

Why I am a Lutheran

- *The Lutheran Church Proclaims the Message of Forgiveness in Christ to Believers.*

We need assurance of forgiveness to have a relationship with God. Without that assurance, we will either attempt to flee from God by blocking Him out of our minds, or we will develop a small, false view of Him that will not threaten us. As Isaiah found out, the only way we can stand in God's presence is with the assurance that God has taken care of our sins.

God promised Adam and Eve that a Savior would come to redeem them from their sin. This promise was spread through generations of believers until the nation of Israel was commanded to establish blood sacrifices for sin. These sacrifices were merely a reminder of what was to come: A living Savior. These sacrifices were for all sin, even the believers, not just for people at the time of their conversion.

Christ's death ended the repetition of sacrifices for our sins with a once for all event. But, the human heart has not changed, and forgiveness still needs to be declared on a regular basis to us, even as it was proclaimed to believers before the time of Christ.

In many churches, forgiveness is only proclaimed at the time of someone's conversion or when someone specifically confesses to a certain sinful act. But, I am always in need of forgiveness not only for my sins, but because I am a sinner. In Lutheran churches, the consistent emphasis on forgiveness should encourage a fellowship on the basis of the forgiveness in Christ.

- *In the Lutheran Church, the Law and Gospel are Presented in Balance.*

The themes of law and gospel run throughout the Bible. Luther and Lutheran theologians clearly teach the correct handling of the Bible using these truths.

Those who say that a personal relationship with Christ will automatically create this balance do not grasp the greatness of Christ. He is the perfect and holy God. His perfection bears down upon our conscience through His amazing creation, through His example of how a life could be sinlessly lived, through His work in other believers who are gifted and strong in areas where we are weak, through His convicting Holy Spirit, and through the preaching and reading of His word.

The depth of mankind's fall into sin needs to be considered, also. Job had a very good relationship with God, but when the devil created terrible conditions for him, he questioned God's goodness. If we were to be pushed beyond a point, our pride would cause us to sin by questioning God's goodness, also. Christ's holiness and our depravity will combine to drive us from Him or cause us to set up barriers between Him and us if the presentation of the law is not balanced with the gospel of forgiveness.

- *In the Lutheran Church, Salvation is Presented as More than Conversion.*

We believe that a person who is living a life in rebellion and in hatred to God needs to be converted to a life of love for God. However, to many churches with a non-Lutheran theology, salvation means only a conversion experience and the gospel only means the invitation to accept Christ. The Lutheran church teaches a deeper meaning of these terms. Gospel is any message of forgiveness in Christ, and salvation is a life lived in the forgiveness of the cross (the gospel).

- *In the Lutheran Church, a Scriptural Plan is Presented for Teaching our Little Children Salvation.*

In many churches, salvation can only be obtained when the mind is capable of intellectually comprehending the spoken message and the will is in sufficient control to be able to yield itself to that message. Because of this view and the Bible's teaching that even little children have a sinful nature, they have great difficulty in understanding their young children's relationship to God.

Since a Lutheran can believe that salvation is more than just conversion, and is a life lived in the forgiveness of the cross, it is not hard to believe that this forgiveness and salvation can extend to children. A child may hear the name of Jesus, the savior, even before he is born while his mother is carrying him. After he is born, he can be brought to baptism to receive the forgiveness offered there. As he is being brought up, he can be taught how Jesus wants him to live and how to talk to and listen to Jesus (the law) and that Jesus forgives him when he sins (the gospel). Parents can provide imperfect role models of the demands and forgiveness of God. I believe all these examples illustrate part of the great commission of making disciples by baptizing and teaching a life of salvation.

- *The Lutheran Church Gives the Correct Meaning to the Sacraments.*

The Bible regularly speaks of baptism and communion in connection with forgiveness of sin. Because we can put on Christ through these sacraments, then God sees us as if we had never sinned. To those of other theologies who believe salvation is only conversion, they will not be able to understand how someone could receive salvation through these acts. But to us who see salvation as a life lived in the forgiveness of the cross, they are another means to receive this gift.

- *Epilogue*

Even though important differences exist between the Lutheran church and other churches mentioned above, I appreciate what I gain by associating with those churches and their members. I owe so much to the Lutheran church, but it is sad to see how masses of Lutherans worldwide are ignoring the great spiritual resources available to them in the Lutheran faith. Let's pray that the Lutheran church returns to sound doctrine and practice.

[Home:](#)