

Congregation at Prayer

✠ Pentecost 21 ✠

A Guide for Daily Family Prayer
For the Week of October 14th to October 21st

Catechesis Notes for the Week...

You can never get too much Law and Gospel! C.F.W. Walther, our Synod's first President, once said in an evening lecture:

“Now, of all doctrines, the first and foremost is the doctrine of justification. However, immediately following upon it—and almost equally as important—is the doctrine of how to distinguish between Law and Gospel.”

(Law & Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible, p.9)

And our Confessions say,

“The distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a particularly brilliant light. It serves the purpose of rightly dividing God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15) and properly explaining and understanding the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles. We must guard this distinction with special care, so that these two doctrines may not be mixed with each other, or a law be made out of the Gospel.”

(Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, V.1)

St. Paul describes Law and Gospel in many of his Epistles. In our *learn-by-heart* passage for this week, he calls the Law *the letter*, and the Gospel *the Spirit*. The Law/Letter is that Word of God that kills: it shows us our sin, it demands our works, it creates guilt, and leaves us powerless. The Gospel/Spirit is that Word of God that gives life: it shows us our Savior, it gives us His works, removes guilt, and bestows upon us the power of Christ.

Moses also does a bit of Law/Gospel or Letter/Spirit work in the close of our Commandments. The Law is His wrath and the threat of punishing all those who hate Him and do not keep His commandments. The Gospel is that love and pure delight that comes to those who, in Christ, do keep His commandments.

So, we should rightly fear His wrath on account of our sin and our breaking the Letter of the Law, pleading for His mercy. And yet, as those baptized into Christ, we rejoice in the Spirit of the Gospel, that has raised us from the dead and promised us every blessing.

Letter and Spirit – Law and Gospel

Responsive Prayer 2, *Lutheran Service Book* p.285

Learn-By-Heart Scripture...

2 Corinthians 3:6

For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Learn-By-Heart Catechism...

The Close of the Commandments

What does God say about all these commandments?

He Says, “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:5-6).

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

Daily Readings...

Monday (10/14): Deuteronomy 12:13-32; Matthew 12:38-50

Tuesday (10/15): Deuteronomy 13:1-18; Matthew 13:1-23

Wednesday (10/16): Deuteronomy 14:1-2,22-23,28-15:15; Matt.13:24-43

Thursday (10/17): Deuteronomy 15:19-16:22; Matthew 13:44-58

Friday (10/18): Deuteronomy 17:1-20; Matthew 14:1-21

Saturday (10/19): Deuteronomy 18:1-22; Matthew 14:22-36

Sunday (10/20): Deuteronomy 19:1-20; Matthew 15:1-20

Prayer of the Week...

Almighty God, You show mercy to Your people in all their troubles. Grant us always to recognize Your goodness, give thanks for Your compassion, and praise Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm of the Week...

Psalm 34

Hymn of the Week... “For All the Faithful Women” 855, stanzas 1,7,3-4

Looking Forward to Next Week...

Genesis 32:22-30 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 Luke 18:1-8