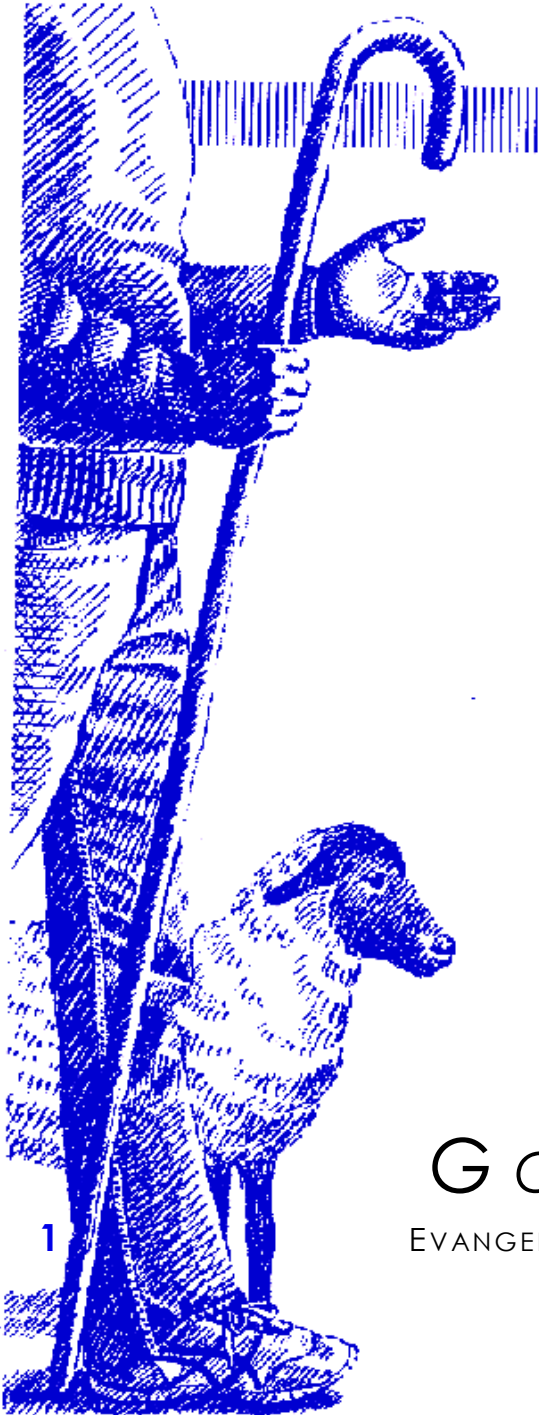


Thus says the Lord, "In quietness and confidence is your strength"—Isaiah 30:15



Daily 5 With Luther

GOOD SHEPHERD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, USA

*Serving all people with the
Gospel of Jesus Christ*

Pastor Paul A. Tullberg Pastor John T. Melke
3k-Gr.5 Principal/Educator Hannah E. Cook
ECM Director / Teacher Amanda Irwin

January 1

I AM the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Matthew 22:32

* * *

In this text Christ powerfully shows the resurrection of the dead; for if there were no hope of the resurrection of the dead, nor of another and better world after this short and miserable life, why does God offer to be our God?

If there is no resurrection why promise to give us all that is eternally necessary and healthful for us? Indeed, why promise in the end to deliver us out of all trouble, both temporal and spiritual?

To what purpose is it that we hear His Word and believe in Him? What does it serve us that we sigh and cry to Him in our anguish and need, or that we wait with patience for His comfort and salvation, for His grace and benefits which He shows us in Christ?

Why do we praise and thank Him for the same? Why are we daily in danger, and suffer ourselves to be persecuted and slain for the sake of Christ's Word, which we teach and hold for our greatest treasure?

Through His Word the everlasting and merciful God talks and deals with us concerning our future life, where we shall be when we depart from this life. He gives to us His Son, our Savior. His Son delivers us from sin and death. His Son has purchased for us everlasting righteousness, life, and salvation.

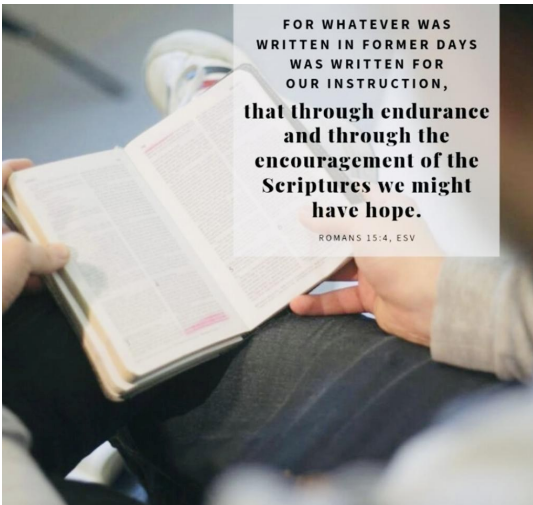
Therefore we are sure that we do not die like the beasts that have no understanding. Rather, all who die trusting in Christ shall through Christ be raised again to everlasting life.

*He lives and grants me daily
breath;*

*He lives, and I shall conquer
death;*

*He lives, my mansion to pre-
pare;*

*He lives to bring me safely
there.*



January 2



When I considered how to understand this, It was too great an effort for me and too painful, until I came into the sanctuary of God; then I understood for I considered their end. Surely You set the wicked-minded and immoral on slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.

Psalm 73:16-18

* * *

what's coming
is better than
what is gone.

* * *

Why does God give honor, health of body, fine children, a life of fun and pleasure to desperate wretches, but in the contrary manner, He permits the good and godly people who are highly enlightened to remain in calamity, danger, and need all the days of their lives?

God acts in this respect like an honest and godly father who eagerly desires to bring up his son in the knowledge and fear of the true faith. He does this in order that he might have joy in him later on. And a father does this so that he might convey to his child all the treasure which he has gathered together.

God allows the disobedient servant to go for a while unpunished, to use his haughty willfulness, without seeming to notice it; but when the time comes, He thrusts him out.

In Jeremiah God says: "Why has the way of the wicked prospered? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease? ... Drag them off like sheep for the slaughter and set them apart for a day of carnage!" Their wickedness shall bring them to an evil end.

But God allows the godly to be chastened and beaten when they are secure and unthankful to Him. He wants to move them to turn them back to Himself, to seek help and comfort from Him through Christ.

*In all my ways Thy hand I own, Thy ruling Providence I see;
Oh help me still my course to run, And still direct my path to Thee.*

January 3

Their eyes bulge ... they have more than their heart could wish ... Behold, these are the ungodly. who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

Psalm 73:7, 12

* * *



We believe that God will give us much better things than He gives to the rich, ungodly wretches in this world, to whom He gives a surplus, and the fill of good wine, money, wealth, power, honor, and all things that they would have, or can desire.

But the best wealth and treasure, which they do not desire, He denies them; namely, Himself. But the one who does not have Him, the true and only God, let him have what he will. He is, notwithstanding, more miserable than was Lazarus. He lay at the rich man's gate and was starved to death.

But, it will go the same with arrogant unbelievers, as it went with the rich man. They shall everlastingly must hunger and want, and shall not have in all their power so much as the least drop of water.

If then the almighty God heaps blessings upon His worst enemies and blasphemers in such a manner, with all sorts of temporal goods and wealth, and gives to some also kingdoms, principalities, etc., then we, who are His children, may easily conceive what He will give unto us, who for His sake must suffer.

We know what He has already given to us: His only-begotten Son, and with Him has bestowed all things upon us, so that through Him we are God's children and heirs of His celestial treasure, and co-heirs with Christ, according to hope.

*Jesus, priceless Treasure, Source of purest pleasure, truest Friend to me!
Long my heart hath panted. Till it well-nigh fainted,
Thirsting after Thee! Thine I am, O spotless Lamb!
I will suffer naught to hide Thee. Ask for naught beside Thee.*

January 4

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have reject-

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

ed knowledge, I also will reject you The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame.

Hosea 4:6, 7

* * *

God is patient and of great goodness in that He permits the wicked to go so long unpunished. Yet God will fearfully punish the blind of the world who refuse believe the truth and be saved. Instead they blaspheme and persecute believers.

Therefore God sends unto the wicked powerful errors, so that they actually believe lies. (2 Thessalonians 2). Long after the time of the Apostles, the Gospel had its free course in Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Asia, Greece, etc. But when the people grew weary of the Gospel, then came that blasphemous Mohammed. From that time forward, blinded souls forsook Christ and worshiped Mohammed's false-god-allah.

And so it will go. Where there is unthankfulness and condemning of God's holy Word, purely preached, after such refreshing brightness there will come fearful darkness.

When God wishes to punish a people,

He first removes good and godly teachers and preachers;

He also removes wise, godly, and honest rulers and counselors.

Then the common people are secure and merry, satisfied to be allowed to go on. Then people who care nothing for truth and divine doctrine only live as they please.

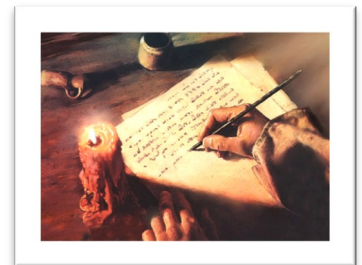
But then God lays the ax to the root of the tree, and soon cuts it down.

*In these last days of sore distress Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness,
That pure we keep, till life is spent, Thy holy Word and Sacrament.*

January 5

"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in heart, and trembles at My word." . . .

But look! This one slaughters an ox, another kills a man; one sacrifices a lamb, another breaks a dog's neck; one offers a grain offering, another pig's blood; one gives incense and praises an idol-- all these wicked ones have chosen their ways and taken delight in their detestable practices. So I will choose their punishment, and I will bring on them what they dread because I called and no one answered;



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

I spoke and they did not hear; they did what was evil in My sight and they chose what I did not delight in."

Isaiah 66:2-4

* * *

When God judges, He punishes sins and vices. Nevertheless, so long as God speaks with us through His Word, it is a certain sign of His grace and favor toward us; for "*whom the Lord loves He chastens.*"

But when people are self-secure, they hear indeed the Word, but it goes in at one ear and out at the other. They prattle much about it, but no amendment of life nor fruits of the faith follow. As we see before our eyes, every one wants to be seen as a true Christian, and yet there is no end of self-indulgence; wicked discontent and other sins continue and flourish.

When God through good and godly teachers and preachers warns us, and we refuse to turn and repent, then it is a clear sign that God will shortly take from us His Word and pure doctrine. God must then leave us in the night of our hardened hearts to walk in our own darkened counsels.

God has long patience. But when people despise His Word and even persecute it, then His patience ends.



*A clean heart create in me, Which in Thee, O God, believeth,
And at the iniquity Of my sins sincerely grieveth;
And when hours of woe betide me, in the wounds of Jesus hide me.*

January 6

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:1-2

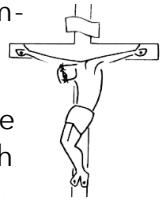
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All righteousness comes originally from God. **First** He speaks to us through His Word, and **then** He offers to us His grace and forgiveness of our sins through Christ.

This is how He spoke to Adam and Eve in Paradise soon after the Fall. They had rebelled, deceived by the serpent. At that time God laid upon them

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

a grievous punishment, but immediately comforted them and promised Christ, who should crush the serpent's head of power.



Likewise God dealt with Abraham. He commanded him to depart out of his native country. God promised him He would make of him a great nation, and would bless him; moreover, that through His *Seed* (Christ) all people on earth should be blessed.

And so He called Moses, and David, and Mary, the mother of Christ, who received His Word with faith, and said: "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to Your Word.*"

Thus God begins: God's Word of promise and of grace goes first. And although there be still in us an abundant surplus of sin, yet, notwithstanding, God will not impute these sins to us for the sake of Jesus Christ. Ah! to know Christ is the highest treasure! Of Christ the wicked world knows nothing. Yes, they despise Him. It As the Lord revealed in St. John chapter one:

"The light shines in darkness, and the darkness does not comprehend it."

*Thou art the Way: to Thee alone From sin and death we flee,
And he who would the Father seek, Must seek Him, Lord, by Thee.*

January 7

"God says, 'Call on Me when trouble comes. I will help you, and you will honor Me.'"

Psalm 50:15

* * *

The Scriptures show two sorts of sacrifices that are acceptable and pleasing to God. **The first is called a sacrifice of thanks or praise:** when we teach and preach God's Word purely; hear and receive it with faith; and do everything that tends to the spreading of it abroad.

Thank God from our hearts for the unspeakable benefits which are given us in Christ through His Word; praise and glorify Him. In the Psalms we find many such expressions of thanks or praise. "*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever.*" "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.*" "*Offer unto*



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

God thanksgiving."

The second type of sacrifice is when a sorrowful and troubled heart in all manner of temptations has a Refuge in God. The Psalms offer many examples of such sacrifices. *"From my distress I called upon the LORD; The LORD answered me and set me in a large place."* *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."* I call on God in true and upright faith; I seek help from Him; I wait patiently on Christ.

To God, the Father of all love, the God of earth and heaven, the mighty God who reigns above, be praise and glory given! With healing balm my soul He fills, and every pain and sorrow stills: to God all praise and glory.

January 8

I know, Lord, that Your judgments are just and that You have afflicted me fairly. May Your faithful love comfort me as You promised Your servant.

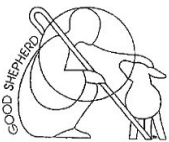
Psalm 119:75-76

* * *

God the LORD is not angry, for if God should be earnestly angry, then were we all utterly lost and gone. God does not willingly strike mankind, but as a just God He is constrained to justly punish.

When we are unthankful and disobedient to His Word and Commandments, then He allows us, through the devil, soundly to be lashed with pestilence, with famine, and with whips such as these. God does this not because He is our enemy. God takes no pleasure in our suffering. His plan is that through such scourging God may call us to repentance and amendment. In this way God entices us to seek Him, run to Him, cry to Him for help. Of this we have a fine example in the book of Judge.

The true and living God, in the Person of the Angel, speaks thus: *"But you have abandoned Me and worshiped other gods. Therefore, I will not deliver you again. Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your oppression."* *But the Israelites said, "We have sinned. Deal with us as You see fit; only deliver us today!"*



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

When we trust God's Word, Our Savior moves us to yield to His will. Jesus Christ desires and longs to help us. Therefore then most certainly He helps us since He is the true God.

But the trouble is, we lack in this one area: we cannot yield. Notice that the Word says: "*Deal with us as You see fit.*" Therefore the one who is himself earnestly humble before God in Christ, that same soul has already won.

*O God, Thou righteous, faithful Lord, I have not kept Thy holy Word,
But sinned and oft offended Thee; Now I repent, it grieveth me.*

January 9

*O LORD, our Lord, Your name is the most wonderful in all the earth! It brings
You praise everywhere in heaven. From the mouths of children and babies
come songs of praise to You. They sing of Your power to silence Your enemies
who were seeking revenge.*

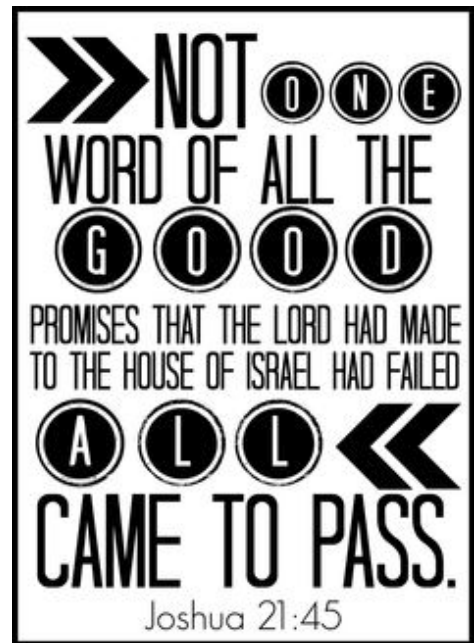
Psalm 8:1-2

* * *

When God intends or has in mind some great work, then He begins the same by and through a poor human creature. Afterwards God gives such assistance that the enemies who seek to hinder His people are overcome.

We know how He delivered the children of Israel from their long, wearisome, and heavy captivity in Egypt: He first called Moses. Afterwards God gave to him his brother Aaron as an assistant. They together went to Pharaoh, spoke to him by the commandment of the Lord, "*the God of the Hebrews,*" that Pharaoh should let God's people go.

Although Pharaoh at first set himself against them, and plagued the people worse



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

than before, nevertheless he was forced in the end, through the plagues sent by God, to let Israel go.

And later when Pharaoh had a change of heart and wished to bring the children of Israel back. Yet in attempting to pursue them across the Red Sea, all Pharaoh's army were drowned, according to the will of God.

In the time of Eli the priest, when Israel was in difficult straits, the Philistines pressing hard upon them, and taking away the ark of the covenant, God raised up Samuel, and through him helped Israel up again.

Then again we remember how God raised up David to rule His people, through whom God not only saved Israel out of the enemies' hands, but brought to obedience all kings and people that set themselves against him.

*Give to our God immortal praise! Mercy and truth are all His ways,
Wonders of grace to God belong: Repeat His mercies in your song.*

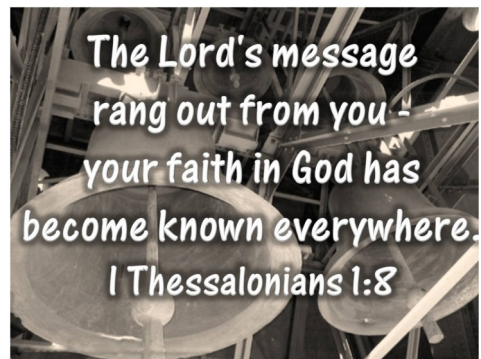
January 10

"These things you have done, and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you, and state the case in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

Psalm 50:21-22

* * *

God shows no greater anger than when He is silent and does not talk with us, but permits us to pursue our sinful works, lusts and pleasures. We read in the 81st Psalm: *"Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would only listen to Me! Let there be no strange god among you; nor shall you worship any foreign god.*



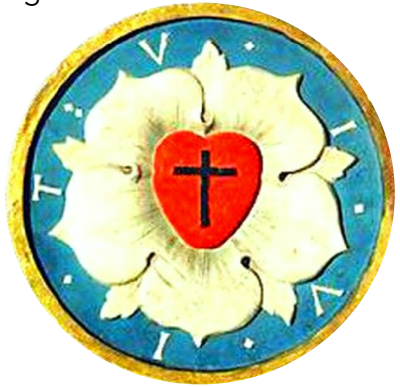
I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide and I will fill it. But My people did not listen to My voice; and Israel did not obey Me. So I gave them over to the stub-

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

bornness of their heart, to walk in their own devices." (Psalm 81:8-12).

They cried bitterly and prayed fervently, with great and earnest zeal. Do not wonder that God did not hear them: His anger was very great.

But now, when they cried, God answered in this manner: As I preached and cried to you, and there was none that would hear Me, *therefore will I not hear; My threatening sermons you have despised, therefore I shall not hear you.* No man was ever able to describe or express the fierceness of God's anger when it is kindled.



Out of the depths I cry to Thee, Lord, hear my lamentation; Bend down Thy gracious ear to me, And grant my supplication; For if Thou fix Thy searching eye On all sins and iniquity, Who, Lord, can stand before Thee?

January 11

***May my heart be blameless in Thy statutes, That I may not be ashamed. . . .
They almost destroyed me on earth, But as for me, I did not forsake Thy
precepts.***

Psalm 119:80, 87

* * *

In matters of religion and what concerns God's Word, we must be sure and certain without wavering. Above all things, let us be sure that the doctrine which we teach is God's Word. When God assures us of that, then we may build upon it and be sure that this cause shall remain.

The devil shall not be able to overthrow it, much less the world be able to root it out, rage as much as they will. I, God be praised, do surely know that the doctrine which I teach is God's Word.

I have now hunted out from my heart all other doctrines and faiths which I see do not concur with God's Word. God be praised, I have overcome those temptations, the doubtful thoughts which sometimes had tormented me.

The terrible doubts were such as these: *Are you the only man who has*

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

God's Word pure and clear, and all others failed in that? That doctrine which the Christian Church so many years has held and established as right, will you presume to reject? To overthrow with your 'new' doctrine. Is not your doctrine false and erroneous, and thereby produces trouble, refashion, and confusion both in spiritual and temporal authority?

Such arguments of the devil I find in all the prophets. Chief leaders and members, both in church and commonwealth, always have censured them, saying: *We are God's people. We are placed and ordained by God in an established government; Therefore, whatever we conclude and acknowledge to be right, must and shall be duly and wholly observed and kept.*

Truly, in this case we must not only be well-armed with God's Word and firmly established in it, but the Lord Christ must also grant the certainty of conviction that we have the true doctrine. Otherwise we shall not be able to endure in the fierce combat for God's truth.

And since the cause and glory, Lord, Are Thine, not ours, do Thou afford us help and strength and constancy; With all our heart we trust in Thee.

January 12

***The LORD is great and is highly praised; His greatness is unsearchable.
One generation will declare Your works to the next and will proclaim
Your mighty acts.***

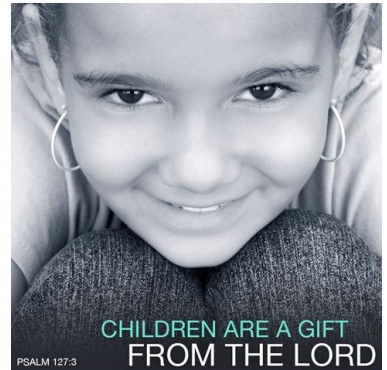
Psalm 145:3-4

*** * ***

All the works of God are unsearchable and unspeakable: no human sense can find them out; only faith takes hold of them, without human power and wisdom.

No human creature can take hold or know God in His majesty, and therefore He has set Himself down in the simplest manner, and was made man, yes, was made sin, death, and weakness! But who can believe it?

No one is able to imagine, much less to understand, what God has



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

done and what God still does without ceasing. All that He has done, all those things which He daily creates, are not seen by the ungodly.

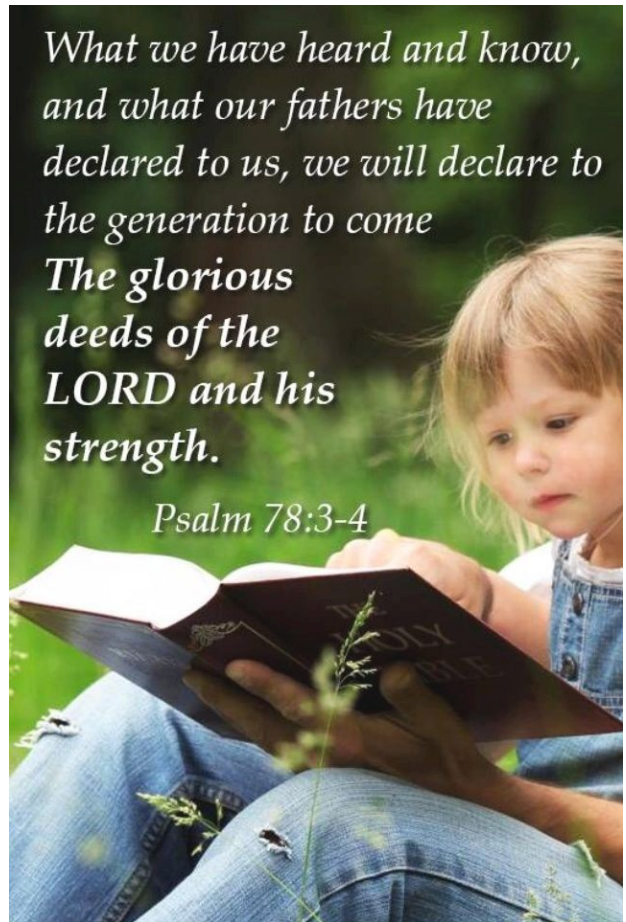
The blind world does not even acknowledge these matters as God's wonders. They think it all is done by chance, haphazardly.

On the contrary, the good and godly, wherever they cast their eyes, see and acknowledge everything as wonders of God, at which they are truly astonished.

They see in these various works their delight and joy, they laud and praise the Creator. They know also that God is well pleased with their praise because God has revealed this to them in His Word.

The children of the world, who are in darkness, see nothing of these things. They know even less about the causes of faith. These truths: three Persons yet only one God; the true eternal Son of God was made mortal man; Christ are two natures, divine and human; all of this truth offends them.

Such wicked children of the devil consider these things myths and fables. They mock and attack those who hold tightly to these matters of the Word. Truly, this is a very high and hard article of faith, that the eternal God was made man—and that for us!



*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation.
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy Health and Salvation!
Join the full throng; Wake, harp and psalter and song;
Sound forth in glad adoration.*

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

January 13

Rulers persecute me without cause, but my heart trembles at Your Word... Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing can make them stumble.

Psalm 119:161, 165

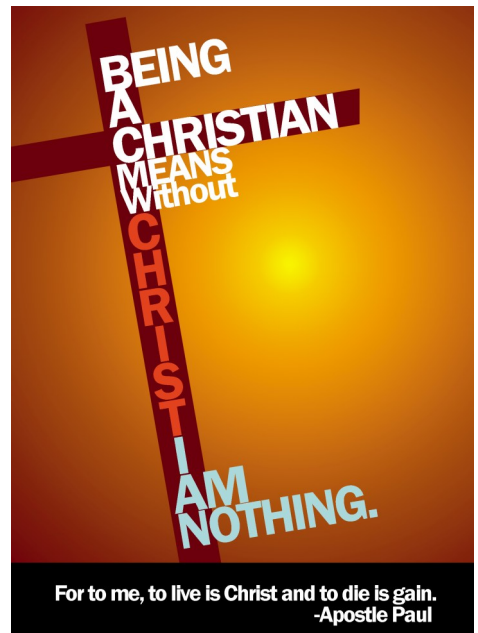
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When God preaches His Word, presently there follows in the life of the good and godly Christian the cross, as St. Paul witnesses: *"All that will live a godly life in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution."* And our Savior says: *"The disciple is not greater than his Master: have they persecuted Me? They will persecute you also."* Therefore it is most certain that the cross follows, and under the cross God's Word is rightly understood.

The work, which follows the Word, rightly expounds and declares the Word as the prophet Isaiah says: *grief and sorrow teaches one how to understand the Word.* What does he know about the Word who is without tribulation and temptation? No man understands the Scripture except he is acquainted with the cross.

When God bestows benefits and gifts upon the people in the world, they take away from God the honor due to Him for them. God will bear with us when we boast of our power, of our riches, wisdom, and arts; these things God endures and is content to let them pass; but His Word and true religion, of that He will have and keep the honor to Himself.

Therefore God hangs the cross about our necks, as scorn, persecution, the world, and the devil, by means of which to keep us in humility (lest we be pricked with pride), that God Himself may have the honor and glory that correctly and only and always belong to Him.



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

*Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure, Joys that through all time abide.*

January 14

***Help me understand the meaning of Your precepts
so that I can meditate on Your wonders... Your decrees are wonderful; there-
fore I obey them. Psalm 119:27, 129.***

* * *

Christ says: "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." Here one might ask, What mystery is that? The mysteries of the kingdom of God are the sorts of things which lie hidden in the kingdom of God.

God has revealed Christ to us who is all of God's merciful kindnesses. The one who knows Christ aright, knows what God's kingdom is, and what may be found there!



It is called a mystery, because it was secret and hidden from human senses. Human reason cannot grasp this mystery unless the Holy Ghost first reveal it, unveil it, bring understanding.

They hear of 'Christ' and speak of 'Christ', that a Person, 'Christ', has given Himself to death for our sins. But those truths are only on their tongues and in their ears, not in their hearts! They neither believe God's words nor are able to truly comprehend them. It is as the Lord revealed through the hand of St. Paul: "*The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God.*"

Although many hear and discern words and sounds, yet, notwithstanding, they shall never conceive nor understand God's Word as God intends except through the gracious revealing activity of the Holy Ghost.

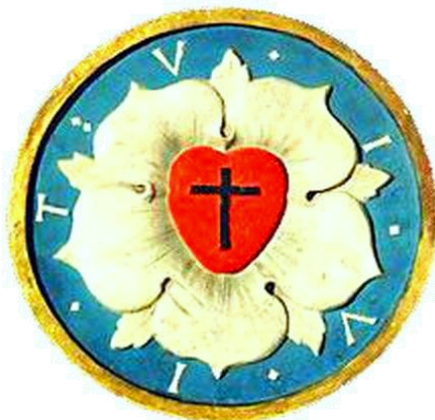


"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

Therefore Christ says: "To you it is given to know," that is, the Spirit of God *gives* it to you. What does this mean? You not only hear and see it, but you receive it as His gift, within your hearts, and He moves you to believe it. Therefore it is no mystery or secret to you. It is obvious and plain and a cause of ceaseless joy and confidence.

But to those who have not faith in their heart, though they hear it, to them the Gospel remains hidden, a mystery.

*Father, in us Thy Son reveal;
Teach us to know and do Thy will;
Thy saving power and love display,
And guide us to the realms of day.*



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.