



# Morning Glory

*“The Coming of the Lord Draweth Nigh” — James 5:8*

EXPERIENCED SALVATION • CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP • SIMPLICITY IN WORSHIP

Hauge Lutheran Innermission Federation • September 2024

## Lutherans and Conversion

Dr Craig Jennings

**L**utherans and conversion: do those two words really belong together? Forty-five years ago a Lutheran pastor by the name of Jacob Andreasen wrote a book titled *Lutherans and Conversion* in which he argued that conversion is “one of the very important doctrines of the Christian Faith” (p.8). He lamented the fact that there are those in Lutheran circles “who leave the impression that... conversion is only for non-Lutherans and for heathen” (p.6). **“The essential elements in conversion... Are repentance and faith which are produced by the Holy Spirit through the Word”**

### *What is conversion?*

Well, what is conversion? Andreasen defines the term this way: It is “that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit in the strength of which the sinner turns in repentance from his sin and in faith to Christ.”

He goes on to say, “the essential elements in conversion... Are *repentance* and *faith* which are produced by the Holy Spirit through the Word” (pp. 12, 13). His definition squares with our Lutheran confessions. Indeed, the *Formula of Concord* puts it this way: “For conversion is that kind of change through the Holy Spirit’s activity in the intellect, will, and heart of man whereby man through such working of the Holy Spirit is able to accept the offered grace: (11.83).

It is certainly fair to say that over the years the Church of the Lutheran Brethren has been marked by an emphasis on conversion. One hundred years later we all agree that such an emphasis is vital to who we are as a synod. We all agree that evangelism must be a top priority for our con-

gregations - that is, we all agree that we are called to proclaim the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We all agree that we must call people to turn from sin and personally receive the gift of salvation. We all agree that the unchurched, the pagan, and the godless need to be converted. But do we all agree that conversion preaching must be directed to the baptized churchgoers (both children and adults) who enter our sanctuaries week after week?

### *The center of preaching*

I believe that the preaching of conversion – repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ – is vital in the context of our Lutheran Brethren congregation because the preaching of conversion is at the heart and center of all biblical preaching. There are two passages, which make that fact abundantly clear.

The first passage records the opening words of Jesus as he began his public preaching – words which sounded the keynote of His entire ministry: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; *repent and believe in the gospel*” (Mark 1:15 NASB, italics added).

The second passage is Paul’s farewell address to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20). In summarizing his preaching the great apostle declares that “I did not shrink from declaring to you *anything that was profitable* (v. 20, italics added)... I went about *preaching the Kingdom* (v. 25, Italics added) ... I did not shrink from declaring to you *the whole purpose of God*” (v. 21, italics added).

And so the sum and substance of all New Testament preaching is repentance and faith – repentance created by

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the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the law and faith engendered in the heart through the preaching of the gospel. It is the preaching of conversion. **Conversion is “one of the very important doctrines of the Christian Faith.”**

#### *Active*

Now, of course, we all believe that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word. But having understood that to be so, we must not erroneously conclude that conversion is something passive. In fact, the Bible makes it plain that conversion (repentance and faith) is active.

According to the Bible, repentance is a deep sorrow for sin. It is a change of mind. It is a turning from sin. It is a forsaking of that which is evil (See Isaiah 55:7). “To repent is with heartfelt contrition and sorrow to acknowledge our sins, honestly confess them before God and earnestly seek His grace in Christ” (Explanation of Luther’s Small Catechism, Faith and Fellowship Press, 1959, question 183).

According to the Bible, faith, too, is something active. (The apostle John, for example, defines faith as “receiving” Christ.) Our church has, in fact, taught that faith involves three basic elements:

Knowledge. I must know something of the truths concerning salvation.

Assent. I must agree that what I know is true for

me personally.

Trust. I must accept the truth and make it my own.

**Over the years the Church of the Lutheran Brethren has been marked by an emphasis on conversion.**

*All need it*

Therefore, based upon such teaching of Scripture, our Lutheran Brethren church has clearly asserted that all people, even those baptized into Christ as infants, need to enter a conscious experience of repentance and faith – in other words, they need to be converted. As Lutheran theologian Iver Olson points out in his book *Baptism and Spiritual Life*, “There is a tendency on the part of some Lutherans to insist that a child who has been baptized, and who has remained in the baptismal covenant with God, needs no conversion later in life. Conversion is only for those who have fallen away from grace” (p. 82). Finnish Lutheran theologian Uurus Saarnivaara speaks with great concern along the same lines. In his book *Scriptural Baptism*, he writes the following, “Those who have practiced infant baptism, although their doctrine of baptism has been more Scriptural, have often neglected evangelism and even led people to assume that they are true Christians and saved just because they have been baptized, although they have no living faith and knowledge of Christ, and do not follow Him, which of course is a horrible deception and fatal error.” The meaning of baptism, Saarnivaara writes, “is that the baptized person should consciously repent, experience salvation in Christ, believe in Him as his personal Savior, and give his heart and life to Him” (p.56).

And how does that conversion come about? The answer is simple: from the moment of baptism onward, the Holy Spirit is at work in a person’s life to awaken him in a conscious way to the issues of sin and grace. He is at work inviting and enabling him to personally respond to God’s grace in Christ (Lutheran Brethren Statement of Faith, article 7). *How* and *when* that awakening takes place in the life will be unique for each person, but such an awakening is necessary. And when that awakening is complete, “it necessitates a *choice*.” Indeed, “conversion is impossible except by a conscious and free choice” (Ole Hallesby, *Infant Baptism and Adult Conversion*, Augsburg Publishing House, pp. 83,43).

So what’s the bottom line for us as a church body? If what the scripture teaches is true, godly pastors and elders will be concerned that all of those under their care have experienced a personal conversion. It will be the heart’s desire of all of us that each little one who has been brought to the grace of God in baptism, experiences a conversion. It will be our passion to make the most of every opportunity

to speak to souls about their need for Jesus.

And yes, if we would retain our Biblical heritage, the words *conversion* and *Lutheran* must always be closely bound together.

Reprinted from *Morning Glory*, Sept 2010. Originally taken from *Faith and Fellowship* with permission granted.

**Editor’s Note:** “We will have the privilege to have Dr. Jennings at our fall Bible conference in Des Moines Oct 11-13. If you are anywhere in the central Iowa area, please come, I know you will be challenged, encouraged and blessed. This article was written with the Lutheran Brethren in mind. I know many Lutherans outside the Brethren Church who would have this same view. How someone is saved, is probably the most important topic in the universe. It determines who goes to Heaven and who goes to Hell.”

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### Holding Forth In Simplicity

I enjoy the old-time writers and preachers like Lars Linderot in Sweden (1771-1811). They hold forth the simplicity of the Gospel when it comes to Repentance and a living Faith, and also hold forth strong warnings to the unconverted. So many nowadays will reason away these warnings and take the edge out of the strong warning—unless you repent and get converted you can never enter the Kingdom of God.

When we have found life in the Word of God, it becomes new and refreshing to us every day. It humbles us and makes us see more of our helplessness, and then we see more of His grace—marvelous grace by which we are both saved and kept going on in our Pilgrim journey, like the children of Israel in the wilderness who were led on by the pillars of cloud and fire. Despite many sins and failings they were in God’s keeping power until they entered Canaan of rest. So with His children today. “When peace like a River attendeth my way and sorrows like seabillows roll, still it is well with my soul.”

We are so happy to think of all God’s people and pray for everyone, especially those who through old age or sickness cannot have the joy of Christian fellowship so much. We should encourage them, visit them in their homes, and lift high the Royal Banner. My dear wife is one of those sitting in the wheelchair and can only use a walker; but we help each other, and we rejoice together in His wonderful salvation. He giveth grace to the humble and makes us thankful for all blessings and also to the servants of God who have been a blessing to us both in former days and at the present time. God bless you all.

C.O. Rogness, Eagle Grove, Iowa, taken from *Morning Glory*, March 1959

# Editorial

Wayne Almlie

## *Remaining in your Baptismal Covenant? (Part II)*

*“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you ....”*

*(1 Peter 3:21)*

Our confessions teach it. Our Catechism teaches it. I have not found a Lutheran pastor, Teacher, Editor, or professor that does not teach it. The question is what does it look like? What are the mechanics of it? If someone has that profession, are we allowed to ask a couple follow up questions, to make sure their calling and election is sure? (2 Peter 1:10)

In Jacob Andreason's book "Lutherans and Conversion" (1955), of those who answered his survey, 27% said they have remained in Baptismal grace. This is what he says. *"Twenty-seven percent of those who were baptized in infancy testify that they have remained in grace since the day that they were baptized. Ten per cent of those gave no testimony of any experience. Some of the testimonies were rather weak; for example, "My church and the activities of the church have at all times been the most important things in my life. I have always been deeply spiritual, and spiritual refreshment has always given me a feeling of well-being. The more I delve into the teachings of the Bible, the more I do appreciate its great truths and riches."*

*However, most of these gave a clear-cut testimony which left the impression that they had experienced sin and grace and that they knew the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Some of this group are known to the writer as fine spiritual pastors, evangelists, and lay people who are concerned for the salvation of souls and are walking worthy of the gospel.*

*How many remain in grace and in fellowship with God since the time of baptism nobody knows. The late Dr. J. N. Kildahl in his book, Sin and Grace, writes concerning remaining in the baptismal covenant, "There are some who can say it, but they seem to be very few. Most people, however, fall away from their baptismal covenant. And there are many, many such in our churches. . ."*

When I hear someone say, "I grew up in a Christian family and in the church, and I have always loved Jesus." That is good, nothing wrong with that testimony, but it always leaves me wanting to hear more. Shouldn't we want to hear more? After all, eternity is at stake. I always look for evidence, as Jacob Andreason

says, that they have had an "experience with sin and grace". There are probably people in our churches that say they have always loved Jesus, but if you asked them to define this Jesus that they love, would give you a description of a Jesus of their own making. A Jesus unlike the Jesus revealed in scripture.

O. Hallesby lays it out so simply in his book *Infant Baptism and Adult Conversion*. "Why cannot the God-fearing child keep its spiritual life by retaining its former piety? What is it that causes its life with God to die? The answer is exceedingly simple: the God-fearing child has now received new light. But it will not follow this light. And since this opposition to the Spirit of God is not merely a fall that is regretted and resisted, but develops into persistent obstinacy, the child thereby puts to death the life in God which it has had and in which it has lived from the moment of Baptism." As I mentioned last month, this was my testimony, I received new light on what it meant to follow Jesus and I rejected it. It was a fully conscious decision.

A.W. Knock describes a scenario where a young person at the age of 12-14 is shocked at the thoughts that creep into their minds and they come under a deep conviction of sin. They think; "There is no way someone as evil as I can be saved," and their parents or pastor help them come to a knowledge of sin and grace. Their awakened soul finds comfort in the Cross of Christ, and they find the assurance of Salvation. Knock would describe this as the transition between Unconscious faith and conscious faith.

Are we saved by baptism? Yes, this is what the Bible teaches and what the Lutheran confessions confirm. Yet most conservative Lutherans believe that a majority of the baptized will end up in hell. I was in a conversation with an AALC pastor a few weeks back and during the conversation he said, Baptism saves us. I said, but many of those who are baptized will end up in hell. He agreed with the truth of my assessment, that most baptized Lutherans will probably end up in hell. So I suggested to him, that since that is the case, shouldn't we have a far more robust theology and cate-



chris focused on keeping our baptized saved? But yet too often I see Lutherans posting memes online, suggesting especially to our youth, that the only thing you

need to know to have the assurance of salvation is that you were baptized.

## Testimony of P. Ljostveit, Editor of the Morning Glory in 1951

I felt the first call at the age of fourteen, fell on my knees and prayed in my own words and surrendered to the Lord as good as I understood, also confessed to others a little, but was not set free, and gradually slid into a condition of doubt and fear, having no peace neither with God's people, nor with the world.

Five years later I felt I could not continue in this condition, there must be an either, or, now or never. So I surrendered to the Lord again, God's people prayed for me and I myself prayed, but only, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and began to confess Christ again, read His word and pray, and, by His grace, have never been entirely away since, but still Calvary was not revealed to me, I did not possess the blessed rest, at least not as I should, in the finished work of Jesus.

This went on for some years until I heard Ludvig Hope preach on I Cor. 12:3, "No one can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." As he in the most simple way pictured the lost, helpless sinner, who cannot do a thing to save himself, nor does God want him to do a thing to save himself, and then in simple language pictured Christ as a full Savior for the most empty, sinful, lost, fearful and miserable sinner, adding, "The work of the Holy Spirit is to take the helpless sinner and lead him to Calvary and point him to the 'speaking blood' and to bleeding wounds of Jesus," the Holy Spirit revealed, through this most wonderful message I have ever heard, the dying Savior to my soul-all for me so the love of God flowed into my heart, with the comfort of the Holy Ghost and the many accusations, fear and unbelief left me. "Jesus had paid it all," I was set free in Christ and born of the Spirit on Calvary's blood-bought ground.

A year or two later, I was sorely assaulted by fear and unbelief that I was not rightly born again. But as I prayed on my knees and again confessed my lost and helpless condition – I was especially afraid I had never seen my sinful and lost condition as I should. The Spirit of God led me to John 6:37, "Him (without any exception) that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." So I hung my helpless soul in that promise, that He would not cast me out that minute, nor any time since, no matter how poor a Christian I had been, no matter how many backslidings, fear and unbelief in my life, His promise held, holds now,

and will hold till the end. Though my heart condemns me, as it often does still, God and His promise is greater than my heart. (See I John 3:21)

From that time I have learned more and more to live on and in God's promises despite many failings, accusations, fear and dark thoughts. A number of times I had to practice James 5:16 in my life. Here are some of the promises I have lived on and still live on. Eph. 2:8, that I am saved by grace, for by simple faith I have accepted the gift of salvation.

When I was very sick with the "flu" and thought I might die and could find nothing in myself to hold on to, I clung to Rom. 5:20 to die on "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

The words in 2 Cor. 12:9, that was such a great help for John Bunyan, "My grace is sufficient for thee," grace sufficient for forgiveness, for strength to live a Christian life, go through trials in life and in death His grace is sufficient for me.

Heb. 7:25, that Jesus is praying for me at the right hand of God, and able to save to the uttermost-even a sinner like me.

Is. 1:18, and especially Is. 42:3, that "He will not break the bruised reed," but accept me when I am on a low level, feel weak, and sinful-still, He will not turn me away. When I turn to Him He will never turn away from me.

P. Ljostveit, taken from the *Morning Glory*,  
December 1951

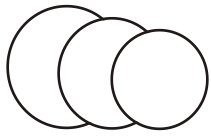
## Strength For Today

*"As thy days, so shall thy strength be."*  
(Deut. 33:25)

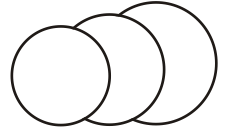
To thy saints, while here below,  
With new years, new mercies come;  
But the happiest year they know  
Is the last, which leads them home.

*"Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."* (Prov. 23:17)

Daily Food for Christians, printed in 1897



# From Our Fellowship Circle



**R. J. Estherville, IA.**  
 Thank you for still putting together “The Morning Glory”! My Dad was a big part of the Federation in the 50’s and 60’s, Pastor G.E. Jacobson. Would you please send me 5 copies of Infant Baptism and Adult Conversion? Thanks so much.

**B. L. Upsala, MN.**  
 “I have been especially grateful and blessed by the wonderful and edifying material Wayne has included in the Morning Glory as the new editor. I have enclosed a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please by all means advertise the times, dates and places of the Bible conferences or meetings being held, so that I can get them on my calender as the Lord allows.

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**“Prone to wander Lord I feel it,  
 prone to leave the God I love.”**

This is a line in Robert Robinson’s hymn “Come thou Fount of Every blessing.” Prone to wander. Robert Robinson felt this weakness in his young Christian life, but I think it’s a weakness that plagues all of us to some extent. Adam and Eve were prone to wander, Kings Saul, David and Solomon all wandered, Israel wandered, Judas wandered and was lost, Peter wandered and repented. I believe there is a tendency for all of us to wander.

The verse I most often think of when I sing this song is Heb 2:1-2 ‘Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.’ This is the antidote to wandering, to give “earnest heed to the things we have heard.” And what have we heard? We have heard the testimony of the Scriptures, and we have heard the faithful preaching of godly men. The Greek word translated “drift” is a nautical term used to describe a boat at sea without an anchor that’s at the mercy of every current or wave. That is an apt descrip-

**“This Bible will keep me from sin or  
 else, sin will keep me from this  
 Bible.”**

**D.L. Moody**

tion of a life that is not fettered to God’s goodness; that is not anchored in the Word of God.

I first became familiar with the story of Robert Robinson when I heard it as part of a message by a Presbyterian pastor Ron Davis. I had been a Christian for several years by then and had already seen my spiritual life ebb and flow. I started out with a bang, much like Robinson did, I went to California Lutheran Bible School for two years and considered going to seminary and into the ministry. But things just didn’t seem to move in that direction. After getting married we settled down in West Fargo and got involved in an ALC mission congregation.

The first wandering probably happened right after Bible School. After two years of training, and immersion in the Bible it becomes “Old hat” to you. You know it all, so you think, and it’s easy to drift.

Now there were many opportunities for service in that ALC church, I was involved in the teaching ministry and I ended up being the Volunteer Youth Director, but there was a frustration because of the liberalism that was already sweeping across the ALC. Spiritually I felt like I was dying, but I didn’t know what else to do, I was saved in an ALC church and it was all I knew.

After my wife graduated from NDSU we decided to move to Des Moines and start a new life for ourselves in the “deep south.” I joined an ALC church, because, like I said, it was all I knew. Now the church I joined was more conservative than the one I left, but I took a retail job that required me to work Sundays so my involvement at church was very sporadic. I poured myself into my Job and worked my way to the top, becoming the general Manager of the furniture store. But in the process, I died somewhat, spiritually. I still believed, I still went to church when I could, but there was little life. I seldom read my Bible and I hardly ever prayed. I was like Israel wandering in the wilderness.

But the Spirit has always called me back, and all along the way He’s lead me through a series of personal reformations. Part of that was in His leading me to the AFLC seminary to take some summer classes. Through that I met some people who introduced me to the Hauge Innermission. Today I feel I have a more solid mooring in his word, and pray to God to give me grace to remain faithful to the end. This song will always have a special place in my heart, and every time I sing it, it is a call to examine myself to make sure I haven’t wandered

WMA

# Believable...Yet Unbelievable.

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## Jack Phillips' Long Road to Justice

Jack's legal odyssey began back in 2012, when the Colorado Civil Rights Commission targeted him after he respectfully declined to create a custom cake to celebrate a same-sex wedding.

Years later, in 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that the state had indeed targeted him with "clear and impermissible hostility" that violated the First Amendment.

That should have been the end of the story. Yet, almost immediately the same state government came after him again, this time because he politely refused to create a cake celebrating a "gender transition." After Jack's ADF team sued the state in federal court, state officials backed off.

Again, that should have ended the legal attacks against Jack.

But the same attorney who initiated the state lawsuit against Jack—who had requested the "gender transition" cake—decided to double down and sue Jack in state court.

Unfortunately, the court, and a subsequent state appeals court, ruled that Jack could indeed be FORCED to express messages he disagrees with. The courts effectively said that the state or activists could compel an individual to use their creative gifts to promote messages they do not agree with.

The message was: if you want to open a business in Colorado, leave your conscience, your beliefs, and your convictions at the door.

Jack continued to trust in God's faithfulness, and he displayed the calm peace and quiet joy that has always inspired us all. He appealed to the Colorado Supreme Court, which heard oral argument in the case on June 18.

Please continue to lift up Jack, his family, his legal team, and the judges who heard the case in your prayers.

No American should be bullied or banished from the marketplace simply because they cannot express messages they disagree with.

But a ruling against Jack threatens to do just that.

*The Christian Post 6/28/24*

**Editor:** It never was about, "How is my gay marriage going to affect your life," or "What does it matter to you what we do in the privacy of our homes?" It was always about winning the culture war and forcing Christians and the church into submission.

There are hundreds of bakeries in Colorado that would

have been happy to bake those cakes. But these people are activists with an agenda, in every similar case that I am aware of, these activists sought out businesses that were owned by Christians knowing they would refuse, so they could make an example of them.

I saw it coming from the 80's, that this would be the issue that would bring hate and persecution to Christians and the church in this country. We are seeing the early rumblings, it will slowly build, but if they see an opening where they think they can get away with it, it will be on us in flash. We best be ready.

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." (John 15:18-19)

## Attendance Plumets at ELCA National Youth Gathering

The 2024 ELCA National Youth Gathering has announced "nearly 16,000 youth, adult leaders and others from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will participate in the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, La., July 16-20."

This is approximately half of the attendance numbers from 2018 (the last gathering) and 2015. Both of these previous National Youth Gathering attendance numbers were reported to be over 30,000.

This is disastrous for the denomination but a reason to praise God for those that have seen the wickedness proclaimed from the stage and the assembly at the previous ELCA Youth Gatherings.

Let's pray that even less attend and that it is completely shut down in the years to come.

Dan Skogan, exposingtheelca.com

**Editor:** The 2018 Youth Gathering was heavy into the LGBTQ agenda, even featured a 15 year old trans youth as one of the speakers. One of the positive things about Covid was that they had to cancel the 2021 convention. Now 6 years later their attendance is down almost half. Still way too many. Hopefully more and more people are waking up and leaving that apostate church.

## Whatever Happened to Contrition?

*“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.”*  
(Psalm 51:17)

In many Christian ministries today, salvation is viewed as praying the Sinner’s Prayer. People are told that all they need to do to be saved is to ask Jesus into their hearts and they are then saved for eternity and nothing can change that. When the issue comes to Confession and Repentance, it is scarcely mentioned, and certainly not a condition for salvation. The emphasis today is on music and the churches with the best bands are the most popular. Verse by verse exposition of the Scripture is not practiced in many places, but rather topical preaching is presented. This way, certain objectionable verses can be avoided. The main emphasis is on the Love of God and the topics of Hell, the Wrath of God, Divine Retribution and God’s Judgment upon the sin of mankind is avoided like the plague.

Today people make a smorgasbord of the Scripture. They only go to those things that they like and avoid the things that they don’t like and might cause people to not come to hear them. They even have a name for it – They call it a “Gospel Centered Approach” instead of Preaching “The Whole Counsel of God”

But this is not the way that neither the Scriptures nor the Lutheran Confessions teach that people come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. It is the Lutheran Church which has held to preaching “The Law in all it’s Sternness and the Gospel in all it’s Sweetness.” Unless this is done, there will not be true Contrition over sin nor true Conversion to Christ.

Our Lutheran Confessions give this definition of conversion: “For conversion is that kind of change through the Holy Spirit’s activity in the intellect, will and heart of man whereby man through such working of the Holy Spirit is able to accept the offered grace.”<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere in the Confessions, the components of conversion are more fully explained:

It is, of course, self-evident that in true conversion there must be a change, there must be new activities and emotions in the intellect, will, and heart, so that the heart learns to know sin, to fear

the wrath of God, to turn from sin, to understand and accept the promise of grace in Christ, to have good spiritual thoughts, Christian intentions, and diligence, and to fight against the flesh, etc. For if none of these things takes place or exists, there is no true conversion.<sup>2</sup>

In order for there to be true conversion, there must be a contrite heart. The Hebrew word translated as “contrite” literally means “crushed,” like crushing an aspirin tablet into powder with a pestle in a mortar. It is where the Holy Spirit uses the Law to crush the self-confident heart of man and breaks it to see that it is hopelessly lost and under the Wrath of God. The Lutheran Confessions define what Contrition is in the heart of man:

In these terrors the conscience feels God’s wrath against sin, unknown to men who walk in carnal security. It sees the foulness of sin and is genuinely sorry that it has sinned; at the same time it flees God’s horrible wrath, for human nature cannot bear it unless it is sustained by the Word of God. So Paul says (Galatians 2:19), ‘I through the law died to the Law.’ For the Law only accuses and terrifies the conscience.<sup>3</sup>

C.F. W. Walther writes about the effect of contrition from the Law:

It conjures up the terrors of hell, of death, of the wrath of God. ...when the Law strikes (a person) like a bolt of lightning, he perceives how great a sinner he is, what horribly ungodly thought he is cherishing. That is what the apostle means when he says, ‘Sin revived,’ when the Law came. The Law uncovers sin, but offers no comfort. If we had the Law only – as we have it now – and nothing besides, we should have to perish forever and go to hell.<sup>4</sup>

Evangelist Ray Comfort emphasizes the lack of preaching the Law unto contrition today:

Those who make a profession of faith without having a humble heart (which the Law produces) have the experience described in 2 Peter 2:22: “According to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”

1 Theodore Tappert, ed. *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 537.

2 Ibid., pp. 534-535.

3 Ibid., pg. 186.

4 *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* by Dr. C.F.W. Walther, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, pg. 14.



Yet the new and modern method of evangelism forsook the Law in its power to humble the proud heart and convert the soul. It did, however, speed the process of evangelism making it easier to get “commitments.” Also, it stirred less opposition and it seemed to get results. So everyone rejoiced.

Modern evangelism failed to mention the fact of Judgment Day.

He goes on to list 4 aspects of today’s Gospel approach:

- 1) No mention of Judgment Day
- 2) Not a hint of Hell
- 3) No use of the Law of God to bring about the knowledge of personal sin
- 4) The Gospel is held up as a means of happiness, rather than a means of righteousness.”<sup>5</sup>

Before Luther found Justification by Grace through Faith, he first experienced true contrition of the soul when he conducted his first mass:

“At these words I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken. I thought to myself, ‘With what tongue shall I address such Majesty, seeing that all men ought to tremble in the presence of even an earthly prince? Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty? The angels surround Him. At His nod the earth trembles. And shall I, a miserable little pigmy, say ‘I want this, I ask for that?’ For I am dust and ashes and full of sin and I am speaking to the living, eternal and the true God.

“The terror of the Holy, the horrors of Infinitude, smote him like a new thunderbolt, and only through fearful restraint could he hold himself to the altar to the end.

“... [Luther’s] God was the God who inhabited the storm clouds brooding on the brow of Sinai, into whose presence Moses could not enter with unveiled face and live. ...Luther’s tremor was augmented by the recognition of unworthiness. ‘I am dust and ashes and full of sin.’ ... How could a pigmy stand before a divine Majesty; how could a transgressor confront divine Holiness? Before God the high and God the holy Luther was stupefied. For such an experience he had a word which has as much right to be carried over into English as *Blitzkrieg*. ... It is all the

doubt, turmoil, panic, despair, desolation and desperation which invade the spirit of man.

“Utterly limp, [Luther] came from the altar to the table where his father and guests would make merry with the brothers.”<sup>6</sup>

Luther experienced something that most modern people, even in the church, know nothing about. It is called “The Fear of the Lord.” “*The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*” (Prov. 9:10) It is where the Law in all its fury is unleashed upon your soul.

Dear reader, has what happened to Luther happened to you? When it happened to me, I laid awake at night wondering if this would be the day that Jesus would return and cast me into hell. I was afraid of God because of what He would do to me. I knew I deserved it because of my sin. I didn’t enjoy even living and would rather die than continue on this way. My very soul was brought low and I was a broken man.

Unless there is true Contrition and Repentance over sin, there will be no true Conversion to Christ or peace or assurance.

Pastor Jim Haga

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## The Product of Atheism

Finally it must be clear to every one of us that by dethroning God as Creator and making men accidental beasts, atheists are promoting sin, vice, immorality, and giving free reign to lust. If there is no almighty Ruler who brought us into being; if there is no judge of eternity before whom “every one of us shall give account of himself”; if there is no heaven and no hell, why worry about truth, honesty, purity, love, faithfulness? Why keep your pledges and promises? Why try to help your fellow men? Why be restricted by marriage? Why not glory in war, revel in bloodshed, gloat over others in agony? Why not carouse, lie and steal, kill, curse, and crush your fellow men, pander to your passions, live as animals in unbridled lust, close the churches, chop down the cross of Christ, stop the preaching of His Gospel? These are the logical extremes of godlessness.

Walter A. Maier, sermon **Jesus Christ Is Your God**, in the book *Global Broadcasts Of His Grace*, page 97

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5 *Revival’s Golden Key: Unlocking the Door to Revival* by Ray Comfort. Bridge-Logos Publishers, Gainesville, FL., pgs. 60-62.

6 *Here I Stand – A Life of Martin Luther* by Roland Bainton. Nashville: Abingdon Press, pgs. 30-31

## Only Broken Instruments

NOTHING but a genuine spiritual awakening wrought by the Spirit of God can save our nation in this dark hour. This experience, however, will never start among the unchurched, the drunkards, or the self-righteous. It must begin in the church of Jesus Christ. Revivals that have swept nations have always started in the hearts of Christians. The future destiny of our nation and of the world hangs on the Christians. They are standing in the gap. This is a tremendous day for the church of Jesus Christ in America.

If this revival is to come through His church today, Christians must be broken. There is no other way. One of Evan Roberts' mottoes in the days of the great Welsh revival was, "Bend the church and save the people." God has never used a proud man. The forward march of God's people through scripture and through history is a march of broken men. All the leaders whom God used in scripture had to be broken before they were usable. This is a hard saying for proud, self-sufficient America where, even in the church, it becomes easy to boast of this and that achievement. Dr. B.M. Christensen, president of Augsburg College, said to a group of seminary students several years ago, "Only broken instruments can play in the symphony of God's kingdom." Today American Christians must be broken if God shall be permitted to work mighty works by His Spirit to change the hearts of men and nations.

We must be broken in self-will. This is hard. By nature, our wills are stubborn. Self wants to be on the throne of our hearts. It is my plan, my desire, my feeling, my purpose. The capital "I" is the center of the little word S I N which is causing all the heartache, misery, and tragedy in the world today.

As the mighty blacksmith takes the heated, straight iron and bends its two ends together to form the oval link, the Holy Spirit must through the law of God bend both the ends of this capital "I" so it becomes zero—nothing. Then S I N becomes S O N. The ego becomes nothing, and Christ moves into cleanse and rule. Then, "It is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). When self gets off the cross, it comes on the throne. Self wants to be in the driver's seat. Such a person wants his own way, is slow to admit any fault or weakness, and will stand up for his own rights regardless of consequences. Such a person easily becomes irritable, envious, resentful, and critical. This spirit has caused dissension in many youth groups, choirs, Ladies' Aids, and congregations. However, if the Holy Spirit were permitted to break the self-will of every Christian, there would be confession of sins and asking for for-

giveness in every group both to God and fellow church members, and spiritual revival would begin in the congregation. It costs to pray honestly, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," but there is no other way.

We must also be broken in self-reliance. This, too, is hard. As Christian workers, it is easy to slide off a total dependence on grace and begin to rely a little on what we are and what we do. We are always busy doing things for others. These deeds want to stick to our hands so it is hard to pray, "Nothing in my hands I bring—Simply to Thy cross I cling." In his stimulating book, *Heralds of God*, James Stewart says, "Only if you strike rock bottom in your own nothingness, will you strike the Rock of Ages." If God is to use us, we must in ourselves remain broken daily, like the publican in the temple praying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Then in total reliance alone on the blood of Jesus Christ that He gave to wash away every sin, we can claim healing of soul, full forgiveness and newness of life. Daily our only plea will ever be: "That Thy blood was shed for me." Then the one refrain from pulpits and in programs of church organizations will constantly be, "I would know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2). Only Christians broken in self-reliance before the cross daily are usable in pulpit or pew. I am nothing, but Christ is everything.

This is true also in my work as a Christian. He is the Vine and we are just the branches. Like the apostles of old, "Without him we can do nothing" (John 15:5). But how easy it is for self to want to try to do the work. As a result, church organizations bog down and Christians grow discouraged and weary. I cannot, but the Holy Spirit can. He is able. A clever personality, a smooth tongue, a new technique can never change a person or save a soul. Jesus Christ can. He is able. "If any person is in Christ, he is a new person altogether" (II Corinthians 5:17). If every trustee, every deacon, every church member would be broken in all self-reliance and let the Holy Spirit take over, the Christian church would shake our nation and the world in this critical hour.

We must also be broken in self-esteem. This, too, is hard on a stubborn, proud ego. Only a broken Paul could say, "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (I Corinthians 3:5-7). Only a broken John could say, "He must increase, I must decrease." A great bishop once said to a congregation, "God can do big things here if we will only forget about who is going to get the credit." Think of small church members who will quit the choir because the church does not seem to appreciate their voice or will resign from the official

boards because feelings are hurt. Self-pity is a tool of the devil to stymie the church. Christians broken in self-esteem will have open channels through which the power of the Holy Spirit can shake our nation and bring eternal glory to God alone and not heap laurels on proud men.

To be broken, Christians must abide at the cross of Christ. To the cross, from the cross, and back again to the cross. It is a continual process. A dying, broken world cries in despair on the brink of chaos, confusion, and death. The power of our living God in Jesus Christ, our Savior, is the only answer. But this power will be let loose only through broken Christians. Are you willing to be a broken instrument in His hand in this hour of great need? Then something will happen.

*March to Win*, Oscar C. Hanson, © Copyright 1952  
Bible Banner Press

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### **Struggle not with flesh and blood**

Pastor Maynard Force was a pastor, teacher at the Lutheran Bible Institute, president of the California Lutheran Bible School and an evangelist with the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement.

“When the devil comes as an angel of light he imitates the work of the Holy Spirit. He points to sins, as does the Holy Spirit but his aim is accusation instead of conviction. Many a conscientious child of God has under his prodding re-confessed sins that God forgave and forgot long before. How jubilant Satan must be when he can get a child of God to squirm in agony over sins that God has already forgiven!”

“Satan is so clever in hiding his identity that some of the strongest saints have been deceived by him. There are times when a child of God does not know whether it is the Holy Spirit or the devil working in his heart. God tells us, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God.” (I John 4:1)

“Rather than let our subtle foe paralyze us, let us remind ourselves that when we have properly dealt with our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9) It is always hard for us to realize that God is able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Satan knows this weakness of ours and would like to rob us of the joy of our salvation by getting us to believe we are not properly cleansed.”

“Among those who fail to base their salvation on the Word, Satan finds ready listeners. He can use their feelings as a piano and play any tune he wishes. Those, on the other hand, who disregard their feelings that they are

contrary to the Word render Satan helpless. He can change feelings in a moment’s time, but he is powerless to change God’s Word. The word of God abides forever. Dear friend, be sure to anchor yourself well on the promises of God, for our subtle foe will be alert to attack you on this point. Let us not insult our God by confessing sin to Satan, who comes as an angel of light, sins that God has already forgiven.”

“When Satan comes as an angel of light, the great problem is to detect him. How can we tell the Holy Spirit from the devil? We certainly do not want to rebuke the Spirit of God, but neither do we want to entertain Satan. Many a sincere Christian, confused at this point, has been willing rather to err on the side of confession than to rebuke the Holy Spirit. When we err here we merely turn ourselves over to our enemy to be tortured by him. The devil never leaves us unless we resist him. God told us, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) To accept any accusation is not resisting him.”

“When the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, He is gentle – Satan, on the other hand, hounds and nags. The Spirit of God leads, while Satan drives. One is like a shepherd, the other like a wolf. To confess to Satan never brings peace, no matter how many times the sin is confessed; to confess to the Holy Spirit brings sweet peace.”

The following is taken from the message *Satan as an Angel of Light* by Pastor Maynard A. Force. “The Christian Warfare.” © Copyright 1949, The Lutheran Evangelistic Movement

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### **Being Confident**

Paul expresses where his confidence is. “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6) God had begun a good work; it was good because God started it. God started it, and He will complete it. This speaks of the process of sanctification. You don’t get saved and boom you’re there. It’s a process that won’t be complete until the day of Jesus Christ. When Jesus comes in His glory then we will receive our resurrected bodies and be joined to Christ as His bride. Paul is speaking of the faithfulness of God, we can be sure of God’s faithfulness.

WMA



## Proceeding in or Falling from the Baptismal Covenant

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumberest thou the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. Luke 13:6-9 [KJV]

A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. That man is the Lord. The vineyard is His church on earth. You and I are fig trees, planted in the vineyard. We were planted in the vineyard by holy baptism.

“And he came and sought fruit thereon.” Fig trees are planted in the vineyard because they are expected to bear fruit. And we are placed in the church of God in order to bear fruit. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life [Rom. 6:4, KJV]....

What kind of fruit does the Lord expect us to bear? That can be seen plainly from the verse preceding our text. Jesus happened to tell this parable because people were talking about some persons who had died suddenly. In connection with the incident, Jesus said, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish [Luke 13:5, KJV]. Then He told this parable. The fruit, therefore, which the Lord expects us to bear is our repentance. The thing that brings forth fruit in the lives of men is the Word of God. But God’s Word is of two sorts – the law and the gospel. Where the law is permitted to do its work, it brings forth consciousness of sin and repentance. Where the gospel is permitted to do its work, it brings forth faith and trust. But where there is faith there are also the fruits of faith; namely love for God and for one’s neighbors, and zealous work for the cause of the Lord.

“But he found no fruit.” Year after year He came and looked for fruit, but found none. The Lord, in this passage, is not speaking about any heathen. He is speaking of a person who has been baptized into the church of God, who has been the object of God’s grace, and from whom God could therefore expect repentance and the fruits of faith; but He does not find them.

Could it, by any chance, be you? ... Have you borne fruit? Have you repented and turned to the Lord? ...

What has been your experience with respect to what

we ordinarily call revival? You have often heard about revival. Have you ever experienced it? Can you look back to some point in your life when you experienced a radical change? A time when the question of getting into the right relationship with God became so important that it took first place in your thoughts, night and day? Do you know that you experienced a time when you were given grace to believe that you had received the forgiveness of your sins and the assurance that you were a child of God, so that you also gained peace in your soul? Perhaps you answer, No, I have not experienced what is called a revival, for I believe that I have been a Christian since the day of my baptism. Have you, indeed? In that case you are a happy person! There are some who can say it. But they seem to be very few. Most people, however, fall away from their baptismal covenant. And there are many, many such in our churches – people who have never experienced a revival, who have never been really troubled about their spiritual condition, who have never been anxious about their relation to God, and who have never experienced the power of the new life and the peace which faith brings to the soul. They have lived in the church all their days; they have gone into the church and to the table of the Lord; they have great respect for the House of God and the Word of the Lord; and they have taken some part in the work of the congregation. But the Word of God has never borne any fruit in their lives, making old things pass away and all things become new.

If we use the Word of God rightly, it will produce spiritual experiences in us, and these experiences we must have in order to be right with God. Yes, even those who have remained faithful to their baptismal covenant must experience some kind of revival. They must proceed from the standpoint of the child to that of the adult. They must reach a deeper consciousness of sin and a clearer view of grace.

But it is not enough to have had such an experience once in a lifetime. If the Word of God is to bring forth fruit in us, we must have spiritual experiences, continually, or, in other words, God’s Word must constantly bring forth fruit in us.

How about this with you? Do you have any trouble with sin? With waging your fight against sin? ... Are you troubled by the old Adam – your own sinful heart? Or are you living on good terms with your own nature?

... Is the good news that Jesus died for our sins on the cross ... only a doctrine which you acknowledge to be a true and comforting teaching; or have you actually experienced a heart moved by this gospel so that your soul is comforted and guided and refreshed by it? ...

And what is your relationship with God? Is God



only a power you have heard about, far away in the heavens? Or is the secret of the Lord with you when you read and meditate upon the Word, and pray to Him? ...

... Do you find that you feel uncomfortable among the children of the world and their social ties? ... Do you have a special love for all believers, and do you feel most at home among God's people? ...

Is it a pleasure to you to be among those who give of their earthly goods for the upbuilding and extension of the kingdom of God ...?

I have mentioned briefly here some of the fruits which the Lord expects to find among us who belong to the church. Too many people treat this matter too lightly. And it is sad to think that they will be eternally lost. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous [Ps. 1:5, KJV]. The Lord may perhaps let us stay year after year like barren fig trees in His vineyard, but He will not allow it forever. Some day His command shall go forth: "Cut it down! Why does it cumber the ground?"

What if it refers to you? What if the Lord has been waiting these many years for you to repent and to begin leading a holy life.... You have had your day of grace, and have not made use of it. Or perhaps you are one for whom Jesus prays today, pleading that you may be permitted to live one more year, with the understanding that if you do not repent now, this shall be your last chance. ... Therefore, seek ye the LORD while he may be found, and call ye upon him while he is near [Isa. 55:6, KJV]

J.N. Kildahl, *Concerning Sin and Grace* [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954], Bernhard H. J. Habel, trans., pp. 52-58.

(Underlining has been added to highlight salient points.)

**Editor:** I want to thank Jonathan D. Anderson for including this chapter in his editing and reprinting of J.N. Kildahl's "Christian Dogmatics." It is indeed a timely word for our day when so many formerly good Haugean churches and Associations seem to be abandoning their heritage and are adopting a Missourian view of baptism and salvation.

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### Can you Know you are saved?

How could the Christian doctrine be called the evangel, that is, glad tidings, if those who accept it must be in constant doubt whether their sins are covered, whether God looks upon them as righteous people, and

whether they will go to heaven? If even a Christian cannot know what his relation to God is and what his fate will be in eternity, whether damnation or salvation, what difference would there be between a Christian and a heathen, the latter of whom lives without God and without hope in this world?

Does not Holy Scripture say: "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1)? (Luther translates: "Faith is having a sure confidence regarding things hoped for and not doubting things unseen.") Does not our blessed Lord Jesus Christ say: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28)? Does He not say: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (John 4:14)? Does He not say: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27,28)? If the aforementioned doctrine of doubt were true, would not all these sayings be empty delusions, yea – I shudder to say it! – lies and cheats?

Our dear Lord Jesus Christ requires of His followers that they wrestle with their own flesh and blood, the world, and the devil, and that they be faithful unto death. He requires of them that they renounce all that they have, come to Him, take His cross upon them, deny themselves, and follow Him. He tells them in advance that, if they side with Him, the world will hate them, revile them, and persecute them unto death. If the aforementioned doctrine of doubt were right, who would desire to come to Christ, side with Him, and fight all the great and dreadful battles of this life, following His crimson banner? Who could muster the strength to follow after holiness if he had to doubt whether he will ever reach the heavenly goal? Indeed, anyone who has received this doctrine of doubt into his heart is an unhappy man. He remains forever a sorry slave of the law; he is constantly told by his conscience: "It is not well with you; who can tell what God's thoughts concerning you are, what punishment is awaiting you?"

Unquestionably, this doctrine of doubt is the most horrible error into which a Christian can fall, for it puts Christ, His redemption, and the entire gospel to shame. It is therefore no jesting matter.

By Dr. C.F.W. Walther in *Evangelize* (LEM)  
May, 1947

## The Christian's Cross

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matt. 16:24.

A Christian has two crosses. The one is the cross on Calvary's hill; the other is his own cross. The former is his salvation; the latter is his sanctification.

But what is this cross that we are supposed to bear? Is it all kinds of trouble, disappointment, and sorrow? No, it is only the sufferings and losses that are a consequence of the obedience of faith.

It is the answer to the prayer, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

When we believe in Jesus and follow Him we travel a different road from those whose real "prayer" is "My will, not Thine, be done." We clash with the godless world and this means conflict and persecution—and a cross.

Then, too, we have our invisible enemies who tempt us to disobey God, and when we resist them, they oppose and plague us. This also is a cross.

Again, we have an enemy in our own sinful nature which prompts us to rebel against the spirit of God, and the distress of this experience adds to the weight of the cross.

In other words the cross of the Christian is everything that crosses the will of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and which we could avoid if we denied Christ and yielded to their temptations.

But a Christian chooses voluntarily to remain loyal to His Savior. He does not have to. He is free to cast the cross aside and travel the broad road that leads to destruction. But he prefers the other road. He elects to stay with his Savior and join the company of those who are home-ward bound.

A dreary journey? Not at all. For every loss there is a tenfold gain, and the loss is only the loss of worthless things, while the gain is the gain of priceless and eternal values. It is the dieting of the sick to gain health. It is the investment of small earnings to secure untold wealth.

The very frame of a cross suggests its meaning, an upright and a transverse beam. The former, we may say, represents the will of God, while the latter represents our will. When we take up the cross and bear it in the footsteps of Jesus, God's holy and loving will crosses our selfish and sinful will and we are crucified with Christ, not only on His cross by appropriating His atoning death in our stead, but also by making our daily life a Gethsemane prayer in His name. The glorious result is that our old nature is being put to death and our new nature experiences a resurrection with Christ, to live and reign triumphant with Him.

The beginning is our baptism; the end is to "be like

unto Him," at home with the Lord.

"Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." (Gal. 5:17)

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13)

Dr. C.J Sodergren from the *Bible Banner*,  
LBI MPLS., Feb. 1939

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## Led By the Spirit

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

How can I be certain that I am led by the Spirit of God?

You understand, of course, that the Spirit is known by what He does with us. When He leads us, He does something that no one else can do. The Spirit leads us to God.

No one else can do that. Not the devil; not we ourselves either, for we are enemies of God.

However, there are religious people who are not led by the Spirit of God, are there not?

Yes, that is true, And for that reason they are not led to *God* either. They are, on the contrary, afraid of God and of His message of repentance.

The Spirit, on the other hand, leads the sinner *out into the light*, onward to *reconciliation*.

We ourselves oppose this as long as we can and dare.

If you have been reconciled to God, you have certain proof that you are led by the Spirit of God.

The Spirit leads *to the cross*.

But does not dead faith also put its trust in the grace of God? Yes, but it never seeks the cross to *confess* sins, only to seek comfort in sin.

But with me everything is impossible and meaningless. There is no real prayer, no sincere remorse, no real striving against sin. As a result my life is merely one defeat after another.

My friend, who has shown you this? God's Spirit, who leads sinners *to the cross* in just that way.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

**"How blessed is the little flock,  
Whom Jesus calls His own!  
He is their Savior and their rock,  
They trust in Him alone."**

Taken from *God's Word for Today* by O. Hallesby.  
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## America, Wake Up! The Philistines Be Upon Thee!

JUDGES 16. Samson was a man of God, a promised child even from birth, like John the Baptist. His father's name was Manoah, and his wife was not to drink wine nor strong drink because her child was to be a Nazarite unto God from his birth. Samson was a judge for many years; but after he got married, he gradually fell away from the Lord. Delilah, his wife, loved silver which the Philistines promised her if she could only find out where Samson had his strength. She loved silver more than she loved her husband, but as long as Samson kept the secret to himself his strength remained with him. He depended too much on his strength and not on the fact that it was given to him by God.

At last he told his worldly wife where his strength was. He went to sleep on his wife's knees or in the bosom of the world. When the Philistines came, he still thought that his strength was in him so he tried to break loose, but in vain. He did not know that the Lord had departed from him. So the Philistines came and picked out his eyes. It can go that way with a nation that forgets God. There are lots of agents hard at work trying to find out the secret of our strength as a nation. Russian rubles are invested yearly in order to find out the secret about our strength. Many a Delilah is working in secret and is very successful. They can travel here and there so freely where they have their co-workers. It is the Philistines over again and they will, in time, succeed like Delilah....

Many Lutherans do not see the dangers we are facing, and it can go that way with any denomination that thinks like Samson: We have our strength and wisdom in the top of the head or in the hair. We have merged now so we are mighty and strong, but are we so sure that God is with us and His power is in us? Paul says: "Be strong in the Lord!" Samson did not know that God had departed from him. How sad. He tried to break loose as before, but he tried this time in vain. There are too many foxes running loose, destroying the vineyard now as of old. Christ Jesus is not wanted as Savior from sin in many churches now. The Lord is forced out to stand at the door outside, pleading with the individual and church for re-entrance. Very few seem to have any use for Jesus as a Savior from sin. But no one will ever reach heaven's glory without first seeing he is a sinner by nature and that he must be saved by grace alone. Jesus is the only One chosen by God to save sinners from their sin and from hell. May we say with Luther: "Here I stand! I cannot do otherwise!" May none of us be caught unawares like Samson. By God's grace be awake and put on the whole

armor of God. The Apostle Paul says in I Cor. 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for our example; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he stands, take heed lest he fall.

Nordahl Nelson, Pinewood, Minn.  
*Morning Glory* March 1959

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### Unless You Repent

Life oftentimes isn't fair; people die way too young, tsunamis wipe out hundreds of thousands, planes fly into buildings and thousands die, and we ask God, why? Why God?

In Luke 13, the people had come to Jesus with similar questions. "Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And He answered and said to them, Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:1-5 NASB)

In both of these instances, Jesus doesn't answer their question but directs them back to their individual responsibility to God. It will do us no good to agonize over the fate of those who have gone before us. Their fate is sealed. The Bible says it is (Heb 9:27) appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment. It will do you no good to pray for them. We can thank God for them, And I do thank God for my parents, pastors and other people who helped make me the person I am today. And yes, some of them left this earth far earlier than I wanted them to. God's ways are not our ways, but His way is perfect.

Jesus' word to that generation and His word to us is the same. Unless you repent you will perish. Unless you repent, you will perish! We need to look at the law and see that we are sinners. We need to repent of the sin God reveals to us, that means to turn away from it and change directions. We turn away from sin and turn toward Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away our sin.

WMA

## HAUGE BIBLE CONFERENCE

Zion Lutheran Church  
4300 Beaver Ave, Des Moines, Iowa

Pastor John Kline, Host Pastor  
October 11-13, 2024 – (Friday Evening  
through Sunday Noon)

**THEME:** For Such a Time as This (Esther 4:14)

### Tentative Schedule

#### FRIDAY

7:00 Singspiration  
7:30 p.m. Guest Speaker: Dr. Craig Jennings,  
Bottineau ND  
Coffee and Refreshments following

#### SATURDAY

9:00 a.m. – Prayer Time  
9:30 a.m. – Coffee/Refreshments  
10:00 a.m. – Dr. Mark Mattes, Professor,  
Grandview University  
11:00 – Pastor Jim Haga, Shoreview MN  
Noon Meal at the Church (Free Will Offering)  
1:15 - 2:15 p.m. – Mr. Wayne Almlie, Des Moines  
2:30 – 3:30 – Testimonial/Singspiration  
3:30 – Fellowship and Refreshments  
7:00 p.m.– Dr. Craig Jennings

#### SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. – Worship Service: Dr. Craig Jennings

Pray For: Presence of the Holy Spirit, Christian Fellowship, Special blessings on the Hospitality and that our Triune GOD might be glorified!

Welcome to all those who hunger  
for Spiritual Food!

**PRAY, WELCOME, PRAY,  
INVITE, PRAY, ATTEND!**

For Refreshment Times: If able, please bring home-made goodies!

Convenient Local Motels and Restaurants

If you would like to help offset the expense of the Conference, simply earmark your check accordingly.

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