

In the HOUSE *of the* LORD

LESSON #4 – THE WORD



Lutheran worship is a continual conversation between God and His people. We speak to God in the Confession of Sins, Song of Praise and Prayer of the Day. God then speaks to us through His holy Word in the Scripture lessons and sermon. Even the posture of worshipers portrays this conversation. Worshipers stand out of respect and humility as they approach God's presence to speak to Him in prayers and praise. Worshipers then sit as God speaks to His children in the section of the worship service entitled The Word.

The Bible is the Word of God

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time. We use the Bible in our Lutheran churches, our Lutheran elementary schools, in our worship services and in our homes. Why? What is so special about the Bible? Let's discover those answers as we answer this question: What is the Bible?

- 1 Thessalonians 2:13 *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.*
- Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

How did the prophets who wrote the Old Testament, the evangelists who recorded Jesus' life and words in the Gospels, and the apostles who wrote letters to Christian churches and individuals know what to write down?

- 2 Peter 1:21 *For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
- 2 Samuel 23:2 *The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.*
- 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 *We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.*
- 2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed ...*

Since the Bible is the very Word of God, of what are we assured?

- Numbers 23:19 *God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?*
- John 17:17 *Your word is truth.*
- 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,⁵ so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

The Bible	Old Testament	New Testament
Writers	Moses, Prophets, Kings	Evangelists and Apostles
Language	Hebrew (Aramaic)	Common Greek
Books	39	27
Time	c. 1500 – 400 BC	c. 40 – 100 AD
Content	History of Israel, poetry, laws, prophecy about coming Messiah	Life of Jesus, history of early church, doctrine, prophecy

For what purposes did God give us the Bible?

- John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
- Romans 10:17 *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*
- Psalm 119:105 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*
- 1 Peter 2:2 *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.*
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
- Acts 17:11 *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*

Why do we need the Bible to give us faith?

- Ephesians 2:1 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*
- 1 Corinthians 2:14 *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
- 1 Corinthians 12:3 *No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*
- John 6:33 *The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.*
- 1 Peter 1:23 *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

What does God forbid us to do concerning His Word, the Bible?

- Deuteronomy 4:2 *Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.*
- Revelation 22:18-19 *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*
- 2 Peter 3:16 *He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*
- 2 Peter 1:16 *We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

What does God command regarding His Word?

- Acts 17:11 *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*
- John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
- Luke 11:28 *Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.*
- James 1:22 *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*
- Matthew 28:19-20 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

Why do I want to read and study my Bible regularly?

- 2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness ...*

Why do I want to read and study my Bible regularly?

- 2 Peter 3:17 *Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.*

How long does God's Word stay in effect? For whom does God's Word work?

- Isaiah 40:8 *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.*
- Matthew 24:35 *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

Defending and Confessing the Faith

The Lutheran Church uses the three ecumenical creeds – The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed – as statements of the Christian faith. The Lutheran Church also uses the Lutheran Confessions as clear explanations of the doctrines of the Christian Church as taught in the Holy Bible. Why does the Church need clear statements of faith?

- Matthew 16:13-16 *When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
- Romans 10:9-10 *If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*
- 2 Timothy 4:2-3 *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.*
- 1 Peter 3:15 *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

God gives us His truths for faith, salvation and Christian living in His holy Word. So, why is false teaching/doctrine so dangerous?

- Galatians 1:6-8 *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!*
- 2 Peter 3:16 *His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*
- Romans 16:17 *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.*

Choosing a Christian congregation

Christians gather together in churches in order to worship and study God's Word together. God gives us some directives for choosing a Christian congregation. To what type of congregation does God want you to belong?

- John 8:31-32 *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*
- Matt. 28:20 *... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

What danger exists if we choose to belong to a church that tolerates false doctrine?

- Matthew 7:15 *Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*
- Galatians 5:9 *A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.*

What does God urge you to do when you encounter false doctrine within a Christian church?

- Romans 16:17 *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.*

Choosing a Christian congregation should not be based on how friendly the congregation is or how well the pastor preaches. What should be the reason we join a Christian congregation ... and church body?



Some notes on Church Fellowship:

- Most church bodies today seek unity on the basis of minimizing differences. God teaches us to seek unity on the basis of adherence to the entire Word of God.
- There is a difference between a heterodox church and a cult. A heterodox church uses the Word of God and teaches that Jesus is the Savior. A cult denies that Jesus is true God and denies that He is the Savior. A person who belongs to a cult and who believes what that cult teaches is going to hell. (John 14:6) A person who belongs to a heterodox church body may be going to heaven. (God promises that His Word will not return to Him empty - Isaiah 55:11) Unfortunately, their faith is in constant pressure from the false teachings and they fail to enjoy the full freedom which God has won for us.
- God's Word is clear. The reason that different church bodies come to different conclusions is because of the devil, the sinful world, and our own sinful flesh.
- In practicing church fellowship, we do not judge people's faith. Only God can do that. (1 Samuel 16:7) Instead, we judge teachings, and God has instructed us to do that. (Romans 16:17; 1 John 4:1; Titus 1:9; 2 John 10-11)
- The doctrine of church fellowship, when properly practiced, is a decisive statement of love; love for God's Word, love for our own souls, and love for the souls of others. It is always to be practiced in humility.
- These truths become more and more appealing as we grow in our understanding of God's love for us and for all, and as we grow in our understanding of His Word. (Hebrews 5:11-14)

Since God's Word is how we are brought and kept in the Christian faith, what should be a major portion of every worship service?

THE DIVINE SERVICE/SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

PSALM OF THE DAY

EPISTLE LESSON

VERSE OF THE DAY

GOSPEL LESSON

CHILDREN'S DEVOTION

HYMN OF THE DAY

SERMON

A hymn that teaches the faith: Christian Worship #293 – “God's Word Is Our Great Heritage”

God's Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way;
In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations.

Anyone who
Loves Me
will obey my
Teaching