



3. CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them, and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son ☩ and of the Holy Spirit.

John 1:19-28

²²Then [the priests and Levites] asked [John the Baptist], “Who are you? Tell us so we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ just as Isaiah the prophet said.” ²⁴They had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵So they asked John, “Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet?” ²⁶“I baptize with water,” John answered. “Among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.”

(Excerpt from the Gospel for the Last Sunday in Advent, EHV)

LAW & GOSPEL

1. Review: We refer to our sinful natures as the “Old Adam,” which are drowned daily in Baptism. Why do we call them this? (Consult Genesis 2-3 if needed)
2. In **Genesis 2:8-9, 16-17**, we read, “The Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made every kind of tree grow—trees that are pleasant to look at and good for food, including the Tree of Life in the middle of the garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil...The Lord God gave a command to the man. He said, “You may freely eat from every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die.”

What *law/command* did God give Adam? What *promise* did God give Adam?

3. Because Adam sinned and did not *believe* God, what did God say would happen to him in **Genesis 3:17-19**? What would be the end result of Adam's *work* from now on?
 "The soil is cursed on account of you...By the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the soil, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

4. However, God also said this in **Genesis 3:15**: "And I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

We call this the *proto-evangelion*, or the first Gospel promise of a Savior.
 "Gospel" means...

Law and Gospel are the two main teachings of the Bible. The entire Bible can be divided into these two teachings. The Law is that Word of God which tells us how we are to be, and what we are to do and not to do. The Gospel is that Word of God which reveals the salvation Christ has won for all people.

5. What is the difference between the Law and the Gospel?

Luke 10:28: Do this and you will live.

John 19:30: Jesus said, "**It is finished!**"

The Law...

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The Gospel...

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6. Why do we need the Law?

Romans 3:19-20: Now we know that whatever the law says is addressed to those who are under the law, so that every mouth will be silenced and the whole world will be subject to God's judgment. For this reason, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by works of the law, for through the law we become aware of sin.

CONFESSIO

7. We begin our service by confessing our sins. To confess our sins means to...

Psalm 32:5: I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Joel 2:12-13: Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and grief. Tear your heart and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in mercy, and he relents from sending disaster.

8. What sins do we (or should we) confess? (Consider your own situation according to the Ten Commandments. Read through them now.)

"Confession consists of two parts: one, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the pastor or confessor as from God Himself, and in no way doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven." (**The Small Catechism, Confession**)

9. Is the important part of Confession and Absolution the work of confessing? Or the receiving and believing of forgiveness?

10. Read the passages below. Does God forgive us *because* we confess our sins?

Luke 23:33-34: They crucified Him...Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

John 19:30: Jesus said, "**It is finished!**"

11. How does God *absolve* us?

1 John 1:7: the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 2:2: And He Himself is the propitiation [or atoning sacrifice] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

12. God absolves, or washes away, all our sins by the blood of Christ. So how can the pastor also absolve sins?

John 20:21-23 Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Matthew 9:6-8: But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

KYRIE ELEISON

13. Kyrie Eleison is a Greek phrase meaning...

Luke 18:38: And [the blind man] cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Luke 17:13: And [the ten who were lepers] lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

Matthew 15:22: And behold, a woman of Canaan...cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David!"

14. How do we know God will have mercy on us?

John 1:1-14: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...All things were made through Him...In Him was life, and the life was the light of men...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

John 3:17: For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Titus 3:4-6: But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

READ: The Ten Commandments & their Explanations in the Small Catechism

READ: The Small Catechism on Confession

MEMORIZE: The Ten Commandments & the Primary text for Confession: **John 20:21-23**