

Lutheran Confessions

Formula of Concord: Epitome, XI: God's Eternal Foreknowledge and Election

...7. This Christ calls to Himself all sinners and promises them rest, and He is in earnest [seriously wills] that all men should come to Him and suffer themselves to be helped, to whom He offers Himself in His Word, and wishes them to hear it and not to stop their ears or [neglect and] despise the Word. Moreover, He promises the power and working of the Holy Ghost, and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation [that we may remain steadfast in the faith and attain eternal salvation].

8. Therefore we should judge concerning this our election to eternal life neither from reason nor from the Law of God, which lead us either into a reckless, dissolute, Epicurean life or into despair, and excite pernicious thoughts in the hearts of men, for they cannot, as long as they follow their reason, successfully refrain from thinking: If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, no matter what I do; and again: If I am not elected to eternal life, it is of no avail what good I do; it is all [all my efforts are] in vain anyway.

9. But it [the true judgment concerning predestination] must be learned alone from the holy Gospel concerning Christ, in which it is clearly testified that *God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all, and that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and believe in the Lord Christ.* Rom. 11, 32; Ezek. 18, 23; 33, 11; 2 Pet. 3, 9; 1 John 2, 2.

10. Whoever, now, is thus concerned about the revealed will of God, and proceeds according to the order which St. Paul has observed in the Epistle to the Romans, who first directs men to repentance, to knowledge of sins, to faith in Christ, to divine obedience, before he speaks of the mystery of the eternal election of God, to him this doctrine [concerning God's predestination] is useful and consolatory.

11. However, that *many are called and few chosen*, Matt. 22, 14, does not mean that God is not willing to save everybody; but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but wilfully despise it, stop their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot perform His work in them, or, when they have heard it, make light of it again and do not heed it, for which [that they perish] not God or His election, but their wickedness, is responsible. [2 Pet. 2, 1ff; Luke 11, 49, 52; Heb. 12, 25f.]

... In Him we are to seek the eternal election of the Father, who has determined in His eternal divine counsel that He would save no one except those who know His Son Christ and truly believe on Him. Other thoughts are to be [entirely] banished [from the minds of the godly], as they proceed not from God, but from the suggestion of the Evil Foe...

13. Besides, we should use the greatest diligence to live according to the will of God, and, as St. Peter admonishes, 2 Pet. 1, 10, *make our calling sure*, and especially adhere to [not recede a finger's breadth from] the revealed Word: that can and will not fail us.

14. By this brief explanation of the eternal election of God His glory is entirely and fully given to God, that out of pure mercy alone, without all merit of ours, He saves us according to the purpose of His will; besides, also, no cause is given any one for despondency or a vulgar, wild life [no opportunity is afforded either for those more severe agitations of mind and faintheartedness or for Epicureanism].

(Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.

Prayer

Grant, we implore You, merciful Lord, to Your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve You with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN** (*Collect for Trinity 20*)

Word of God: St. Matthew 22:1-14 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

- Note: The phrase "The kingdom of heaven/God" seeks to describe...
 - Not the way God works at a place called heaven(Lk 17:20-21)
 - But the way God works in the one holy Christian Church for all time (John 3:5, Rom 14:17, Psalm 103:9—God's throne is in heaven).
- "...a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son." Examine the Old Testament imagery that would surely have come to mind.
 - King =LORD 1 Sam 12:12, 8:6-7; Ps 2:6, 24:7, 44:4, 47:5-7, Zech 9:9
 - Meal/Banquet = Ex 12-Passover, 24:9-11; Is 25:6, 55:1-3; Prov 9:1-6
 - Wedding =Ps 45 also intro; Jer 2:32; Hos 3:1-5; Gen 2:24, Is 54:6
 - Son =Ex 4:22 Israel; Dt 32:6; Is 9:6; Jer 31:9, Hos 11:1
 - Garments(or lack of) =Gen 2:25, 3:7, 21; 9:22-27, Is 20:3-5
- To whom did the king first send his servants? (v.2,8) What was their reaction? (v. 3)
- Once again, to whom did this gracious king send his servants? (v.4,8) Why did the King do that? They had already refused his invitation.
- Who had advanced notice of Christ's coming?
- Some of that first group called "the rest" got violent. How did they treat the servants because of the invitation? The King's reaction?
- How does the King deal with both parts of that first group? (v.7)
- Now, who does the King invite?(v.9-10) Is anyone excluded?
- In what sense are these Christians "good" and "bad"? (1Jn 1:8)
- The host would provide appropriate wedding garments for a royal feast. What did the man say who refused to wear what had been provided?
- What is the provided wedding garment? (Rev 7:13-14, Gal 3:26-27)
- According to this parable, why can't the phrase, "For many are invited, but few are chosen," mean God doesn't really want to save all people? (See 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Ths 2:14 also see the section 11 to the left.)
- By nature, we are unable to accept God's invitation(1 Cor 2:14), thus we are not saved by a human decision(Jn 1:13). We are saved by the graciousness of God through the completed work of Christ who calls us by the Holy Spirit who creates faith in us that puts on Christ. See it here!

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn TLH #350, stanza 3
 Lord's Prayer, 1st Petition and Meaning, p.302
 2 Thessalonians 2:13b-14

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses

"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise

"Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia." p.225

Reading

St. Matthew 22:1-14 (back)

Hymn

"Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee"
 (insert)

Catechesis on... (back)

St. Matthew 22:1-14
 Liturgy
 Catechism

--prayer based on reading

+ Recite Word by Word insert

Ten Commandments
 Lord's Prayer
 Apostles' Creed
 Sacrament of Holy Baptism
 Matthew 28:19
 Mark 16:16
 Confession & Absolution
 John 20:22-23
 Sacrament of the Altar
 Words of Institution

Collect of the Day

--prayer based on reading

R. AMEN

Benediction

R. AMEN

Catechesis on St. Matthew 22:1-14

1And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.”’ 5But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ 10So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14For many are called, but few are chosen.” (NKJV)

The Kingdom of Heaven=The Church

“We do not concede to the papists that they are the church, for they are not. 2 Nor shall we pay any attention to what they command or forbid in the name of the church, for, thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, **holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd.** 3 So children pray, “I believe in one holy Christian church.” Its holiness does not consist of surplices, tonsures, albs, or other ceremonies of theirs which they have invented over and above the Holy

Scriptures, but it consists of the Word of God and true faith.” (Smalcald Articles, III, XII).

Man’s Perverse Will

39 This would also overturn and destroy for us the foundation, namely, that **the Holy Spirit wills to be certainly present with and efficacious and active through the Word when it is proclaimed, heard, and meditated upon....** 40 On the contrary, as God has ordained in his counsel that the Holy Spirit would call, enlighten, and convert the elect through the Word and that he would justify and save all who accept Christ through true faith, so he has also ordained in his counsel that he would harden, reject, and condemn all who, when they are called through the Word, spurn the Word and persistently resist the Holy Spirit who wants to work efficaciously in them through the Word. 41 In this sense “many are called, but few are chosen,” for few accept the Word and obey it; **the majority despise the Word and refuse to come to the wedding. The reason for such contempt of the Word is not God’s foreknowledge but man’s own perverse will, which rejects or perverts the means and instrument of the Holy Spirit which God offers to him through the call and resists the Holy Spirit who wills to be efficaciously active through the Word, as Christ says, “How often would I have gathered you together and you would not!” (Matt. 23:37).**

The Holy Spirit and the Word

“On the other hand, it is correct to say that in conversion, through the attraction of the Holy Spirit, God changes stubborn and unwilling people into willing people, and that after conversion, in the daily exercise of repentance, the reborn will of man is not idle but cooperates in all the works which the Holy Spirit performs through us...

19 Prior to man’s conversion there are only two efficient causes, namely, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as the Holy Spirit’s instrument whereby he effects conversion. Man should hear this Word, though he cannot give it credence and accept it by his own powers but solely by the grace and operation of God the Holy Spirit.” (FC Ep II, 17,19).

CATECHESIS ON ST. MATTHEW 22:1-14



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The Lord's Prayer, First Petition

“But what is it to pray that his name may become holy? Is it not already holy?”

Answer: Yes, in itself it is holy, but not our use of it” (LC III 37).

God's Name

Exodus 3:13-15, “Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” 14And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘**I AM(Yahweh)** has sent me to you.’ ” 15Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The Lord(Yahweh) God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.

This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.”

Exodus 20:7, “You shall not take **the name of the LORD(Yahweh) your God** in vain, for the LORD(Yahweh) will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

Luke 1:49, “For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and **holy is His name.**

Matthew 1:21, “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name **Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.**”

Pure Doctrine

“In the first place, then, it is profaned **when men preach, teach, and speak in God's name anything that is false and deceptive**, using his name to cloak lies and make them acceptable; this is the worst profanation and dishonor of the divine name. Likewise, when men grossly misuse the divine name as a cloak for their shame, by swearing, cursing, conjuring, etc” (LC III 41-42).

Jeremiah 23:28, “The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully.”

1 Timothy 4:14-16, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. 15Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”

2 Timothy 2:15, 3:14-17, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.... But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Holy Life

“In the next place, it is also profaned **by an openly evil life and wicked works, when those who are called Christians** and God's people are adulterers, drunkards, gluttons, jealous persons, and slanderers. Here again God's name must be profaned and blasphemed because of us” (LC III 43).

John 8:47, “He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

John 15:16, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

God's Name Placed on Us

“**God's name was given to us when we became Christians at Baptism**, and so we are called children of God and enjoy the sacraments, through which he so incorporates us with himself that all that is God's must serve for our use. 38 So we should realize that we are under the great necessity of duly honoring his name and keeping it holy and sacred, regarding it as the greatest treasure and most sacred thing we have, and praying, as good children, that his name, which is already holy in heaven, may also be kept holy on earth by us and all the world. 39 How does it become holy among us? The plainest answer is: When both our teaching and our life are godly and Christian. Since in this prayer we call God our Father, it is our duty in every way to behave as good children so that he may receive from us not shame but honor and praise.”

Matthew 28:19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Acts 2:41-42, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Leviticus 21:6, “**They{the Priests} shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God**, for they offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy.”

1 Peter 2:5, 9-10, “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, **a holy priesthood**, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.... But you are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that you **may proclaim the praises of Him** who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

49] As we prayed in the First Petition concerning the honor and name of God **that He would prevent the world from adorning its lies and wickedness with it, but cause it to be esteemed sublime and holy both in doctrine and life, so that He may be praised and magnified in us**, so here we pray that His kingdom also may come.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XI. Of God's Eternal Foreknowledge [Predestination] and Election

78] But the reason why not all who hear it believe, and some are therefore condemned the more deeply [eternally to severer punishments], is not because God had begrudged them their salvation; but it is their own fault, as they have heard the Word in such a manner as not to learn, but only to despise, blaspheme, and disgrace it, and have resisted the Holy Ghost, who through the Word wished to work in them, as was the case at the time of Christ with the Pharisees and their adherents. **79]** Hence the apostle distinguishes with especial care the work of God, who alone makes vessels of honor, and the work of the devil and of man, who by the instigation of the devil, and not of God, has made himself a vessel of dishonor. For thus it is written, Rom. 9, 22f : *God endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.*

80] Here, then, the apostle clearly says that God *endured* with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, but does not say that He *made* them vessels of wrath; for if this had been His will, He would not have required any great long-suffering for it. The fault, however, that they are fitted for destruction belongs to the devil and to men themselves, and not to God.

81] For all preparation for condemnation is by the devil and man, through sin, and in no respect by God, who does not wish that any man be damned; how, then, should He Himself prepare any man for condemnation? For as God is not a cause of sins, so, too, He is no cause of punishment, of damnation; but the only cause of damnation is sin; for *the wages of sin is death*, Rom. 6, 23. And as God does not will sin, and has no pleasure in sin, so He does not wish *the death of the sinner either*, Ezek. 33, 11, nor has He pleasure in his condemnation. For He is not willing *that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*, 2 Pet. 3, 9. So, too, it is written in Ezek. 18, 23; 33, 11: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* **82]** And St. Paul testifies in clear words that from vessels of dishonor vessels of honor may be made by God's power and working, when he writes thus, 2 Tim. 2, 21: *If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.* For he who is to purge himself must first have been unclean, and hence a vessel of dishonor. But concerning the vessels of mercy he says clearly that the Lord Himself has prepared them for glory, which he does not say concerning the damned, who themselves, and not God, have prepared themselves as vessels of damnation.

83] Moreover, it is to be diligently considered that when God punishes sin with sins, that is, when He afterwards punishes with obduracy and blindness those who had been converted, because of their subsequent security, impenitence, and wilful sins, this should not be interpreted to mean that it never had been God's good pleasure that such persons should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. For both these facts are God's revealed will:

First, that God will receive into grace all who repent and believe in Christ.

Secondly, that He also will punish those who willfully turn away from the holy commandment, and again entangle themselves in the filth of the world, 2 Pet. 2, 20, and garnish their hearts for Satan, Luke 11, 25f, and do despite unto the Spirit of God, Heb. 10, 29, and that they shall be hardened, blinded, and eternally condemned if they persist therein.

The Covering of Sin

“1. That **this inherited damage** is the reason why all of us, because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, are in God's disfavor and are children of wrath by nature, as St. Paul says (Rom. 5:12)....

5. This inherited damage is so great and terrible that in baptized believers it can be covered up and forgiven before God only for the Lord Christ's sake. Likewise, **only the Holy Spirit's regeneration and renovation can heal man's nature, which original sin has perverted and corrupted**. Of course, this process is only begun in this life, not to be completed until the life yonder.”

Faith thus looks at the person of Christ, how this person was placed under the law for us, bore our sin, and in his path to the Father rendered to his Father entire, perfect obedience from his holy birth to his death in the stead of us poor sinners, and thus covered up our disobedience, which inheres in our nature, in its thoughts, words, and deeds, so that our disobedience is not reckoned to us for our damnation but is forgiven and remitted by sheer grace for Christ's sake alone (FC SD, XXVIII)