

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.’); Heb 13:9 (Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.); 2 Jn 9,11; Tit 1:9-12

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 “**Now Let All Loudly Sing Praises**” ASBH insert
5th Commandment & meaning
Malachi 2:7
- 7:00 PM “Catechesis”
- + Opening Verses
“O Lord, open Thou(†) my lips...”
from the Psalter, p. 29-30
- Reading
St. Matthew 7:15-23 (back)
- Hymn
“**Now Let All Loudly Sing Praises**”
(Augustana Service Book & Hymnal, insert)
- Catechesis on... (back)
St. Matthew 7:15-23
Liturgy
Catechism
- + The Prayers..... p.36
Kyrie (“Lord, have mercy...”)
Lord's Prayer
Salutation p.37
Collect for Sunday
--prayer based on reading
Special Prayers
Collect for Peace p.37
+ Benedicamus & Blessing p.38-39

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)

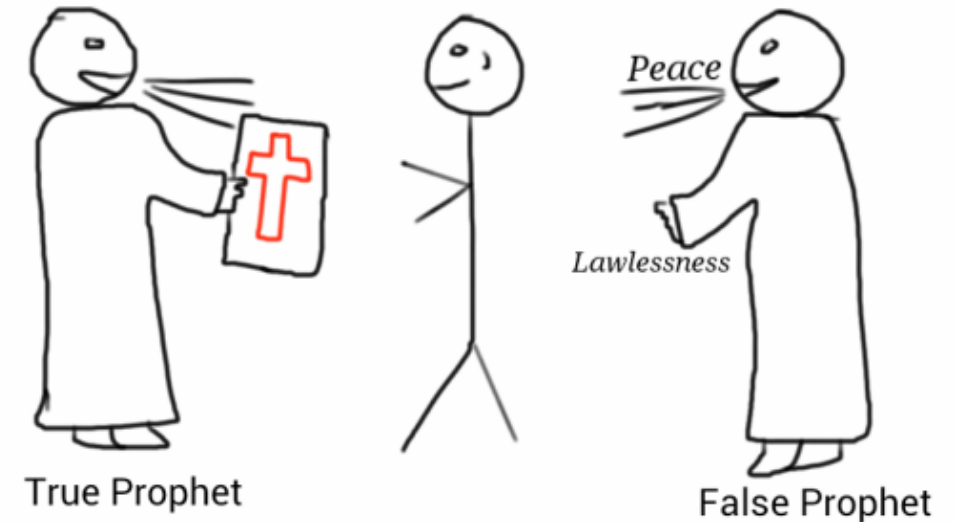
--“The Lord be with you” is not just an empty greeting, but a present reality and an encouragement to faith. The Lord is not dead, he is risen from the dead. For those who believe and are baptized Jesus Christ is with you. When the Lord is with you, you have a mighty fortress, a trusty shield and weapon.

--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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