

Do You Have the Tools?

Sunday, 6/24 at 8:00 & 10:45 and Monday, 6/25 at 7 PM

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, Fourth after Trinity – 2018

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Tools are important, so *God has blessed us with ✎pens for writing and ✎screw drivers for tightening screws.* God has also blessed us with the 2017 edition of Luther's Small Catechism, so that we have the tools to ✓pray, ✓share the way to heaven, and ✓understand many other important things! This sermon includes the highlights of *five sections* of the catechism appendix.

1. **Simple Prayer** (pages 360-361): The method used by Dr. Luther **begins with the Bible:** As you get ready to read the Bible, find a quiet spot; then read slowly... What words “...**jump out at you... trouble you... encourage you... disturb you... comfort you?**” Ask yourself: What am I learning? How am I thankful? What sins should I confess? Then, do the following in prayer:
 - a. Thanksgiving: Let us give thanks to God for His goodness and mercy!
 - b. Confession: Let us confess all known sins – *being thankful* for Jesus' finished work and *being sure* we have those benefits by grace through faith!
2. **Salvation Outline** (page 361):
 - a. God loves you! How do we know? Physically – He provides our food, clothing, and shelter; spiritually – just look at the cross!

- b. You are a sinner. Where God has said, “No,” we have sometimes said, “Yes,” and where God has said, “Yes,” we have sometimes said, “No.”
 - c. God punishes sin. Our wrongs have made us deserving of God’s punishment ([Romans 6:23](#)).
 - d. Jesus took our punishment. **First**, He was our sinless substitute; **second**, He received our sin ([Isaiah 53:6](#)) and our punishment ([1 John 2:2](#)).
 - e. Jesus rose from the dead. When the Father raised His Son, *He showed that we are forgiven!*
 - f. Jesus offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to those who believe in Him. Regarding heaven, *Jesus did all that is necessary for everyone*; now those benefits are being offered to all who, *by the Holy Spirit*, believe in Jesus as their Savior!
 - g. Salvation is free—a gift from God. Salvation is by grace: **God’s Riches At Christ Expense!**
3. **Luther’s Preface** ([pages 363-367](#)): This section addresses particular issues in Dr. Luther’s day, but it also has application in our day. Since – in Luther’s day – many pastors knew little, and parents and youth knew even less, Dr. Luther urged the following:
- a. Choose a *simple version* of the catechism (note: the explanation was written later) and stick with it; teach parents and youth to repeat it word for word, *so that they commit it to memory*.
 - b. Once they know the words, teach them the meaning – *but do not overwhelm them!* Once they understand the First Commandment; then go on to the Second, and so on.

- c. Then teach them even more by using the Large Catechism, and supporting those teachings with many true stories from the Bible.
 - d. Since some are no longer willing to receive the Lord's Supper, *we should instruct them about the reality of sin and the forgiveness promised through the Supper (Matthew 26:26-28)*. For some, they will “**come running and racing**” to receive; for those who choose to not come, we fear that they may not be Christians.
4. **Explanation of Luther's Seal** (pages 360-368): Dr. Luther designed his seal to summarize his Christian faith; see the stained-glass version across from our church office.
- a. Black Cross: Jesus died to take the punishment for our sins.
 - b. Heart: God's love moved Him to send His Son.
 - c. Red of the Heart: The color of Jesus' blood.
 - d. White Rose: The work of the Holy Spirit to make us holy through faith and help us live holy lives.
 - e. Sky-Blue Background: The joy of the new life.
 - f. Golden Outer Ring: Eternity with God.
5. **Books of the Bible** (pages 369-371):
- a. OT – It can be divided into these sections:
 - i. **Historical books:**
 - 1. The first five: Genesis – Deuteronomy; from creation to Moses, about 2,600 years of history.

2. The others: from Joshua – Esther; about 1,000 years of history.
- ii. **Poetic books**: from Job – Song of Solomon; the poetic and prophetic books fit into the time of the historical books.
 - iii. **Prophetic books**:
 1. Major Prophets: from Isaiah – Daniel.
 2. Minor Prophets: from Hosea – Malachi.
- b. NT – It can be divided into these sections:
- i. **Historical books**: from Matthew – Acts; the gospels – *the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus*, and a thirty-year history of the early church.
 - ii. **Epistles (Letters)**: from Romans – Jude; letters written to instruct believers; some are named according to the recipients, and some according to their writers.
 - iii. **Prophetic book**: Revelation; a symbolic picture of the NT era, as well as ♦the return of Jesus, ♦the final judgment, and ♦a blessed eternity in God’s presence for all believers!

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, we thank You for the important tools contained in the Small Catechism; help us to 😊be familiar with them, 😊be blessed by them, and 😊use them!

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