



His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.

Almost 500 years ago, during the time of the Reformation, the problem was that many people focused on the wrath of God to the exclusion of His mercy revealed in God sacrificing His own Son in order to save His enemies from the judgment they deserve (see Romans 5:9-10). **However, today we have the opposite problem!** Today it is not popular to speak about sin or the wrath of God against our sin – even though Scripture speaks of this in many places (for example, Isaiah 13:13, Amos 1:3, Nahum 1:2,

Romans 1:18, Ephesians 2:3, 1st Thessalonians 1:8-9). Instead, many people deny that they are sinners and assume that God ought to love us because we are basically good people - *even though we desire and do bad things!*

Many people wrongly think that God's forgiveness means that He simply overlooks our sin. But Scripture clearly teaches that God is holy and just, and so He must punish sin. However, Scripture also teaches that God is merciful and that He longs to forgive sinners. *So how can God be both just and merciful?* God's answer to that problem is nothing short of AMAZING GRACE! **Simply put, God damned Himself in our place!** (See Isaiah 53:3-12, Matthew 1:21-23 & 20:28, Romans 3:21-26, Hebrews 1:1-3, 1st Peter 2:22-25)

God put our sin on His One and Only Son and poured out His wrath upon Him so that we might be saved. All the lambs that were

sacrificed by God's people during Old Testament history were pictures of THE SACRIFICE of God's Son Whom John the Baptist calls "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." So, when God forgives you He does not merely ignore your sin. Instead, when God forgives you He is saying: **"I gave your sin to my Son and damned Him in your place!"** THIS IS THE ULTIMATE SIGN OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US! (See 1st John 4:9-10)

However, this AMAZING GRACE does us no good if we deny our sin or try to earn God's mercy by our good works. (See Hebrews 10:26-31; also 1st John 1:8 & 10) Unless we repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for salvation we remain under the wrath of God! In John 3:36 Jesus Himself says: **"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."** *But how do we reject the Son?*

One way we reject the Son is by denying WHO He is! Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus is God's Son. **In other words, Jesus is God in human flesh!** (See John 1:14 and Colossians 2:9) That's why we worship Jesus along with the Father and the Holy Spirit – ONE GOD! The Father moved the Apostle Peter to speak the truth about Jesus when Peter said: **"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!"**

However, even though Peter was correct about WHO Jesus is. Peter was not yet ready to accept the WORK of Jesus on our behalf. (See Matthew 16:22-23) Jesus clearly taught that He had come into the world to die on the cross for our sins and then conquer death for us by His own bodily resurrection. (See Matthew 16:21, Luke 24:44-48, John 10:11-18 & 11:25-26, 1st Corinthians 15:1-4) **In fact, the atoning work of Jesus on the cross for us sinners is the central teaching of the Christian Faith!** *One*

can NOT deny the atoning work of Jesus and still consider himself or herself to be a Christian in any meaningful sense of that word!

Sadly, there are many false teachers today who claim to speak for Jesus and yet they deny that He is God and, even worse, they deny that He died for our sins. In his book "The Sins of Scripture" Bishop John Shelby Spong writes: *"Jesus did not die for your sins or my sins. That proclamation is theological nonsense ... We are not fallen, sinful people who deserve to be punished ... Jesus did not die for our sins."* Such false teaching mocks God and the loving sacrifice of Jesus! Such false teaching also leads people astray from the ONLY way of salvation God has provided for us sinners!

In Philippians 3:18 the Apostle Paul writes: **"...as I have often told you, ... many live as enemies of the cross of Christ."** Paul also

said: **"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."** (1st Corinthians 1:18) Paul says this in the hope that ALL will repent of their sins and trust in Jesus for salvation – *which is the will of God Himself!!* (See John 3:16, 1st Timothy 2:3-6, 2nd Peter 3:9, 1st John 2:1-2)

Please read the next His Word is Truth on Monday, March 16th!

Pastor Eckstein will begin a series entitled:

"Comfort and Encouragement from Holy Scripture!"

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page: www.concordiajt.org

Paid for by Concordia Lutheran Church