

**THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**The Presentation of the Augsburg Confession**  
**Romans 10:8-13 - June 29, 2014**

**<sup>8</sup>But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: <sup>9</sup>That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. <sup>11</sup>As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup>For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, <sup>13</sup>for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

This morning we go back to Germany 484 years ago. The Reformation of the Christian church was in full swing. The forced unity in the church of Europe was broken. But was that unity broken beyond repair? The Emperor, Charles V, still wanted to bring about church unity and he called a council, called a diet, for April 8, 1530, in Augsburg, Germany. It was his intention **"to consider with love and kindness the opinions and views of everyone in order to reduce them to one single Christian truth and agreement."**

Both Lutherans and Roman Catholics were invited. The Lutherans thought the invitation looked good. The Elector, John the Steadfast of Saxony, commissioned four men to draw up a document spelling out the Lutheran faith, its customs and ceremonies where there was controversy with the Roman Catholic Church. The four men chosen to write the document were Martin Luther, John Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, and Philip Melancthon.

Three different sets of articles were drawn up but there was not time to put the three into one document. Luther could not go to Augsburg because he was under the condemnation of the Roman church and they could take him dead or alive. He waited nearby at the Coburg Castle and kept in constant contact with the others at Augsburg.

The Lutheran and Roman Catholic princes and theologians were waiting and ready for the debate but the Emperor was 2 1/2 months late! Philip Melancthon used the time to put the three sets of articles into one set, which we today call the Augsburg Confession. It was OK'd by Martin Luther and was written in both Latin and German.

On June 24<sup>th</sup> the sessions finally began but not until late in the day. The Emperor really did not want the documents read. Chancellor Bruck insisted that the Augsburg Confession be read as promised in the invitation. He also requested that it be read in German (so the people could understand it). The Emperor wanted it read in Latin. A long discussion followed. Elector John reminded the Emperor they were on German soil and the Emperor finally gave in. By then it was too late in the day to read the two-hour long document. It was placed on the agenda for the next day.

Trying to control what was happening, the Emperor moved the meeting to a smaller room, a room that held less than 200 people. The room was packed. Many more people were in the halls and in the outside courtyard. As vice chancellor Beyer stood to read the German version all of the Lutherans stood but the Emperor made them sit down. Beyer read the document loudly and clearly enough so even those outside could hear it.

After the reading Duke William of Bavaria asked Dr. Eck, the chief theologian of the Roman Catholics, if he could refute the Augsburg Confession. Eck replied that he could do it on the basis of the writings of some of the church fathers but not on the basis of the Scriptures. Duke William replied, "Do I understand that the Lutherans are sitting in the Scriptures, and we are on the outside?" Duke William was really asking a question that we still ask 484 years later:

**"WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?"**

## **WE BELIEVE IT IN OUR HEARTS.**

THE JEWS WANTED TO BE SAVED BY KEEPING THE LAW.

They had misinterpreted the purpose of God's law ever since it was given on Mt. Sinai. The law of God has three purposes: It is a mirror to show us our sin; it is a curb or bridle to stop us from the outbreaks of sin; and, it is a guide for the way that God wants us to live. The law was never intended to save us. Because of original sin we do not even start our lives with a clean slate -- we are already guilty before God. Added to that sin we also have our own actual sins with the result that we could never reach the perfection our God demands.

That is why God began the law at Mt. Sinai by saying, "**I am the LORD, your God.**" This is the Triune God whom we regularly talk about. This is the LORD who loves us so much that he gave his one and only Son for our salvation. Because we could not keep the law with the perfection he demanded, he accepted the perfection of his Son in our stead and on our behalf.

THE APOSTLE PAUL MAKES THAT SAME MESSAGE CLEAR TO THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS.

He often repeats God's words: "**You must be perfect.**" He also clearly teaches that no one can keep God's law perfectly. He clearly teaches that "**all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God.**" That includes us! There is no way we can excuse ourselves or argue our way out of condemnation from God. Where is our hope? "**Our hope is found in nothing else than Jesus' blood and righteousness.**" God justifies us by grace. This is God's undeserved favor toward us. He gives us this through faith in his Son Jesus.

God has declared us just or right by grace through faith. This is the chief teaching of the Christian religion. This is the teaching that makes true Christianity different than any other religion in the world. Every other religion, to a greater or lesser degree, demands something on the part of the person. Whether you are a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Mormon, a Jehovah's Witness, a follower of New Age, it depends on you and what you do. True Christianity reveals that God has done it all for us out of love for us. He sent his Son Jesus to do it for us. This is the good news - - the gospel! We make it our own as the Holy Spirit works that faith in our heart. Listen once again to Paul in our text: <sup>8</sup>**But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:** <sup>9</sup>**That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** <sup>10</sup>**For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**" Listen to Paul's appeal. Paul is appealing to Scripture! This is how God spoke in the past and still speaks to us today -- through the Word!

These words are addressed to all of us today. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior? Do you believe that Jesus Christ actually died on the cross and bodily rose from the dead as the Scriptures declare? Then you are a Christian! Then you are saved! As Paul says, <sup>11</sup>**As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."**

Transition: Listen again to the words of Paul: <sup>9</sup>**That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** <sup>10</sup>**For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**" Notice that not only does Paul talk about believing with our hearts but he also talks about confessing with our mouths. They are two sides of the same coin. For if we believe with the heart, we will confess with our mouths!

## **WE CONFESS IT WITH OUR MOUTHS.**

SAINT PAUL SURELY DID THAT.

He said, "**I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.**" He ended up giving his life for the sake of that Gospel.

CHANCELLOR BEYER SURELY DID THAT IN 1530 AT AUGSBURG.

He read that Augsburg Confession loudly and clearly for all to hear. He was not afraid to confess openly what he truly believed in his heart. He did not know what the repercussions might be but that was not the point -- he had to confess!

WHAT ABOUT US TODAY?

Are you willing to confess with your mouths what you believe in your hearts? As Moses to Pharaoh? As Jeremiah to Jehoiakim even when he knew he would be thrown into a cistern? As Stephen who was stoned for preaching the resurrection of Jesus from the dead? As Paul who testified before the Emperor Nero and was put to death?

Or, are you more like Peter on that Thursday night? He denied Jesus to the servant girl. He even cursed and swore in order to cover up his faith. Remember, there was forgiveness for repentant Peter. The Lord heard Peter's cry of repentance. The Lord restored Peter and empowered him so he could preach a sermon on Pentecost resulting in 3000 conversions. There is forgiveness for us as repentant sinners. We pray for that forgiveness "for Jesus' sake," in other words through his merits, not ours. We pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us to follow the confessional example of those who went before us.

Confessionalism is not popular today. Rather than talk about what is Biblical and confessional it is more popular to talk about what is politically correct. Many follow this proverb for their life: "Go along to get along." Sorry, but that was not said by Solomon or any of the Bible writers! Today we are told to pretend that differences do not exist or that they do not matter. They did in Jesus' day. He would not let the Pharisees get by with their teaching of salvation by the law. He would not let the Sadducees get by with their teaching that there was no resurrection from the dead. We cannot let people get by today when they teach and confess things that are in direct opposition to what the Bible says. A watered down faith in the end is really no faith at all.

We need Biblical confessionalism today. Like Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521 who said, "Here I stand... unless I am shown by the Scriptures... I cannot do otherwise." Like Paul who said, "**What does it (the Bible) say?**" "What does the Bible say?" As confessional Lutherans, by God's grace, through faith in Jesus as our Savior, we are privileged to know. How blessed that we are a church yet today that directs people back to the Word of God for the answers we need for faith and life. How blessed we are that our church provides classes and other opportunities to learn. How blessed we are that we do know what the Bible says. How blessed we are that we believe it in our hearts. May the Holy Spirit empower us to also confess it with our mouths and in our lives! Amen.

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