

FIRST CLASS:

Module 9

Truth: The Epistemological Mystery

Review of Module 8: The Means of Grace—Holy Communion

Here are the summary points from Module 8. If you have any further questions and want to dialogue, please contact one of Trinity's pastors!

- *On the night of the Passover Meal, the night before Jesus' crucifixion and death, He gave to the New Testament Church He was establishing a holy meal of their own. Christians believe, because of what the Holy Scriptures proclaim and teach, that in the Lord's Supper they do actually receive the very Body and Blood of Christ, in a divine, miraculous, and mysterious (mystical) way, in, with, and under the bread and wine. Yes, we admit this a profound and unexplainable thing! But this is what Jesus instituted and gave to His Church for all the ages! As in Baptism, the power to do the miracle is clearly in the power of the Word of God attached to water, bread, and wine. This holy meal is not our meal, but Christ's meal and gift to us.**

- *Christians receive wonderful benefits in participating in this holy meal—forgiveness of sins, and where there is forgiveness of sins, there is salvation and eternal life.**

- *God's Word clearly teaches that those who misuse or abuse the Sacrament of Holy Communion sin against what is really present in it—the true Body and Blood of Christ. First, it is only through faith that the benefits given in Communion are received. False teaching about this holy meal is a misuse of the gift, rather out of ignorance or deliberate rejection of Biblical doctrine.**

- *We practice a restricted or closed Communion because the Bible clearly states that not everyone who receives the bread and wine, that is the Body and Blood of Christ, receives it to his/her benefit. In fact, some can actually receive it to their spiritual harm and judgment.**
 - we receive it worthily when we have faith in Christ and believe His Words about His Holy Supper**
 - we are unprepared and unworthy of it, and should not receive it if: we do not believe in Christ and His Word; we are stubbornly aware yet unrepentant of sin and refuse to change our lives, yet speak and act as if we are in good standing before God and His Church; we refuse**

to be reconciled to a brother or sister in the faith

2

In this lesson we will examine the topic of truth. (epistemology)

Turn first to page 13 in your Catechism and read the Third Commandment and Dr. Luther's explanation. Luther explains that for New Testament Christians obeying this particular commandment means that we would not despise God's gift to us of p _____ and His W _____, but that we would consider this s _____ among us and would treasure it by gladly h _____ and learning _____ this W _____.

Look also in your Catechism at page 20, under the First Petition of The Lord's Prayer. We pray to God that His Name be kept holy among us. But how do we do this, keep God's name holy? Luther says God's Name is kept holy when the W _____ of G _____ is taught in its t _____ and p _____, and we who are God's people live our lives according to this Word.

Next read pages 43-51, the Introduction to the Explanation of the Catechism:

The Christian faith and doctrine is in one way a complex and deeply substantive body of teachings derived from the Word of God as it has been revealed in the books of the Bible. The Christian Church has a long, two-thousand year history. But at the heart of the Christian faith is the confession that Jesus of Nazareth, born somewhere around 4-5 B.C. (we guess from historical references in the Bible, early Church historians whose writings have been preserved, and also with the help of records preserved and now discovered from the Roman Empire) was and is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, in human flesh and form, who came to be the fulfillment of the ancient promise to the Jews that God would send a Messiah, in the Greek language, Christ (Savior), for them and the whole human race.

A Christian is someone who has come to faith, to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior. Christians confess Jesus is also their L _____. This means that they trust Him in life and death because He has died for them that they might belong to God. Belonging to God, they desire to live for God and serve Him.

The Christian's source for this knowledge about—who God is and what He has done in creating the universe and all things; who human beings really are and why they are who and what they are; how God is disposed to humanity; what is truth; and many other subjects and issues—is the B _____.

What is the Bible?

3

Define the theological terms “verbal inspiration,” “infallible,” and “inerrant?” (see also from the Bible, since, if the source of truth is the Bible, the Bible must also define itself!) 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21; John 10:35; John 17:17

Why is this teaching fundamentally important for a faithful Christian confession of truth?

According to Isaiah 55:10-11, what power is in the Word of God?

What is the relationship between the inspired and inerrant Word of God and human reason?

Read the following Bible passages and answer a few practical questions about using the Word of God in our daily lives and in our life together in the Church?

Colossians 3:16 How does this happen, do you think?

1 Timothy 4:4-5 How is God’s Word a treasure that makes everything holy?

Titus 1:9 and 3:10 How does God expect and enable His pastors to use His Word in the Church? How does God instruct pastors and people to deal with those who would teach false doctrine and/or cause divisions in the Church?

Finally there is a wonderful discussion of how to read the Bible and receive its truths in the Catechism's Appendix. Read pages 354-357 and 369-371.

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What does it mean that only Scripture can interpret Scripture?

What is the Bible's central theme and chief purpose? How must this always be kept in mind when reading from the Bible?

Note: in our congregation we require our children to memorize the Books of the Bible. In our catechetical ministry (weekly classes on Wednesday evenings from grades 3-8), our goal is that every child can recite the books so thoroughly and easily that she/he will never forget. This is more than a rote exercise of the mind. It is a way of honoring God's Word as the most special written treasure we have on earth. It is also a practical tool for the Christian when reading and/or studying the Bible at home and in classes at church. Christians also strive to memorize portions of Scripture so they can recall them in times of need or witness to others.

Return your answers on this module to

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If you want to ask questions or enter into dialogue on any of the above questions or related issues, we'd love to engage in conversation with you:

wmarler@trinitylutheranspfd.org 417-866-5878 (ask for one of our pastors)

