

The Feast of Pentecost

For this reason we will now explain further from God's Word how (a) a person is converted to God; (b) how and through what means (namely, through the oral Word and the holy Sacraments) the Holy Spirit wants to be effective in us, to work and bestow in our hearts true repentance, faith, and new spiritual power and the ability to do good; and (c) how we should respond to these means and use them.

It is not God's will that anyone should be damned, but that all people should be converted to Him and saved eternally.

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. (Ezekiel 33:11)

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. [John 3:16]

This guides how we understand the testimonies of Scripture that speak of the majesty to which the human nature in Christ is exalted. We do not understand them to mean that the divine majesty, which is peculiar to the divine nature of God's Son, is in the person of the Son of Man to be ascribed to Christ simply and purely according to His divine nature. Nor do we understand them to mean that this majesty is to be in Christ's human nature in such a way that His human nature would only have the title and name by a phrase and manner of speaking (i.e., only in words, but [in deed and truth] doesn't have any communion whatever with it). For in that way it might also be said truthfully that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in all the creatures in whom God dwells (especially believers and saints). (God is a spiritual, undivided essence. Therefore, He is present everywhere and in all creatures. Wherever He is dwelling—but especially in believers and saints—there He has His majesty with Him.) We could say that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, and all power in heaven and earth is given, because the Holy Spirit, who has all power, is given to believers. In this way, then, no distinction would be made between Christ, according to His human nature, and other holy men! So

Christ would be deprived of His majesty, which He has received above all creatures, as a man or according to His human nature. For no other creature—neither man nor angel—can or shall say, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” For although God is in the saints with all the fullness of His Godhead that He has everywhere with Himself, He does not dwell in them bodily. Nor is He personally united with them as in Christ. For from such personal union it follows that Christ says, even according to His human nature, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” Also John 13:3 says, “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands.” Also Colossians 2:9 says, “For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” Also Scripture says, “You have crowned Him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under His feet. Now in putting everything in subjection to Him, He left nothing outside His control” (Hebrews 2:7–8). “He is exempted who put all things in subjection under Him.”

However, Christ, as God's only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father [John 1:18], has announced the Father's will to us. In this way He has also announced our eternal election to eternal life. He says, “The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Likewise He says, “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life” (John 6:40). And again, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

The Father wants all people to hear this proclamation and desires that they come to Christ. Christ does not drive these people from Him, as it is written, “whoever comes to Me I will never cast out” (John 6:37).

In order that we may come to Christ, the Holy Spirit works true faith through the hearing of the Word. The apostle testifies about this when he says, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17), that is, when it is preached in its truth and purity.

Solid Declaration 11.48–49, viii.67–70, xi.67–79; Concordia: *The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

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