

Luther and the Bible 3

Luther Studies Summer 2017

Lecture Notes

Pastor Daniel Severson

July 5, 2017

Luther accepted the so-called “Augustinian paradigm” of the Christian faith that it is a journey to God. This is the goal of the Christian life—reconciliation with and fellowship with God. So this is where we are going with respect to our interpretation of the Bible. It is a series of stories, prophetic literature, history, wisdom literature, gospels, and letters all of which are about how human beings are reconciled with God.

So far, we have talked about law and gospel, law being prescriptive texts that tell us what to do, and gospel, which contains promises and stories of what God does for us and on our behalf.

We also talked about inner and outer in this regard. God’s word in law and gospel has both an inner and outer aspect. For example, the first use of the law is to regulate outer behavior. At this point I want to talk a little more about Luther’s view of the state and authority.

Because of the human inclination to do as we please, to be turned in on ourselves, the law’s first use is to control disordered behavior. In order to do this, according to Luther, God ordains state power. He understands the fourth commandment to apply to all authority. [also: quote Romans 13]

The state legitimately has the use of force to control criminal behavior and punish those who violate the law. As individuals, we are not to use violence unless the health and safety of others is our responsibility.

Luther also believed that God ordained marriage in Genesis for the purpose of social order and the raising of children. Marriage is not a sacrament. It’s an order of creation.

These things pertain to life in this world. They have nothing to do with life in God’s Kingdom. There are two kingdoms: one is ruled by gospel, the other by law.

Recall the second use of law is diagnostic. It is meant to convict us of our sin in the sense that what the conscience tells us to do, the heart can’t do. This is the inner function of the law. It convicts our conscience and makes us aware of ourselves as sinners who need to be reconciled to God.

Two aspects of sin:

- a. behavior and sinful acts

- b. State of our souls as living separate from God. Sin is a state—curved in oneself—leads to sin as an act. Because we don't love God, we seek to create idols. (Exodus)

--Ultimately meant to drive us to the grace of God. This expressed in promises.

Jesus takes our sin upon himself and in return gives us his blessedness, love, forgiveness, eternal life. This Luther calls "the great exchange."

--Outer – Proclaimed Word and Sacrament

--A Sacrament: An outward sign of an inner spiritual grace. Inner power of the Word and Sacrament is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the inner testimony of what the word says. So, through the Spirit, the word accomplishes what it says.

Since faith too is a work of the Spirit, the promises of God are received by faith. Thus to say, "We are justified by grace through faith," means the same thing as to say, "We are made righteous by grace through faith."

Justification, or being made righteous happens in two ways.

- 1) Imputation
- 2) Growth or sanctification

Augustinian heritage—

Christian faith is a journey to God.

Understanding of human nature is that the desire for God is what derives and motivates us. It is a search for happiness. That goal can be attained only by coming into spiritual union with God.

What we have in faith: Christ is our righteousness: imputation means sins that remain are not held against us. So the promise conveys Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Law gives what it demands.

Two kinds of righteousness – that of civil obeying the law, and that which comes to us as a gift.

Two Kingdoms or Realms:

Horizontal and vertical

Orders:

Household

Government

Church

Augustine and the sacraments—

Outward sign signifying an inner spiritual grace.