be efficacious and operate through it. **Therefore the meaning is not at all the one referred to above....**

40] Moreover, even as God has ordained in His [eternal] counsel that the Holy Ghost should call, enlighten, and convert the elect through the Word, and that He will justify and save all those who by true faith receive Christ, so He also determined in His counsel that He will harden, reprobate, and condemn those who are called through the Word, if they reject the Word and resist the Holy Ghost, who wishes to be efficacious and to work in them through the Word and persevere therein. **And in this manner many are called, but few are chosen.**

41] For few receive the Word and follow it; the greatest number despise the Word, and will not come to the wedding, Matt. 22, 3ff. **The cause for this contempt for the Word is not God’s foreknowledge [or predestination], but the perverse will of man, which rejects or perverts the means and instrument of the Holy Ghost, which God offers him through the call, and resists the Holy Ghost, who wishes to be efficacious, and works through the Word**, as Christ says: *How often would I have gathered you together, and ye would not!* Mt. 23, 37.

(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 Lord, we implore You favorably to hear the prayers of Your people that we, who are justly punished for our offenses, may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness, for the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Savior, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN** (*Collect for Septuagesima*)

#### Word of God: St. Matthew 20:1-16 (on back)

#### Questions to Ponder in Prayer

With the beginning of the Pre-Lenten season(gesimas) the readings reveal a mission focus of getting out the evangel and bringing in the new converts.

1. What is the kingdom of heaven? (Matt 3:2, “Thy Kingdom Come”)
2. How is the story of the vineyard owner similar to the way that God works in His church? (Psalm 103:13, Gen 32:10, Matthew 18:17, 19:29)
3. Although this landowner has a foreman, how involved is the owner?
4. Who does all the work in the vineyard?
5. The first group hired has worked out an agreement. What was it?
6. Do the next four groups have an agreement?
7. At the third hour, the men were standing around doing nothing. At the eleventh hour, the men respond, “Because no one has hired us.” Is that true? Whose fault is it?
8. Who “found” the ones hired last? What does that say about the landowner?
9. Whenever we get to payment day, there are only two kinds of workers. What are the two kinds? (Mt 25:31-46)
10. When this first group grumbles, why are they concerned about equality/justice(v.12)? (Exodus 16:6-8)
11. Why are these hired first told “Take your pay and go?” With the phrase “the last will be first and the first shall be last,” the first groups is shown to have been what? Luther: “This is a man who works in the church for what he can get out of the church. He has what he worked for—and nothing more.”
12. In Matthew 19:27, Peter had asked, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” How does this parable of Jesus answer that question?

**6:30 PM “Learn by Heart”**  
Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn “**Spread Our Table, Lord and Father**” ASBH insert  
Confession, question 1-3  
1 Timothy 2:3-4

**7:00 PM “Catechesis”**  
+ Opening Verses

“O Lord, open Thou(†) my lips...”  
from the Psalter, p. 29-30

**Reading**  
St. Matthew 20:1-16 (back)

**Hymn**  
ASBH: “**Spread Our Table, Lord and Father**” (insert)

**Catechesis on...** (back)  
St. Matthew 20:1-16  
Liturgy  
Catechism

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

Ten Commandments  
Lord’s Prayer  
Apostles’ Creed  
**Psalm 128** (also page 315)  
Collect of the Day  
Prayers based on the text  
The Collect “For Contentment”  
Benedicamus  
Benediction

## Catechesis on St. Matthew 20:1-16

<sup>1</sup> “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> “Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> “And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, <sup>4</sup> “and said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. <sup>5</sup> “Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. <sup>6</sup> “And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’ <sup>7</sup> “They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.’ <sup>8</sup> “So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last to the first.’ <sup>9</sup> “And when those came who *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup> “But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. <sup>11</sup> “And when they had received *it*, they complained against the landowner, <sup>12</sup> “saying, ‘These last *men* have worked *only* one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.’ <sup>13</sup> “But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> ‘Take *what is yours* and go your way. I wish to give to this last man *the same* as to you. <sup>15</sup> ‘Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’ <sup>16</sup> “So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.’ (NKJV)

### Good Works of Believers

1. Done according to the God's Will, Law, Ten Commandments
  - not obedience to man's law(Mt 15:9)
  - not a good intention
  - even our cross must not be self-imposed (1 Pet 3:7)
  - come from our God-given vocation.
2. Flow from a willing spirit, from the love of God (which thus requires that the person be a Christian).  
Romans 13:10, “Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

### Works of the Law (“Good” Works of the Heathen)

Although the good works of the heathen comply with the external requirements of the Law, they are not done with the right motivation, but are at best simply the natural motives of the law written on the heart(Rom 2:15 ), to elicit fame, to avoid punishment, or at worst to earn eternal life.

1 Corinthians 10:20, “Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.”

Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

Galatians 3:2b,5-7, “Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ... Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it by the works of the law*, or by the hearing of faith?— <sup>6</sup>just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” <sup>7</sup> Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham....

### Reward of Grace

God rewards the good works of believers, both spiritually and temporally. However, should there be a claim of a reward by right, that person would be excluded from the Kingdom.

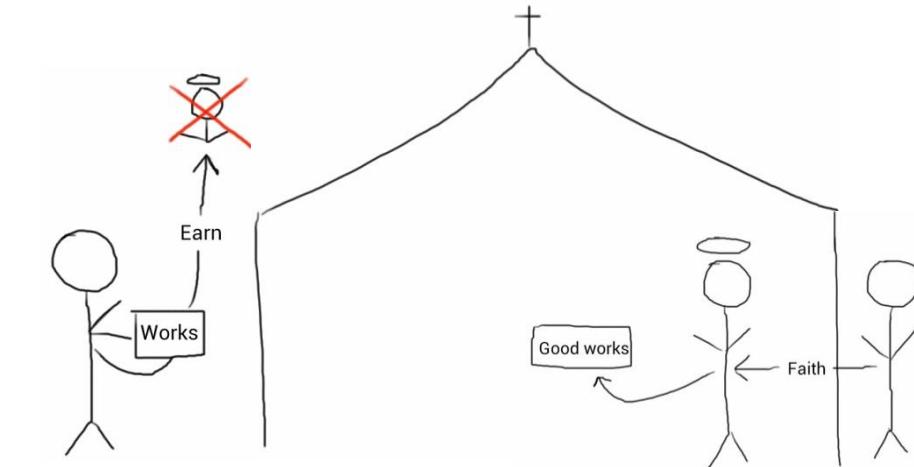
1 Corinthians 3:8, “Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”

1 Timothy 4:8, “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”

Galatians 3:10, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse”

Why? “We are not fit of ourselves(2 Cor 3:5), but it is God who works in us both to will and to do the things pleasing to him (Phil 2:13) ‘If thou didst receive it, why doest thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?’ (1 Cor 4:7).” Chemnitz

## Catechesis On St. Matthew 20:1-16



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