

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

We unanimously believe, teach, and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine in which God's righteous, unchangeable will is revealed. It shows what the quality of a person should be in his nature, thoughts, words, and works, in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God. It also threatens its transgressors with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishments. For as Luther writes against the law-stormers [Antinomians]:

Everything that reproves sin is and belongs to the Law. Its peculiar office is to rebuke sin and to lead to the knowledge of sins (Romans 3:20; 7:7).

Because unbelief is the root and wellspring of all sins that must be rebuked and reprov'd, the Law rebukes unbelief also.

It is true that the Law with its doctrine is illustrated and explained by the Gospel. Nevertheless, it remains the Law's peculiar office to rebuke sins and teach about good works.

The Law rebukes unbelief, that is, when people do not believe God's Word. Now the Gospel is God's Word, and it alone properly teaches and commands people to believe in Christ. The Holy Spirit, through the Law's office, also rebukes unbelief, that is, when people do not believe in Christ.

Yet it is properly the Gospel alone that teaches about saving faith in Christ. Now, a person has not kept God's Law, but has transgressed it when his corrupt nature, thoughts, words, and works fight against it. Therefore, he is under God's wrath, death, all temporal calamities, and the punishment of hellfire. The Gospel is properly a doctrine that teaches what a person should believe, so that he receives forgiveness of sins with God. In other words, it teaches that God's Son, our Lord Christ, has taken upon Himself and borne the Law's curse and has atoned and paid for all our sins. Through Him alone we again enter into favor with God, receive forgiveness of sins through faith and are delivered from death and all the punishments of sins, and are eternally saved.

Solid Declaration v.17-20; Concordia : *The Lutheran Confessions : A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

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