

Oculi ~ Third Sunday in Lent

In order to explain this controversy in a Christian way, according to the guidance of God's Word, and to decide it by His grace, our doctrine, faith, and confession are as follows:

In spiritual and divine things the unregenerate person's intellect, heart, and will are utterly unable, by his natural powers, to understand, believe, accept, think, will, begin, effect, do, work, or concur in working anything. They are entirely dead to what is good [Ephesians 2:5]. They are corrupt. So in mankind's nature since the fall, before regeneration, there is not the least spark of spiritual power remaining or present. No person can prepare himself for God's grace or accept the grace God offers. A person is not capable of grace for and of himself. He cannot apply or accommodate himself to it. By his own powers he is not able to aid, do, work, or agree in working anything toward his conversion. He cannot do this fully, halfway, or even in part not even in the smallest or most trivial part. He is sin's servant (John 8:34) and the devil's captive, by whom he is moved (Ephesians 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:26). Therefore, the natural free will according to its perverted disposition and nature is strong and active only to do what is displeasing and contrary to God [Genesis 6:5].

Solid Declaration 11.6-7; Concordia : *The Lutheran Confessions : A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

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