

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

Daily 5 With Luther

GOOD SHEPHERD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL
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*Serving all people with the
Gospel of Jesus Christ*

Pastor Paul A. Tullberg | Pastor John T. Melke
Educator-Principal Donna L. Tullberg
ECM Director/Teacher Amanda Irwin



February 16

For Peter regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party. Gal. 2:12.

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The Gentiles which were converted to the faith ate meats forbidden by the law. Peter ate with them and therefore boldly "transgressed the law" with the Gentiles. Paul confessed likewise had said "that he became a Jew to the Jews, and to them that were without law, as though he were without law."

When Peter ate and drank with the Gentiles, he did not sin in that activity, but did well. He knew that it was lawful for him to do so. He was demonstrating that the law was not necessary to righteousness. He reinforced the freedom the Gentiles had, freedom from the observation of the law.

Paul reproves Peter for Peter's pretense, in that when the Jews that came from James were present, he abstained from eating meats forbidden in the law. Peter was afraid that the Jews should be insulted by this.

Therefore, to eat meats prohibited in the law is not evil, but this shrinking and hypocrisy of Peter is evil. For it might be said: "Peter abstains from meats forbidden in the law, so, you can see that if you do not likewise abstain, you cannot be saved." The truth of the Gospel was here in danger!

For with the law often comes trust in works. Where "trust in works" is there can be no trust in Christ. Therefore Paul was justified in confronting Peter to uphold the Gospel.

*Run the straight race Through God's good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face;
Life with its way before us lies, Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.*

February 17

And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. Galatians 2:13.

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Peter certainly knew what was the truth and what was not. Tragically the Spirit reveals in His Word that at this moment others imitated Peter in Peter's hypocrisy. Even Barnabas was brought into their dishonesty. This later on would surely have led to the ruin of the Gospel ministry if the Lord Jesus had not confronted Peter through Paul.

It is a wonder-filled matter how God preserved His Church, being yet but young. God preserved His Gospel itself, by one person, in one place, at just the right time. Paul alone stood up for the truth; for Paul had lost Barnabas. Peter was also against Paul. So sometimes one man is able to do more in a council than the rest of council besides.

God had this recorded so that we should diligently learn the article of justification, and make a plain distinction between the Law and the Gospel. And that in this matter we should do nothing by hypocrisy, or give place to any man. We are to retain the truth of the Gospel, and faith sound and uncorrupted.

Nothing fights more strongly against faith than reason united with the Law, and these two enemies of justification must be conquered. For this reason, your conscience may be terrified with the Law. You may be wrestling with the judgment of God.

But do not seek support not from reason nor from the Law. Rest only on grace and the Word of His comfort. Stand in such a manner as if you had never heard anything of the accusing and condemning Law.

It is to be marveled that such excellent men as Peter, Barnabas, and others should so suddenly and so easily fall, especially in something that they knew so well. They had even previously taught to others these very matters. Thus we see that we are nothing with all our gifts unless God assists us. When God leaves us to ourselves, our wisdom and knowledge is nothing.

*Make me to walk in Thy commands—'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands, offend against my God.*

February 18

**But when I saw that they were not straightforward about
the Truth of the gospel, Galatians 2:14a.**

* * *

There is no one but Paul whose eyes the Holy Spirit opened to see the offense of Peter, of Barnabas, and the other Jews who mislead along with Peter. On their part, they do not see their own offense. No, they rather think that they do well in bearing with the infirmities of the weak Jews. It is a great matter that Peter should be publicly accused by Paul as one who had fallen from the truth of the Gospel.

Peter grievously harmed the faithful. Yet no doubt, he gladly acknowledged his offense later. For, though Peter preached God's Gospel, through his hypocrisy he was promoting and establishing the Law! And the establishment of the Law is the abolishing of the Gospel!

Now a way to discern the one from the other is to place the Gospel in heaven and the Law on the earth. Call the righteousness of the Gospel heavenly, and the righteousness of the Law earthly. Put as great difference between the righteousness of the Law as God has created between heaven and earth, between day and night.

Therefore, if there is a question concerning the matter of faith or conscience, let us utterly and completely exclude the Law. Likewise, if we have to concern ourselves with works, let us light the lantern of works and the righteousness of the Law. If the conscience is terrified with the sense and feeling of sin, think in this way: I will know nothing at all of the Law or of the works thereof. Instead, I will only look to the remission of sins and the pure righteousness offered and freely given to us in Christ.

On the other hand, in civil policy, obedience to the Law must be severely required; when external duties must be done, then we must follow our vocation and the works thereof.

*Blest is the man, forever blest, whose guilt is pardoned by his God,
Whose sins with sorrow are confessed,
and covered with his Savior's blood.*

February 19

**I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the
Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that
you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"**

Galatians 2:14b

* * *

The Holy Spirit through Paul says openly to Peter: "You are a Jew, and therefore are obligated to live like a Jew, that is, to abstain from meats forbidden in the Law. Nevertheless, you live like a Gentile, that is, you do contrary to the Law, for, just like a Gentile, who is free from the Law. You eat common and unclean meats; and are right and correct in doing so."

"But by abstaining from these meats when you are in the presence of the brethren whom the Lord has turned back to Himself, away from the Jewish religion. You compel these Jews to join you and likewise to keep the Law. You give occasion to the Gentiles to think: Peter abstains from those meats which the Gentiles used to eat, and which he himself ate. Therefore we must likewise abstain from them. Otherwise we cannot be justified or saved."

The Holy Spirit does not reprove ignorance in Peter. (And Paul knew that Peter could freely eat all manner of meats with the Gentiles). Rather the Holy Spirit reproves Peter's hypocrisy. His false piety compelled the Gentiles' conscience into error, that they must to live like the Jews.

And to be clear, to live in the manner of the Jew is not evil in and of itself. It is a totally indifferent thing whether we eat swine's flesh or any other meats. But if for the sake of a clear conscience before the Law we abstain from certain meats, if we claim this is necessary to be right, this is to deny Christ! It is to overthrow the Gospel!

Therefore when the Holy Spirit revealed that Peter's actions tended to this end, His apostle Paul confronted Peter. It is dangerous thing to be compelled with the Law. Let every Christian diligently learn to discern between the Law and the Gospel. The Law is permitted to rule over the body, but not over the conscience.

*Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, Who was made flesh and suffered death;
Are built on this chief Corner-stone.
All that confide in Him alone.*

February 20

"We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from among the Gentiles.

Galatians 2:15

* * *

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

Jews are born to the righteousness of the Law, to Moses, and to circumcision. They like all descendants of Adam also have a righteousness of the Law by nature. Compared with the Gentiles, such Jews were born set apart, circumcised, to keep the Law, to have the adoption, the glory, the covenant, the fathers of faith, the glories of such majestic history. None of all these is faith in Christ, which alone justifies the sinner.

Note that the Law is not evil nor damnable. The Law, circumcision, and the like, are not condemned in and of themselves. But they are condemned in the matter of being declared just and righteous in God's eyes. It is faith alone that saves.

The false teachers contended that by such "godly works", works done without faith, and only by such good works, one is considered just and righteous by God and saved. This lie God does not tolerate.

Without faith all things are deadly. The Law, circumcision, the adoption, the temple, the worship of God, the promises, yes, God and the person of Christ Himself — all of it without faith, profits nothing. The Holy Spirit records clear and powerful words to expose and completely condemn all things which are contrary to faith.

*Lord, I believe were sinners more than sands upon the ocean shore,
Thou hast for all a ransom paid, for all a full atonement made.*

February 21

**...nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the
works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus,
Galatians 2:16a.**

* * *

This phrase (the works of the Law) reaches far and encompasses much. **"Works of the Law"** indicates *anything that is contrary to grace*. Whatever is not grace, is the Law, whether it be judicial, ceremonial, or the Ten Commandments. Could one do the works of the Law according to this commandment, **"Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart,"** etc.? Even if you could do what no man yet ever did or could do in keeping the Law, still, you would not be justified before God. One is not justified by the works of the Law.

Now, if the works of the moral Law do not justify, much less does cir-

cumcision justify, which is a work of the ceremonial Law. Therefore, the Holy Spirit reveals through Paul (as he often does), **"that a man is not justified by the Law, or by the works of the Law"** (which mean the same thing). Thus God speaks generally of the whole Law. It is the Lord God who is setting the righteousness of faith against the righteousness of the whole Law.

For by the righteousness of the Law, a man is not pronounced righteous before the Lord God. Rather God Himself designates the righteousness of faith freely through grace. This is done for Christ's sake. The Law, no doubt, is holy, righteous, and good: yet, all the same, one is not justified by it before God.

*By grace! Our works are all rejected, All claims of merit pass for naught;
The mighty Savior, long expected,
To us this blissful truth has brought,
That He by death redeems our race, And we are saved alone by grace.*

February 22

**even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified
by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since
by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.**

Galatians 2:16b.

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This is the true meaning of becoming a Christian, to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the Law.

It does not mean that faith justifies only when love and good works are joined to it. When a man hears that he ought to believe in Christ, and yet believes that faith does not justify unless it is formed and powered by love, by and by such a man falls from faith.

Such a soul then may also wrongly think: If faith without love does not justify, then faith is empty and unprofitable and instead love alone justifies. Again, such an error-ridden man wrongly concludes that unless faith is shaped by love, it is nothing.

To support this error, the adversaries of God's full and free salvation allege: **"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,**

and have not love . . . I am nothing." But they are pick-and-choose teachers who pervert the Gospel. They are without understanding.

By this false interpretation, this twisting of God's word, they have 1) not only distorted the Scriptures, but 2) have also denied Christ and 3) buried all His benefits. We grant that we must teach also good works and love. But such works-teaching must be done in the appropriate time and in proper place. This only happens when the question is concerning works, and does not touch the article of justification.

Concerning justification the question is, By what means are we justified? How do we attain eternal life? To this we answer by faith in Christ alone are we pronounced righteous, and not by the works of the Law or by love. We do not reject good works, but we shall not permit ourselves to be removed from this life giving and life sustaining doctrine of justification. This Truth is the stronghold of our salvation.

This is the reason such mixing of Law with Gospel is the very thing which Satan most desires. Instead, we proclaim Truth: the victory over sin and death, salvation, and everlasting life, come by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is ours only-and-alone by faith only-and-alone. Again, we preach salvation is only-and-alone by faith.

*All that I am, e'en here on earth,
All that I hope to be
When Jesus comes and glory dawns, I owe it, Lord, to Thee.*

February 23

But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!

Galatians 2:17.

* * *

Since God declares we are justified by Christ, then it cannot be that we are sinners, or are justified by the works of the Law. On the contrary, if we must be justified by the Law, and its works, then it cannot be that we are justified by Christ. Either we are not justified by Christ, or we are not justified by the Law. The two cannot be commingled.

The Truth is that we are justified by Christ, therefore we are not jus-

Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15

tified by the Law. The truth of the Gospel teaches us that a man is not justified in the Law, but in Christ. Man is justified by Christ, not by the Law.

Now, the false teachers claimed that those justified in Christ were still counted as sinners, that is, they still had to obey the Law to please God. They are therefore required to be under the Law. The false apostles taught this error which plainly teaches that sinners are not yet justified!

For God's Law accuses them and shows that they continue to be sinners. The Law requires from them the works of the Law as necessary to their justification and to have peace with the holy and righteous God.

But we know and believe that Christ alone is the Justifier and the Redeemer from sins. If I attribute His activity to the Law, then the Law has become my justifier. Then the Law, not Christ, delivers me from sins. Why? because I must carry out the Law's works.

This is how the Law becomes my pretend "Christ". The real Person of Christ therefore loses His name, His office, and His glory and honor.

A "**minister of sin**" is nothing else but a lawgiver, or a schoolmaster of the Law. As such the false instructor always is found to teach good works *plus* love. The proper office of Christ revealed in His Word is far different.

After the Law has pronounced a man to be completely guilty, I proclaim the Gospel to raise him up again, to free him from his sins if he believes the Gospel. For to all who believe, "**Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believes.**" (Romans 10:4) "**Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin**" (John 1:30).

*I lay my sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us from the accursed load.*

February 24

**For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed,
I prove myself to be a transgressor.**

Galatians 2:18.

* * *

Paul would here say: "I have not preached to this end, that I might build again those things which I once destroyed. Now, by the ministry of the God's Gospel the Lord Himself has abolished sin, heaviness of heart, wrath, and death. The conscience of man is subject to

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

the Law, sin, and death. Man cannot be delivered from such harsh consequences either by men or angels. But thanks be to God there is full and free remission of sins by Jesus Christ, who has abolished the Law and has destroyed sin and death."

"Whoever believes in Christ Jesus shall be delivered from the curse of the Law and from the tyranny of sin and death. That soul who trusts shall become righteous and has eternal life welling up to eternity. By the preaching of the Gospel I have destroyed the Law. Therefore the Law shall not reign in the conscience any more."

For when the new guest, Christ Jesus, comes into the new house, there he dwells alone, Moses, the old inhabitant, must give place to Him, leave and go somewhere else. Also where Christ, the new Guest, is come to dwell, there dwells only grace, righteousness, joy, peace, life, and true faith in the Father. And the Father is now reconciled to us. For the Father is eternally gracious, long-suffering, and full of mercy for His Son Jesus Christ's sake.

"Does it even make sense, then, to drive out Christ and destroy His kingdom? I have planted His Kingdom through the preaching of His Gospel. Does it even make sense to build up again the Law and set up the kingdom of Moses?"

This is the very false matter that I would do *if* I would teach circumcision and the observation of the Law to be necessary to salvation. The works of the Law are not necessary to salvation!

*Grace all the work shall crown,
through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone. And well deserves the praise.*

February 25

For through the law I died to the Law, that I might live to God.

Galatians 2:19

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These are marvelous words, and unknown kinds of speech, which man's reason can in no way understand.

The Holy Spirit records this with great zeal and vehemence of spirit; in great displeasure, as it were. Why do you boast so much of

the Law? Of this Law the Lord's apostle desires to be ignorant.

But if you want to go down this path and claim the Law as yours, I also have the Law. As though moved through indignation of the Holy Ghost, God calls grace itself 'the Law'! He gives His new term to mark the effect and working of His grace. But God defines this term as God's new-working and new-effect. His grace works and effects in spite of, and in contempt for, the Law of Moses and of the false apostles. The false teachers contended that the Law was necessary to justification. So the Holy Spirit here sets the new Law against the old Law, Law vs Law.

It is as though the Lord's apostle would say: "The old Law of Moses accuses and condemns me. But against that accusing and condemning Law, I have another "new law", which is grace and liberty. This "new law" accuses the old accusing Law. " The "new law" of Christ's Gospel condemns the old condemning Law. This "new death" kills death itself by exchanging it for life. Therefore this "new", killing of old law's death, is true life itself replacing death. When old condemning death is destroyed only than will one see this "new law" for what it really is, Life itself!

And here the Holy Spirit at first appears to be heretic, oh yes, of all heretics the greatest One. For the Holy Spirit teaches Paul to declare, preach and teach that being dead to the Law, one lives to God. The false apostles taught this lie: *Except you live to the Law, you are dead to God.* The Holy Spirit shines out **the Truth** against the midnight lies of the false teachers: **Except you be dead to the Law, you cannot live to God.**

Man's wisdom does not understand this great doctrine of God. Therefore man's reason and wisdom always teaches the opposite of God's free and faithful grace. For this reason, we must be lifted up by the work of the Spirit using His Word.

The Lord needs to lift us up above our earthly wisdom to this heavenly altitude. Thus we may be assured that Christians are far above the Law, yes, Christians are utterly dead to the Law. Christians are fully alive and free in the work of Jesus Christ for us.

All these things all lead to this God-revealed and breathtaking conclusion, that one is not justified by the Law, but only by faith in Jesus Christ!

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

*Fain we would on Thee rely, cast on Thee our sin and care:
To Thine arms of mercy fly, find our lasting quiet there.*

February 26

**I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live,
but Christ lives in me;
Galatians 2:20a.**

* * *

Not only does God reveal His apostle is dead to the Law through the law, but also he was crucified with Christ. Christ is Lord over the Law, because He is crucified and dead unto the Law. Therefore His apostle and all believers in Jesus Christ are also Lord over the Law.

How is this so? By grace and faith. Through this God-given faith that I am now crucified and dead to the Law. The Law loses **all** its power which it had over me. I am in Christ and the Law has lost all its power which it had over Christ. Being now in Christ in spirit, I am crucified and dead to the Law, sin, death, and the devil. They have no further power over me.

I speak not so of my death and crucifying as though I now do not live. Oh, yes, I live, for I am made alive by His death. That is how I am delivered from the Law, sin, and death. I now live in-deed. But I do not live now as my own person, but Christ lives in me.

But who is this "I" of whom he says, "Yet not I"? This "I" is the one who has the Law and is bound to do the works of the Law. The old nature is a distinct individual, separate from Christ. This false and wicked mindset God the Spirit rejects.

For as surely that old nature is separate from Christ. It belongs to death and hell. Therefore the Holy Spirit reveals His words: **'Now not I, but Christ lives in me.'** Christ joined and united His very self to me, and abiding in me, lives this life in me which I now live. Yes! Christ Himself is this life which I now live.

*Jesus! I live to Thee, the loveliest and best;
My life in Thee, Thy life in me, In Thy blest love I rest.*

February 27

And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

Galatians 2:20b.

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Here we have the truth about justification set before our eyes, and a perfect example of the assurance of faith. He who can, with a firm and constant faith, say these words of the Holy Spirit is happy indeed.

"It was not I, then, that first loved the Son of God and delivered myself for Him. They who falsely imagine that they do what lies in them, and therefore love God and deliver themselves for Christ — what else do they do but abolish the Gospel, deride, deny, and blaspheme Christ?

They confess by words that Christ is the Justifier and Savior, but in their deeds they take away from Him the very power both to justify and to save. Instead they give it to the works of their own will. They lift up their ceremonies and devotions in addition to and alongside the very Christ of God.

This is to live in their own righteousness and works, and not in the faith of the Son of God. Christ first began, and not we. Christ found in me no good will or right understanding, but this good Lord had mercy upon me. Christ saw me going astray, cursing God, and flying from Him more and more. Yes, Christ saw me rebelling against God; taken, led, and carried away captive by the devil.

Thus of His mere mercy, 1) proceeding without and 2) before my reason, 3) against my will and 4) outside of my understanding or 5) consent, Christ loved me. Christ so greatly loved me, that He gave Himself for me, to the end that I might be freed from the Law, sin, the devil, and death.

It is a horrible blasphemy to imagine that there is any work by which we might presume to pacify God! We see that there is nothing which is able to pacify God but this singular, inestimable, incalculable and great price, namely, the death and life-blood of the eternal Son of God. A single drop of His blood is more precious than the whole world!

*God saw me ruined in the fall, Yet loved me notwithstanding all,
He saved me from my lost estate — His loving-kindness, O how great!*

February 28

I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.

Galatians 2:21

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Here we must diligently consider this reality: to seek to be justified by the works of the Law is to reject the grace of God, And what sin can be more disgusting or horrendous than to reject the grace of God? To refuse that righteousness which comes from Christ is abhorrent!

It is enough and too much already that we are wicked sinners and transgressors of all the commandments of God. Yet we commit the most vile sin of all when we most contemptuously refuse the grace of God.

How could we refuse the full and complete remission of sins offered unto us by Christ! There is no sin which the proclaimers of the Word did so much detest as this twisted contempt of grace and this deceitful denial of Christ. Sadly, there is no sin more common than this.

Do we then sin in keeping the Law? No, but we despise grace when we keep the Law to the end that we may make peace between God and us through our good doings. All the world does this wickedness!

This world does not wish so to be so severely judged. The world pretends to be all about high service and honor to God. Yet the Word remains true. *"For if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."* Righteousness does not come by the Law.

Now, if salvation was so costly and dear a price to Christ, that He was constrained to die for my sins, then all my works, with all the so-called righteousness of the Law, are but vile. It is all worth nothing in comparison to this inestimable price, this great grace and compassion of God in Christ my Savior.

*Thy grace alone, O God, to me can pardon speak;
Thy power alone, O Son of God, can this sore bondage break.*

February 29

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?! Before your eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified!

Galatians 3:1 a.

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The Holy Spirit has now sufficiently proved and confirmed that Christian righteousness comes not by the Law, but by faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit exposed and confuted the doctrine of the false apostles. Now God turns His talk to the Galatians, and reproves them, saying: "O, you foolish Galatians!"

It is as if God says, "Think! Consider from where you are fallen! My apostle has most carefully and diligently taught you the truth of the Gospel. How then is it come to pass that you are so suddenly fallen away from My Gospel in Christ? Who has **bewitched** you?"

Here the Holy Spirit chastises the Galatians and yet lays the fault properly on the false apostles. As though God says through Paul, "I see that you have not fallen through willfulness or malice."

"The devil has sent the enchanting false teachers, his deceiving children, among you. They do so bewitch you in teaching you that you are justified by the Law! Now you actually think otherwise of Christ than you did before when you heard the Gospel preached by me.

"But we labor both by preaching and writing to you, to uncharm that evil, that sorcery wherewith the false teachers have bewitched you. It is my plan and purpose in Christ to set at liberty those which are snared by the devil's traps. This bewitching then, this sorcery, is nothing else but a clear deception of the devil."

Satan wants to *plant in* the believer's heart, to imprint on a Christian's soul a deadly teaching of Christ and His work. The devil baits his death-hook with a false idea that stands against Christ. The Holy Spirit uses this word, "**bewitching**".

This word displays God's contempt of the false apostles who so vehemently urged the doctrine of the Law and works to be mixed with

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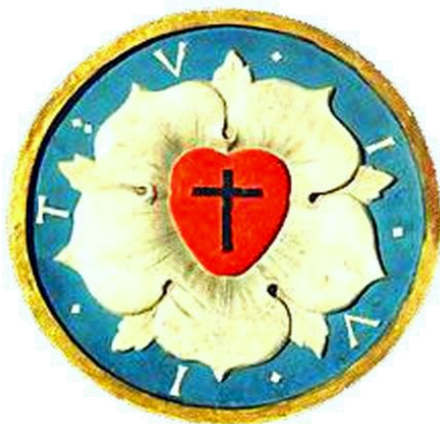
the full and free Gospel of Christ. This word reminds the reader the false teachers, the deceivers and twisters, are in league with hell.

God's warning here also displays the Lord's compassionate mercies!

The Holy Spirit desires to make His Church on earth aware of such devilish deceits. False teachings and false teachers intend to keep God's chosen ones from out of His heaven.

For as the human reason and senses are perverted by bodily use of witchcraft, so are the minds of men also blinded and deluded by this deceiving spiritual witchcraft of false teaching.

*Abiding, steadfast, firm, and sure,
the teachings of the Word endure:
Blest he who trusts this steadfast Word,
his anchor holds in Christ, the LORD.*



Selections from Luther's Commentaries-St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 1535, Edwinus London; Epistles of St. Peter & St. Jude 1523, E. H. Gillett; Select Works of Martin Luther 1555, Rev. Henry Cole; Familiar Discourses of Luther 1566, Capt. Henry Bell, Rev. R.D.Fish; The Lutheran Hymnal; Rev. J.T. Mueller, 1925; Rev. Paul Tullberg 2024.