

FIRST CLASS: Module 10

The Divine Service

Review of Module 9: Truth: The Epistemological Mystery

Here are the summary points from Module 9. If you have any further questions and want to dialogue, please contact one of Trinity's pastors!

***Epistemology is the technical theological and philosophical study of the nature and sources of truth. The basic epistemological question is "What is truth? Is it absolute or relative?"**

--There are many definition attempts to describe truth: facts; the body of real things, events, and facts; judgments, propositions, or ideas that are true or accepted as true; the body of true statements and propositions; being in accord with fact or reality; being in accord with fact or reality; the opposite of falsehood.

--It is obvious that when we humans use language and words to define the concept and idea of truth, it is quite a subjective and relative thing. How much more relative our actual pronouncements of truth! And science itself in formulating its definitions of hypothesis, theory, fact, and natural law recognizes that all propositions and conclusions must be open to new discoveries and evidence. Christians, too, must not confuse the definition of truth, and must be the first to recognize that human truths and doctrines are subjective and relative. (A good illustration of this is in the field of medicine and medical research. Not only are improvements continuously being found, but some treatments, cures, and prescriptions once thought to be helpful are later discovered to have dangerous side effects and the like.)

It --However throughout history and globally, human beings who think existentially, who believe this material world and this human life span on earth may not be all that there is, also believe in the possibility of a truth that is absolute and not of human origin. Religious definitions of truth mostly center around a truth that has its source in the existence of God. Ancient Greek culture, for example, defined truth as an "unconcealment," a revealing or bringing of what was previously hidden into the open. The New Testament writers used this definition and the very Greek word *aletheia*. Absolute truth can only come from an absolute and eternal Divine Being, who has chosen to reveal such truth(s) to humanity. Plato defined God as Truth and Truth as God. The apostles proclaimed, as Christians have for two thousand years,

this same message with the Good News (Gospel revelation) that God is not abstract or merely spiritual anymore—He has become Human in Jesus of Nazareth! He and His Word are truth!

2

- *Christians share this Good News that God has revealed Himself in two covenants He Himself has made with humanity. In His first covenant, His Word/Truths He commanded to be recorded by His own chosen prophets in 39 documents; in His second covenant, He also chose apostles and evangelists to record His Word/Truths in connection with the coming into human flesh of His Son. 27 more documents preserve these absolute truths. These 66 books are bound together in the Holy Bible.**
- *The Bible teaches about itself that the Third Person of the Triune God, the Holy Spirit, inspired the authors of the books of the Bible, in such a perfectly divine manner that the very words, sentences, and thoughts expressed in the Bible are without error and totally and completely infallible. This is why Christians say the Bible is absolute truth.**
- *Christians realize that other world religions and cults claim to have such direct revelations from God instead of or in addition to the Bible. Hindus and Buddhists have countless numbers of written texts and spiritual guides that bring enlightenment through absolute spiritual truths. Muslims have the final and most authoritative revelation from God in the Koran. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints points to the Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, and the Revelations to its Presidents as absolute truths from God. There are even some Christian theologies that claim the Holy Spirit is still giving direct revelation to certain “charismatically-gifted” members of the Church.**
- *Christians who adhere to the text of the Bible as the Word of God, and hold it alone to be the supreme authority in matters of doctrine and divine truth, subjecting the gift of human reason, and all other traditions and human rites to its ultimate authority, also reject the false claims of authorities and truths that contradict, take away, or add to it.**

In this lesson we will take a look at the Divine Service in theology and practice. Before completing this Module, read the brief definition of worship in the Explanation to your Catechism, pages 358-359.

The highest worship of God is f _____ that receives gladly from Him all that He promises us in His Word. And faith comes to us, as we have learned, as a free gift of God; that we become believers is completely and

totally His work and action, as He sends His Holy Spirit through the Gospel that comes to us in His own Means of Grace—the Word, Baptism, and Communion. Through these Means Jesus Himself continues to come to us, to be present with us, to nourish and preserve our faiths.

Read Matthew 20:28. Here Jesus lays down a foundation for the Church, practically establishing Who He is and why He came to be among us. It is a paradox, and therefore difficult for us to understand, to keep in mind, and to consistently practice!

He says, “ [I] the Son of Man came not to be s_____, but to s_____, and to g_____ [My] His life as a ransom for many.

Read what happened at the evening Passover Meal just hours before Jesus would fulfill His promise and mission and die on the cross to pay for the sins of the whole world, to reconcile humanity to God, and to defeat the power of sin, death, and Satan on the earth: John 13:1-17

What was Peter’s objection to Jesus’ service to him and his fellow apostles?

Notice the absolute truths Jesus establishes for the apostles and all future pastors and members of His New Testament Church: *if I do not wash (serve) you will have no _____ . . . You call Me Teacher and L_____, and you are right, for so I am. . . I have given you an e_____. . . a s_____ is not greater than His Master, nor is a m_____ greater than the One who sent him.*

After Jesus’ resurrection, as the angels at the tomb had instructed the women (Matthew 28:5-7), Jesus met the company of believers (1 Corinthians 15:6, more than 500 people!), among whom were the eleven Apostles, at a mountain retreat location Jesus had chosen. Read Matthew 28:16-20. Here He commissioned the Church for its mission. What truths did He lay down as foundational for their work?

*He had been given all divine a_____. (that is, the Head of the Church, Jesus, is in full control with full power!)

*His mission—their mission- was to make d_____ of all n_____ by what means? B_____ and T_____ His Words and commands. (Word and Sacrament)

*And even though He would no longer be physically and visibly among them anymore—He would soon be on His throne in

heaven, He would be with them a _____ to the very
e_____ of the age, of history! (Not our ministry, His; not our
fear, He is with us!)

4

And then after Jesus' Ascension into heaven (Acts 1:6-11) and His sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, we see the very first Christian congregation in history, the Jerusalem Church, obey His directions to the tee. Read Acts 2:42

To what did they devote themselves foremost in their life, worship, and work together?

To the a _____ t _____ and
f _____ (the Word of God), and to the breaking
of b _____ and p _____ (the Greek word
implies corporate worship with the new holy meal, the Lord's
Supper)

And later in the century, after the Christian Church had spread throughout the Roman Empire, the writer to the Hebrews would remind them of the central importance of continuing to assemble corporately to meet with Jesus as He had promised to always come in His Word, in His Holy Baptism, and in His Holy Meal. Read Hebrews 10:25 and 12:25a and 13:17

When a Christian n _____ attendance when the Church meets together (in the Greek *leitourgia* or liturgy; translated into the Latin *Missa* or Mass; into German as *Gottesdienst*, God's Service; and now among us as Divine Service. . .the regular worship service with Communion). . .or r _____ to hear the preaching and teaching of the Word. . .or disobeys and despises the leaders who have been ordained to keep watch over s _____, that Christian is neglecting God, refusing to hear God's Word, and refusing to submit to God's authority. There is not Christian religion known in the Bible which consists only of a personal relationship between God and the individual believer. God has so designed it so that we have fellowship with Him and with our fellow Christians. In the Church He comes to sinners to convert, nourish, and preserve through His Means of Grace and within the context of family—the family of the Church. The family of the Church does not replace or supplant the families households that belong to the Church; the Church strengthens husbands, wives, parents, and children!

The heart and center of our Christian life together is the weekly Divine Service. Here is where we receive from our God His forgiveness, grace, and

other blessings according to His design. He is with us everywhere we go and in our homes, but in the Divine Service is where He wants us to gather that Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, can serve us by continuing His work and ministry among us, also—forgiving and cleansing us from sin, healing and strengthening us, teaching and guiding us in His Word, feeding us in His Meal, and blessing us in our many vocational callings in the world.

5

Here is a summary of how the Divine Service brings the Word of God and Christ's Service to us:

The Ringing of the Bells *Calling the baptized people of God to the hour of Divine Service*

Prelude *Whether a musical or vocal piece, a time for quiet meditation and a resting of the mind, heart, and spirit in preparation for worship*

(If there is a Baptism, it is usually conducted at this time, before entry into the sanctuary. Our Baptismal Font is in the narthex, not only for Baptisms, but for every worshiper upon entering the Sanctuary every week, to remember it is by the divine gift of Holy Baptism that we all enter the family of God)

The Opening Hymn “Father, We Praise Thee”

(Before the Reformation in the 16th century, choirs usually sang most of the hymns, introits, psalms, and canticles. Luther restored to the congregation active participation in the service, especially in the singing of hymns. Opening hymns usually are prayers to ask the Holy Spirit to come and be present, songs of adoration and praise, or songs that set the theme of the day.)

Invocation

(From God's Word we know that wherever God places His Name, there He comes and is present to bless. God has put His Name—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—on us in Holy Baptism. The Divine Service begins with this devotional formula, as a prayer asking God to be present in our sanctuary (our space and time), confessing what He has revealed in His Word about Who He is. The Divine Service is for the hallowing of the Lord's Name! Worshipers are encouraged to make the sign of the cross to remind them of their Baptism.) 1 Kings 8:27-30; Matthew 28:18-20

P: In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

C: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

(It is only through the forgiveness of sins that we enter into the life of heaven. To publicly and corporately confess our sins is to confess together the truth about our lives and to accept God's verdict that we have inherited original sin, have committed numerous actual sins daily against His will, and deserve divine punishments. The truth of our sin is answered by the truth of God's mercy and love as He Himself

speaks forgiveness through the voice of a man 'called and ordained' by Him as a servant of the Word.) 1 John 1:8-10/ John 20:19-23

Confession

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. [Hebrews 10:22]
Our help is in the name of the Lord

C: Who made heaven and earth

6

P: I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord

C: And You forgave the iniquity of my sin

P: O almighty God, merciful Father,

C: I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Absolution

P: Upon this your confession, I by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: AMEN!

SERVICE OF THE WORD

(The Service of the Word has its origins in the Jewish synagogue services, as the first Christians gathered around the Word of God they had come to know as the first (or Old) Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures (39 books from Genesis to Malachi). As Jesus showed them, those Words of God were all fulfilled in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ and His Word, which by the end of the first century had been inspired and recorded in the 27 books of the New Testament.)

The Introit

(Having received forgiveness, we enter the Lord's presence with praise and thanksgiving. As each part of the liturgy is derived, for the sake of truth and purity, from the Word, so the Introit is most often drawn from the Psalms. In worship, we are essentially saying back to God what He has said to us! The Introit may be followed by the Gloria Patri, a short hymn of praise to the Trinity.)

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The Kyrie

(Kyrie eleison is a Greek phrase meaning, "Lord, have mercy." The fabric of the Christian liturgy is a rhythmic succession of praise and petition. The Kyrie is a

somber expression of our absolute need for God's continuing grace and mercy; it is answered by a hymn of exalted joy and praise, echoing the anthem sung by the angel choir to the Bethlehem shepherds on Christmas Day.

Mark 10:47, Hebrews 4:16; Luke 2:14, or Revelation 5:11-14 (This is the Feast)

Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord, have mercy upon us

The Gloria in Excelsis

Glory be to God on high and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. Oh, Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takes away the sin of

7

the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only are holy; Thou only are the Lord. Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Salutation and Collect of the Day

(The Pastors stand before the congregation as servants of the Lord and of the Word. The vestments they wear cover their own personalities and gifts as the funeral pall covers the casket. They are not speaking on their own, but as ones sent by God to represent His Word. The Salutation is repeated three times in the full Divine Service—before the reading of the Word, the administration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and the Benediction. Pastors and congregation are bound together in Christ's love for one another. "Collectio" is a Latin word for prayer. The Collects for each Sunday of the Church year are an ancient collection of prayers for the day based on the liturgical season and Scripture readings. They became an art form in themselves, with literary and poetic value, the essential merit in their spiritual content and brevity.)

P: The Lord be with you

C: **And also with you**

P: Let us pray:

O God, by Your almighty Word You set in order all things in heaven and on earth. Put away from us all things hurtful, and give us those things that are beneficial for us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

[Sit]

The Scripture Readings

(The heart of the Service of the Word is the actual hearing of the precious Word of God. From the prophets we hear a reading from the Old Testament, followed by the Gradual, a brief bridge of praise linking the Old and New Testaments. Next we hear from an Apostle from one of the New Testament Epistles. We anticipate the Gospel reading from one of the four evangelists, preceded by the Alleluia verse, the most full expression found in John 6:63. Having been filled with the Word, we respond in song with The Hymn of the Day, as we anticipate hearing the Word proclaimed.)

The Old Testament Reading

This is the Word of the Lord
C: Thanks be to God!

The Gradual

The Epistle

This, is the Word of the Lord
C: Thanks be to God!

Alleluia and Verse

The Holy Gospel: Luke 7:1-10 [Please Stand]

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the seventh chapter:
C: Glory to You, O Lord.

8

This is the Gospel of the Lord
C: Praise to You, O Christ!

The Creed

(There are three ancient and universal Creeds, or confessions of faith and doctrine—the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian. The Creed is a response to the Word just received. It is a public affirmation and confession of Biblical doctrine and teaching. It is a renewal each time we say it of our Baptismal vows. It binds Christians of all ages together in a comprehensive statement of the fundamental truths of the faith. Again, it says back to God what He has revealed and said to us. Worshipers should speak the Creed with joy and humility. The Creeds were inserted into the liturgy after early struggles and doctrinal conflicts in order to defend the Christian truth. It is for this content and substance that Christians who are called upon to die for Christ's sake do so with courage, peace, and hope.)

[Sit]

The Hymn of the Day

Sermon

(In continuity with the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, the Christian Pastor is called upon to preach and teach. His sermons should generally be based on one of the Scripture lessons for the day, since these appointed texts—known as pericopes—used by all liturgical churches, are arranged so that the entire contents of the Bible are unfolded in a complete cycle over three years. This affords the most complete edification. When the Pastor speaks, proclaims, and teaches in faithful witness to the Word, our Good Shepherd Jesus's own voice is heard calling, gathering, and enlightening His flock.)

[Stand]

The Prayer of the Church

(Having been fed by the Word of God, again the congregation responds in faith. In this prayer, the congregation exercises fully its privilege and responsibility as the royal priesthood of all believers. This is the Church at work, bringing intercessions for the Church throughout the world, for the world and its governments, and for particular needs within the lives of the members of the local congregation.

1 Timothy 2:1-6

[Sit]

The Offering

(Having received such generosity from our heavenly Father, who is the Author and Giver of every good gift, the congregation now brings its tithes and offerings as a “first fruits” of all God has given. While financial support is one way the congregation supports the work of the Church as Christ continues to build His kingdom among us, during the offering the worshipper also contemplates his/her giving of time and talents for the mission and ministry being carried out in the congregation.)

9

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

(Just hours before His arrest and execution Jesus met with His disciples for the Passover meal and established the New Covenant, instituting a new holy meal for the New Testament people of God. The Lord’s Supper is also, along with Baptism and the Word, a means of grace with. In the Real Presence of the Christ, great blessings are given to those who, in faith, receive this divine Mystery and miraculous gift. The second use of the Preface is followed by a Proper Preface for the season; these are the oldest parts of the communion liturgy. The Sanctus (Latin for ‘holy’) unites the worshippers with the song of the angels (Isaiah 6:2-3) and with the great Messianic Psalm (118); this was also sung to Jesus in His Triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The Prayer of Thanksgiving is followed by the Lord’s Prayer, which in this use, is the “table prayer” with which we come to the Holy Meal. The Pastor speaks the very words of Jesus: it is always God’s Word alone that gives and bestows what It declares. We come hungry and thirsty for Jesus, and He feeds and refreshes us. Luther wrote, “Our Lord is at one and the same time the chef, the cook, the butler, the host, and the food!”)

[Stand]

The Preface

P: The Lord be with you

C: **And also with your spirit**

P: Lift up your hearts

C: **We lift them to the Lord**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

The Proper Preface

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Sanctus

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He. Blessed is He. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever
Amen.

The Words of Institution (Spoken by the Pastor)

The Peace ("Pax Domini" is the "The peace of the Lord")

(As the peace of God is given to us in this Sacrament, it is now time to lay aside all ill feelings, grudges, bitterness, anger, and hatred towards anyone, especially our fellow Christians, and everything else in our lives that stands in contradiction of God's Word and will for us.)

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always

C: Amen!

The Agnus Dei

(Introduced into the liturgy about A.D. 700, based on John 1:29, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," in fulfillment of Isaiah 53, this hymn connects Jesus' sacrifice on Good Friday with the sacramental elements about to be received.)

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace.
Amen.

[Sit]

The Distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; John 14:27; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 11:23-29)

Hymns are sung during the Distribution that teach the doctrine of The Lord's Supper or help strengthen the theme(s) of the day from the Scriptures and sermon

[Stand]

The Nunc Dimittis

(Having received the divine gift of our Lord's Body and Blood for our strength and salvation, like Simeon in Luke 2:29-32, we have seen and touched the Lord in the miracle and mystery of Holy Communion. We depart in peace and joy singing Simeon's song. Other songs of thanksgiving may also be sung. A spoken prayer of thanksgiving asks God's Word to have its way with us in our

daily lives that we would live in Christ by faith and in our neighbor by love.)

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy Word;
For mine eyes have seen the salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of
all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. Glory be
to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Post-Communion Collect

The Salutation and Benedicamus

(The third Salutation is spoken, followed by the Benedicamus, a pre-Reformation doxology used at the end of each of the five books of the Psalms, as divided in ancient times: 41, 72, 89, 106, 150. This made the Benedicamus an appropriate, parallel conclusion to the Christian liturgy. The Benediction has been spoken over the people of God now for some 3500 years, first given to Aaron, Moses' brother, in Numbers 6:22-27. It is more than a prayer; it imparts what it promises to the faithful. With the Lord's Name given in Holy Baptism the Christian life begins; so the Divine Service begins by invoking that Name. At the end of the Divine Service that Name sends God's people back into the world to live in our callings as His faithful witnesses. . . (Romans 12:1-2). . . until someday the Word calls us home!)

P: The Lord be with you

C: **And with your spirit**

P: Let us bless the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God**

11

The Benediction

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen!**

Postlude

In our churches of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod we have a common Hymnal, Lutheran Service Book, which contains five different settings for the Divine Service. There are other services for other occasions than regular Sunday morning service, and many Christian hymns and songs from every era of Christian history, including contemporary songs. This reflects the great reality of the Church as a timeless, global people marching through the centuries until the Last Day when we believe Jesus will return and restore God's original intention, design, and creation in a new heavens and earth, where we will live in our resurrected, glorified, and immortal bodies forever. "A foretaste of this feast to come" is what the Divine Service is all about!

Jesus instituted His Church in the world to proclaim the Gospel, and to administer the Sacraments according to the Word. These are the means of grace and the true marks of the Christian Church. We fail in our privilege and duty if we neglect either. Luther recognized in his time the Church's neglect of the Word of God and of true doctrine. American Christian churches have frequently failed to

teach what Baptism and Holy Communion really are, according to Scripture, which led to depreciation in their use. Even some Lutherans offered the Lord's Supper only four times a year or once a month.

Christian worship preserves the uniqueness of the Christian faith and gives faithful witness in every generation. Our neighbors in this world are mostly religious people who seek to worship God; Muslims, members of the Jewish religion, Hindus, Buddhists, and others are people of faith who have beliefs and practices. But instinctively the name and doctrine of the Triune God is avoided among them. Holy Communion in particular remains a very unique possession of the Church, still sustainable in our multi-cultural, multi-religious society, for only the Christian Church practices it according to the Scriptures. Latter Day Saints use water and bread. Even among Christians its special power is often diminished by denial of the real presence, in favor of a symbolic interpretation the New Testament does not know.

A genuine practice of Christianity does not result in believers "circling the wagons" and isolating themselves from the world culture, and especially from religious people of other faith. Christians are called to be in the world to be good and loving neighbors in service to all people. As God loves every human being, so Christians may know and have people who are hostile to them, but not enemies whom they have purposefully made. Christians respect and care about all people, avoiding prejudice and bigotry of every sort.

Christian worship will always be a significant part of Christian unity; just as the Scriptures themselves have been translated and confessed in nearly every language group on earth, so has the liturgy been conducted across the centuries and around the planet. The Holy Spirit Himself creates faith and guards this oneness. Christian worship also helps maintain the catholicity of the Church. The Divine Service is a global expression of the reality of Jesus Christ, His Gospel, and His Church in the world.

12

Return your answers on this module to

wmarler@trinitylutheranspfd.org or nhagerman@trinitylutheranspfd.org

or by fax 417-866-5629

or by mail Trinity Lutheran Church
1415 South Holland
Springfield, Missouri 65807

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)
