

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

In the same way, renewal and sanctification also do not belong in the article or matter of justification before God, even though it is a benefit of the Mediator, Christ, and a work of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification follows justification since, on account of our corrupt flesh, sanctification is not entirely perfect and complete in this life. Dr. Luther writes well about this in his beautiful and large commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, in which he says the following:

We concede that good works and love must also be taught; but this must be in its proper time and place, that is, when the question has to do with works, apart from this chief doctrine. But here the point at issue is how we are justified and attain eternal life. To this we answer with Paul: We are pronounced righteous solely by faith in Christ, not by the works of the Law or by love. This is not because we reject works or love, as our adversaries accuse us of doing, but because we refuse to let ourselves be distracted from the principal point at issue here, as Satan is trying to do. So since we are now dealing with the topic of justification, we reject and condemn works; for this topic will not allow of any discussion of good works. On this issue, therefore, we simply cut off all laws and all works of the Law.

Troubled hearts should have a firm, sure consolation. Also, due honor should be given to Christ's merit and God's grace. Therefore, the Scriptures teach that the righteousness of faith before God stands only in the gracious reconciliation or the forgiveness of sins, which is presented to us out of pure grace, only for the sake of the merit of the Mediator, Christ. This is received through faith alone in the Gospel promise. In the same way also, in justification before God, faith relies neither on contrition nor on love or other virtues. Faith relies on Christ alone and on His complete obedience by which He has fulfilled the Law for us. This obedience is credited to believers for righteousness.

Solid Declaration III.28-30; Concordia: *The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

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