

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter November 2024

Points to Ponder: Reformation Thoughts --

At the end of October, we observe the Reformation of the Church. In the early 1500's, Martin Luther was moved by the Holy Spirit to initiate reforms; the result was (not what Luther desired) the founding of so-called Protestant Churches. Luther examined many of the core teachings of the church and discovered "grace". Let us explore some of what Luther found.

Luther is known for his theology about "justification by faith alone".

Part of the Spirit led, revelation journey of Luther included three times where Paul quoted a verse from the Book of Habakkuk: Unlike other prophets, Habakkuk dialogs with God about people, rather than declaring God's message to people.

Paul quotes God from the second portion of Habakkuk 2:4 (or 4b), "4 ... *but the righteous shall live by his faith.*" in three of his New Testament letters; Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38.

First, recall that Luther eventually translated the Bible into German. Given Luther's language abilities, let us ponder Luther's perspective and HOW it might influence our understanding today. Luther was searching for the 'intent' recorded in God's Word rather than the 'teachings of the church'. Luther had the Old Testament (OT) available in Hebrew (original), Greek, and Latin, and the New Testament (NT) available in Latin and Greek (original). The teaching of the church seated in Rome used the Latin (called the Vulgate) translations of the OT and NT.

In most English translations the word "righteous" is used in Habakkuk 2:4, and is a reasonable equivalent to the Hebrew. In the Latin Vulgate, used by Rome at the time, the Latin word for "just" is used, and is repeated (in the appropriate grammatical form; just - the just - justified - justice) in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38.

What was revealed to Luther about Romans 1:17? The origin of this Latin term, 'Justus', in the Vulgate, supported the teachings of the Latin fathers, who understood the doctrine of justification as what happens when God, through the sacraments of the church *and elsewhere*, makes unrighteous people righteous. Note that "elsewhere" would include works such as buying indulgences, which greatly concerned Luther. With respect to the Book of Roman's Luther wrote --

"I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, 'the justice of God', because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him." - *(rest of quote follows below)*

Paul, when quoting Habakkuk 2:4b, uses the Greek "dikaios" (the word used in the Septuagint, or Greek version of the OT in Habakkuk 2:4, which was available to Paul) for "righteous" (not "the just", as in the Latin Vulgate), which conveys the meaning that the "righteousness" being spoken about is a "righteousness by faith of which God is the source or author". Paul is quoting a Hebrew text where normal translations would just say "the righteous", but Paul (a learned Hebrew scholar, writing these NT letters in Greek), each time uses a Greek word that conveys *not just a righteous person, but a person*

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declared righteous by God because of a faith in God, which itself (faith) is a gift of God. ← This is what the Holy Spirit led Luther to see, so Luther continues with ...

“Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant. Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that the ‘just shall live by faith’. Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning and whereas before the ‘justice of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven.”

Hence, our English Standard Version tries to capture the translators’ dilemma with these passages in two of the quotes, by adding the alternate reading shown in “()” below --

Romans 1:17 (ESV) “17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,[Or beginning and ending in faith] as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”(Or ***The one who by faith is righteous shall live***)”

Galatians 3:11 (ESV) “11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”(Or ***The one who by faith is righteous will live***)”

Note the same could have been done with Hebrews 10:38 (ESV) “38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”, as ‘*but my one who by faith is righteous shall live*’.

Quotes of Martin Luther indicate Dr. Luther, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, discovered concepts that would never allow him to return to his previous beliefs:

“God has surely promised His grace to the humbled: that is, to those who mourn over and despair of themselves. But a man cannot be thoroughly humbled till he realizes that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsels, efforts, will and works, and depends absolutely on the will, counsel, pleasure and work of Another — God alone.”

“Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace.”

Now, that is something to ponder ... God’s perfect mercy and grace gives us a gift of faith via the Holy Spirit, and declares us righteous and justified in Christ. I think Luther, today, would tell us, “You are broken – Stop trying to fix yourself, you cannot – Listen to God’s Spirit – Lay it all at the foot of the cross – Accept the gift of the Grace of God.”

Chuck

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Announcements

We are thankful for grants from Lutheran Disaster Assistance allowing us to move forward with repairs for damages from Hurricane Beryl. The Education Building, Community Hall, and Church Building roofs all have new shingles. The second grant from Lutheran Disaster Assistance is being processed.

Serving This Month:

Altar Guild – Celine Krenek & Velda Keen **Greeter** – “open”

Readers for Sunday Services

Nov. 3 - Karen Kight

Nov. 10 - Doyle Schaer

Nov. 17 - Linda Alderson

Nov. 24 - Velda Keen

Learning with Fellowship

Ladies Bible Study: Mondays from 9:00 – 11:00 am. All ladies are welcome to join. *No Ladies Bible Study on Monday, November 25th (Break for Thanksgiving Week).*

Men’s Group: Men of the surrounding communities meet for some fellowship and a bite to eat at 6 PM on Wednesdays in the Community Hall. *No Men’s Group Meeting on Wednesday, November 27^h (Break for Thanksgiving Week).*

Sunday School: Each Sunday, 9 am to 9:45 am in the Educational Building. Open to all adults and children before church service. Coffee will be served. We will discuss the scripture readings for the current Sunday.

Meetings

Council Meeting November 11th at 6 PM

Results of Congregational Meeting on Oct. 27th: Ann Schaer and Chuck Keen will continue on Council. Linda Alderson and Pam Dekle will join the Church Council for the term starting in January 2025.

November 24th (Last Sunday after Service) we will gather to decorate Christmas Trees and share some Pizza rather than a potluck meal.

Community Hall Booked: Nov. 1st, 2nd, 9th, 10th

Services - Sunday 10 AM. *Baptism on Nov. 10th.*



Mission Moment

by Pastor Bryce Formwalt
Director of Mission Growth



Lord, Teach Us to Pray

Guest Author, John Waak

Weeks of worry brought a woman to the surgery waiting room. Nagging symptoms in her husband's body grew to the point that not even manly denial could dismiss the feeling that something was not right. His wife, with womanly strength, bore the torch of hope -a hope that said, "You're going to the doctor!" He went. The prognosis was serious but hopeful, but surgery was required to understand what was truly going on. So, there we sat, she and I. We chatted about meaningless things, and then in words that were few, she talked about her worst-case fears. I am sure that somewhere in there we prayed. Then the Doctor came out. As compassionately as he could, and with words that plainly explained what he found, he shared that the situation was terminal and fast-acting. She was stunned into silence until at last, realizing that she needed to say something, quietly uttered a one-word expletive. In that word I clearly heard something that came from the depth of her soul. It wasn't offensive, but honest; not dirty, but pure; not profane, but prayer. It was the most authentic prayer I have ever heard next to Jesus praying, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

The ancient teachers of Christian faith have taught us that two situations teach us to pray authentically, that is, from the heart. One is the experience of being awed at the magnificence of something astoundingly beautiful. The individual experiences a kind of emptying, and rises in heart-felt worship for that which one has now experienced. And when experienced, the experience longs to be shared. The other situation is in great suffering. Here, too, there is an emptying, but in anguish. The mind fails for words, but the heart speaks its own prayer in a language known and heard by the Spirit of truth. Here too, where there is an emptying there is a great filling, a filling of grace. The woman above uttered a one-word prayer. She was filled with a grace that bore her husband's suffering and eventual death. She was, by grace, the incarnation of God's love, and was herself healed by her faith.

So there you have it. Emptying and filling, dying and rising. One is in the presence of overwhelming beauty, the other in the presence of overwhelming suffering. Yet both result in worship and the experience of the Love that surpasses all understanding. Both are sacred. Both are missional. Both situations demand that you be present to that which is right there before you. Both demand that you pay the price. Both result in divine love flowing like a torrential river for your neighbor. Are you willing to rejoice for the love God has for your neighbor? Are you strong enough to be weak in tears and steadfast in compassion? Do you really want the Lord to teach you to pray? You may find He is teaching you to love. You may find He is teaching you to live. You will certainly find that you are not the object of your prayer, but its fulfillment, by grace, to His glory, as it was for the disciples of old.

John Waak is recently retired from Martin Luther, Giddings, a member of the LCMC Texas District Council, and instructor of the Old Testament, and Spiritual Formation, in Harvest Workers, an online ministry training program (learn more at www.harvestworkers.net).

WINTER RETREAT

One Another

February 2-4 or 5-7, 2025
Concan, Texas

\$120 - early bird pricing
*includes meals and lodging

Choose from 2 tracks:
Leadership or Devotional

*"A new command I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you must love one another."
John 13:34*

Same great Texas District Winter Retreat with all the benefits of the LCMC LeaderCare initiative.



Scan for more info and registration.

www.lcmctexas.org/winter-retreat

GIVING TUESDAY

December 3, 2024

#GivingTuesday, created in 2012, is a global movement that encourages people to do good. Stay tuned for details on how you can help support the missions of the Texas District & Harvest Workers through our 2024 GivingTuesday event.

Join us in making a difference!



www.lcmctexas.org/giving-tuesday

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter June 2024

2nd Half of 2024 Lectionary Year Calendar -- Three-Year Series : "B" thru end of Nov., then year "C"						
Church Season	Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
ALL SAINTS' DAY	Nov. 3 (<i>observed</i>)	All Saints' Day (Nov. 1)	Rev. 7:(2-8) 9-17	Psalm 149	1 John 3:1-3	Matt. 5:1-12
	<i>or</i> (Prop. 26)	Twenty-fourth S. a. Pentecost	Deut. 6:1-9	Psalm 119:1-8	Heb. 9:11-14 (15-22)	Mark 12:28-37
Pentecost	Nov. 10 (Prop. 27)	Twenty-fifth S. a. Pentecost	1 Kings 17:8-16	Psalm 146	Heb. 9:24-28	Mark 12:38-44
	Nov. 17 (Prop. 28)	Twenty-sixth S. a. Pentecost	Dan. 12:1-3	Psalm 16	Heb. 10:11-25	Mark 13:1-13
THANKSGIVING	Nov. 28	Thanksgiving Day	Deut. 8:1-10	Psalm 67	Phil. 4:6-20 <i>or</i> 1 Tim. 2:1-4	Luke 17:11-19
	Nov. 24 (Prop. 29)	Last S. of the Church Year	Is. 51:4-6	Psalm 93	Jude 20-25	Mark 13:24-37
New Church Year Starts Here (Series C)						
ADVENT 2024	Dec. 1 2024	First S. in Advent	Jer. 33:14-16	Psalm 25:1-10	1 Thess. 3:9-13	Luke 19:28-40 <i>or</i> Luke 21:25-36
	Dec. 8	Second S. in Advent	Mal. 3:1-7b	Psalm 66:1-12	Phil. 1:2-11	Luke 3:1-14 (15-20)
	Dec. 15	Third S. in Advent	Zeph. 3:14-20	Psalm 85	Phil. 4:4-7	Luke 7:18-28 (29-35)
	Dec. 22	Fourth S. in Advent	Micah 5:2-5a	Psalm 80:1-7	Heb. 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45 (46-56)
	Dec. 24 <i>Eve</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord (<i>Christmas Eve</i>)	Is. 7:10-14	Psalm 110:1-4	1 John 4:7-16	Matt. 1:18-25
CHRISTMAS 2024	Dec. 25 <i>Midnight</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord (<i>Christmas Midnight</i>)	Is. 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
	Dec. 25 <i>Dawn</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord (<i>Christmas Dawn</i>)	Is. 62:10-12	Psalm 98	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:(1-14) 15-20

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	Dec. 25 Day	The Nativity of Our Lord <i>(Christmas Day)</i>	Is. 52:7–10	Psalm 2	Heb. 1:1–6 (7–12)	John 1:1–14 (15–18)
	Dec. 29	First S. a. Christmas	Ex. 13:1–3a, 11–15	Psalm 111	Col. 3:12–17	Luke 2:22–40
	Dec. 31	Eve of the Circ. and Name of Jesus <i>(New Year’s Eve)</i>	Is. 30:(8–14) 15–17	Psalm 90:1–12	Rom. 8:31b–39	Luke 12:35–40

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Events in November 2024

Grid Cards List Month Week Day
November 2024 Go << Today >>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Serving This Month Altar Guild, Greeter and Readers, see event discription	2 Community Hall & Church Booked
3 9:00 am: Sunday School 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	4 9:00 am: Women's Bible Study 9:00 AM	5	6 6:00 pm: Men's Group	7	8	9 Community Hall Booked
10 Community Hall Booked 9:00 am: Sunday School 10:00 am: Sunday Church (Baptism) Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	11 9:00 am: Women's Bible Study 9:00 AM 6:00 pm: Council Meeting on 2nd Monday	12	13 6:00 pm: Men's Group	14	15	16
17 9:00 am: Sunday School 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	18 9:00 am: Women's Bible Study 9:00 AM	19	20 6:00 pm: Men's Group	21	22	23
24 9:00 am: Sunday School 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight) 11:00 am: Decorate Christmas Trees & Share Pizza	25	26	27	28	29	30

Canceled event
 Church Service
 Classes
 Community Hall Booked
 Fellowship
 General
 Meeting
 Music Practice

Serving This Month
All Categories