

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Everything that comforts, that offers God's favor and grace to transgressors of the Law, is, and is properly called, the Gospel. It is a good and joyful message that God will not punish sins, but will forgive them for Christ's sake.

Every penitent sinner ought to believe (i.e., place his confidence) in the Lord Christ alone. For Christ "was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). "He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21), "whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). His obedience is credited to us for righteousness before God's strict court, so that the Law, as set forth above, is a ministry that kills through the letter and preaches condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:6, 9). The Gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), which preaches righteousness and gives the Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:18; Galatians 3:2). Dr. Luther taught this distinction with special diligence in nearly all his writings and has properly shown that the knowledge of God from the Gospel is far different from that which is taught and learned from the Law. Even the pagans, to a certain extent, had a knowledge of God from the natural law. But they neither knew Him nor glorified Him correctly (Romans 1:19–32) [LW 22:150–54].

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