

## What Does This Mean? The Continuing Importance of Luther's Small Catechism



### **Lesson 6. Tomorrow What does the Catechism mean for you and future generations?**

#### **Prayer and Introduction**

Important truths of the Reformation:

- ❖ We are declared righteous or good in God's eyes because of Jesus who has paid the penalty we deserve because of our sins. God's declaration is by grace alone and we receive it by faith in Jesus alone.
- ❖ We cannot come to faith on our own "by [our] own thinking for choosing." The Holy Spirit works faith in us through the gospel or the means of grace.
- ❖ When the Holy Spirit brings us to faith we are God's people or saints and sinners at the same time. We do continue to sin and need forgiveness regularly.
- ❖ As believers, we trust what God's Word or the Bible tells us. We trust no human authority but only trust the Scriptures. The Bible is God's Word.
- ❖ The Bible identifies two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They give us forgiveness, life, and salvation and are a means God uses to give us forgiveness and thereby strengthens and comforts us.
- ❖ The church is the assembly of believers in Jesus and includes all men, women, and children of races and social classes. All are equal in the sight of God but not all have the same role in the church.
- ❖ Christians are here on earth as temporary citizens; their citizenship is in heaven. While they are here they are to praise God, love others, and help others .

**1. We understand and believe that God does not deal with us except through the gospel in Word and Sacrament. List four practical implications this principle has for Christians in this life.**

1)

2)

3)

4)

**In what ways can Luther's Small Catechism be a tool to deal with those implications?**

**2. The entire Christian life can be viewed as one of confessing that we are unworthy sinners and receiving the forgiveness of sins. Then why is it important to teach and use Luther's Small Catechism?**

**3. Luther begins each section of the Small Catechism with the words, "As the head of the family should teach it in the simplest way to those in his household." How can this be carried out?**

**Father and Mother with children**

**Single parent with children**

**Divorced parent with children and visiting rights**

**Grandparent**

**4. God has declared sinners righteous, good, and holy because of what Jesus had done. Heaven is ours as a gift of God but we are not yet there. Why is it important to teach and use Luther's Small Catechism?**

**5. What would you say to a fellow believer in your church or family who has not attended Holy Communion for a long time?** Consider what you have learned about our Christian life and about the Lord's Supper.

**Someone who claims to be too busy?**

**Someone who claims to be unworthy?**

**Someone who doesn't seem to care?**

**6. The church is the gathering of believers in Christ without distinction to geography, status, gender, or race. How does the illustration below help you understand that truth?**



**How does any gathering of believers take responsibility for teaching the truths of Scripture Luther gathered in his Small Catechism? List three ways they can take that responsibility.**

1)

2)

3)

**7. List four major events in the life of a Christian.**

1)

2)

3)

4)

**What sections of the Catechism can be helpful when facing those events?**

1)

2)

3)

4)

**8. What would you say to a spouse, son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, or friend who confronted any of these events?** (Choose one event or another that's not listed and write out what you might do or say. If you are working in a group with other Christians, chose an event and share your response. Listen to your fellow Christians; they may surprise you with their responses.)

- 9. Consider the photo below. What lessons does their action teach us?** (It is a picture of Christians in a foreign country sending aid to victims of an earthquake, and, yes, that is a Catechism.)



**Suggest three (3) things you can learn from the photo for you and your church.**

1)

2)

3)

- 10. Write a caption for the picture below that refers in a positive way to the value of Luther's Small Catechism for today's church.** You do not need to mention the words "Small Catechism" or "Luther", but consider some truth you learned from the Catechism.

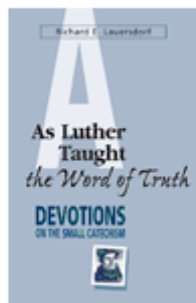


**Your Caption:** \_\_\_\_\_

Share your caption with the chat feature or email your caption to [braunj@nph.wels.net](mailto:braunj@nph.wels.net)

**12. Taking it home.** Take these steps to help use your Catechism regularly.

1. Use it for your regular devotions: Read a portion of the Catechism each day. Start at your birthday each year. Read it with your family. Start at the beginning and read a small portion. Use either Luther's words without the longer exposition or use the exposition. For example, either read the First Commandment by itself or read the First Commandment with the exposition. Complete the entire Catechism and choose another resource. Then return to the catechism again on your next birthday.
2. The new Catechism exposition will have 51 lessons. When it is available this spring, use it and read one lesson each week.
3. The new Catechism exposition also has a section called "Connections" which can be used as a devotion. It includes a quote from Luther or the Confessions, a Bible story exercise, and a hymn.
4. Help your children learn their memory work; relearn it with them including the passages they are asked to know or memorize.
5. Use *As Luther Taught the Word of Truth* by R. Lauersdorf. It is a book of devotions on the Small Catechism (NPH catalog number: 060722)



Something to think about:

I lament my sin and desire comfort and refreshment for my soul (LC Confession 15)

For the Christian way essentially consists in acknowledging ourselves to be sinners and in praying for grace (LC Confession 9)

You are not safe from [the devil] for one hour. How soon he can have you brought suddenly into misery and distress when you least expect it!

Let this, then, be said for encouragement, not only for those of us who are old and grown, but also for the young people, who ought to be brought up in Christian doctrine and understanding. Then the Ten Commandments, the creed, and the Lord's Prayer might be taught to your youth more easily. Then they would receive them with pleasure and seriousness, and so they would use them from their youth and get used to them. For the old are now nearly past this opportunity. So these goals and others cannot be reached unless we train the people who are to come after us and succeed us in our office and work. We should do this in order that they also may bring up their children successfully so that God's Word and the Christian church may be preserved. Therefore let every father of a family know that it is his duty, by God's order and command to teach these things to his children, or to have the children learn what they ought to know (Ephesians 6:4). Since the children are baptized and received into the Christian church they should also enjoy this communion of the Sacrament, in order that they may serve us and be useful to us. They must all certainly help us to believe, love, pray and fight against the devil (LC 5, 84-87)