



Faith Alone

"Do you think there is only one way to be saved?" David asked.

"I think that's right if you mean that Jesus is the only one who can save us," replied his dad.

"Well," David continued, "Jerry went to a youth rally last weekend, and he said he was 'saved' there by giving himself to Jesus. He said I couldn't really be saved because I haven't given myself to Jesus like he did."

"Jerry's experience may be important for him, but it's not required for you or for anyone else. Salvation isn't something we get only when we ask for it; it is something God freely gives to us. And how we become aware of that gift can be very different for different people. But I don't think how I came to faith is as important as the fact that I have faith in Christ."

"What do you mean?"

"I started coming to church because your mom wanted me to come. But gradually that began to change. I kept hearing the pastor say that God was interested in me and my life. I started reading the Bible. I'm still not sure when I actually started believing that God loved me, but I know that it was during the time your mom and I were engaged."

"So you never 'gave yourself to Jesus'?" asked David.

"No," his dad replied, "I think it's more like Jesus gave himself to me, and all I did was say 'thanks!'"



of the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Down:

1. The last writing that was added to the Book of Concord.

2. The three chief symbols of the Christian church.

4. A teaching tool to help pastors called the Large _____.

7. The _____ of Concord is a collection of writings that summarize the Lutheran faith.

9. The _____ Articles were written by Luther to summarize the Christian faith.

"What Must I Do to Be Saved?"

The sixteenth-century reformers offered a helpful formula to remind us that salvation is God's free and undeserved gift. It does not rely on what we do, but rather on what Jesus had done for us. That formula is:

FAITH ALONE—

GRACE ALONE—

WORD ALONE.

Does this formula help you answer this important question of faith?

Grace Alone

"You mean you don't believe in God! But I thought you went to temple all the time."

Cindy was speaking with her best friend, Sari, whose family were practicing Buddhists.

"It's not that we don't believe in God; it's that we don't believe there is a god. Buddha was a person, who showed us that the way to perfection was through acting kindly toward others. So we try to please ourselves by helping others—not trying to please a supreme being, like you Christians."

"But 'trying to please God' is not what Christianity is about!" Cindy answered. "We can never be perfect on our own, and so we can never please God. Christianity teaches that God loves us and wants a relationship with us, even though it is not possible through our efforts."

"Then you don't try to live a good life?" Sari asked.

"We do, but not so that we can earn God's favor," answered Cindy. "God loves us so much that God forgives us for our failings. That is why Jesus came, so that through his death we might understand just how far God is willing to go to share his love with us. When we believe that, we know that we are right with God. And doing good things, like helping the poor or just being honest, are easier because we are so thankful for all that God has first done for us."



Word Alone

John and Tasha had come to talk with their pastor about a recent encounter with two Mormon missionaries.

"Then they gave us a copy of the Book of Mormon. They said it was God's word and that it completed the Bible," Tasha said. "If God wrote this, why don't we use it in our church?"

"Over the years," said Pastor Paula, "people have claimed that the apostles wrote many books that were not included as part of the scriptures.

We don't read those because the church has always insisted that what one says supports the entire message of the scriptures. And the center of that message is that God speaks most clearly through Jesus—what Jesus said and also what Jesus did."

"We believe that all of scripture promises us that God will redeem humankind and restore a proper relationship between us and God. That redemption was accomplished through what Christ did. Anyone who says that something more is needed, like what you might read in the Book of Mormon, is not being true to that scriptural witness. That's why we do not read other writings like the Book of Mormon."

"But didn't you say in confirmation class that we also believe in the Lutheran Confessions?" asked John.

"We read them, but we do not place them on the same level as scripture. Lutherans believe that the confessions tell us what scripture means. But it is only the scripture itself that we turn to in order to discover God's will for us."



Worship

Group 1
Group 2
All

In a world that stresses winning,
Where being second best is not good enough,

In a society that measures one's value by what one has
And not by who one is,

We thank you God for grace.

In a world where 10,000 die daily from hunger,
And wars drive millions from their homes,
In a society where violence reaches into every size community,

And millions live their lives in despair,
We give you thanks for faith.

Thank you God for Jesus Christ,
The Word made flesh,
The source of life.
Thank you, God, for telling me
About a love that sets all free.

We thank you for the Word.

Putting It Together

These puzzle names are parts of the Lutheran confessions. Fill in as many words as you can.

Cross:

A defense or explanation of one's position. The last writing that was added to the Book of Concord.

The _____ technique is an aid to Christian education in the home.

The city in which the first summary of Lutheran teachings were presented to the emperor.

A rite in which one identifies one's sins, asks God for forgiveness, and is promised God's grace.

A German monk, priest, and university professor whose writings and teachings about Christianity began the Protestant reformation of the sixteenth century.

The subject of a treatise by Philip Melancthon written to define the power

