

Sexagesima

APOSTLE'S CREED – THE THIRD ARTICLE

Where the Spirit does not cause the Word to be preached and roused in the heart so that it is understood, it is lost [Matthew 13:19]. This was the case under the papacy, where faith was entirely put under the bench. No one recognized Christ as his Lord or the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier. That is, no one believed that Christ is our Lord in the sense that He has gained this treasure for us, without our works and merit [Romans 4:6], and made us acceptable to the Father. What, then, was lacking? This: the Holy Spirit was not there to reveal it and cause it to be preached. But men and evil spirits were there. They taught us to obtain grace and be saved by our works. There is no Christian Church in that. For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit who creates, calls, and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord.

LORD'S PRAYER – THE THIRD PETITION

If we would be Christians, therefore, we must surely expect and count on having the devil with all his angels and the world as our enemies [Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:9]. They will bring every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where God's Word is preached, accepted, or believed and produces fruit, there the holy cross cannot be missing [Acts 14:22]. And let no one think that he shall have peace [Matthew 10:34]. He must risk whatever he has upon earth—possessions, honor, house and estate, wife and children, body and life. Now, this hurts our flesh and the old Adam [Ephesians 4:22]. The test is to be steadfast and to suffer with patience [James 5:7–8] in whatever way we are assaulted, and to let go whatever is taken from us [1 Peter 2:20–21].

So there is just as great a need, as in all the other petitions, that we pray without ceasing, "Dear Father, Your will be done, not the devil's will or our enemies' or anything that would persecute and suppress Your holy Word or hinder Your kingdom. Grant that we may bear with patience and overcome whatever is to be endured because

of Your Word and kingdom, so that our poor flesh may not yield or fall away because of weakness or sluggishness."

LORD'S PRAYER – THE SIXTH PETITION

And lead us not into temptation.

We have now heard enough about what toil and labor is needed to keep all that we pray for and to persevere. This, however, is not done without weakness and stumbling. Although we have received forgiveness and a good conscience and are entirely acquitted, yet our life is of such a nature that we stand today, and tomorrow we fall [Isaiah 40:6–8]. Therefore, even though we are godly now and stand before God with a good conscience, we must pray again that He would not allow us to fall again and yield to trials and temptations.

Temptation, however, or (as our Saxons in olden times used to call it) *Bekörunge*, is of three kinds: of the flesh, of the world, and of the devil. For we dwell in the flesh and carry the old Adam about our neck. He exerts himself and encourages us daily to unchastity, laziness, gluttony and drunkenness, greed and deception, to defraud our neighbor and to overcharge him [Galatians 5:19–21; Colossians 3:5–8]. In short, the old Adam encourages us to have all kinds of evil lusts, which cling to us by nature and to which we are moved by the society, the example, and what we hear and see of other people. They often wound and inflame even an innocent heart.

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