

A Study of
Whether One May Flee From a Deadly Plague
by Martin Luther
Part 3 of 5

Review of Parts One and Two

- The people who wrote to Luther were considering two options: a) stay in the city and trust God to help; b) flee from the city “if one holds no public office.” (p.120, ¶2)

Luther commented:

- A person is free to flee if he has no responsibility to the people remaining behind. (p.121, ¶3)
- A person with responsibility to those left behind must make sure they are cared for. When he is sure they are taken care of, then he can leave. (p.121, ¶3)
- There are some who say that a true Christian will not flee, but stay behind and trust God. While Luther said there are good things in that thinking, he also had some reservations. Do you remember what he said on this point? (p.124-125)

125 ¶3 to 126 ¶2

- A) On pages 124-125 (in the previous class) he had said, “Freezing weather and winter are also God’s punishment and can cause death. Why run to get inside or near a fire? Be strong and stay outside until it becomes warm again.” Though not speaking of the plague, he demonstrates, with sarcasm, that at some point all of us will *and must* flee from danger.
- B) On pages 125-126 Martin Luther talks about our duty to love our neighbors in these two paragraphs. Often that help will entail a cost to us.

What is Martin Luther saying by putting these two ideas next to each other?

126 ¶3

Martin Luther thought that one of the best ways to take care of the sick, would be that public institutions would be created that could care for the sick. Thus the public would have an organized way to show love for needy neighbors.

127 ¶2

The “Germ Theory” of disease was still centuries in the future.
What of Luther here sounds scientific? What does not?

How much authority or weight does he give to his ideas?

127 ¶3

Explain how Satan uses our natural reactions to lead us into sin.

Read Romans 7:15-19.

128 ¶1

How should we respond to Satan's temptations to fear and negligence. (This paragraph has the first of two responses.)

128 ¶2

What is the second response when Satan tempts us with fear and disgust?

129 ¶2

Continuing from the previous paragraph, this one encourages us to not fear because of God's promises to protect us

129 ¶3 onto next page

"Therefore, dear friends, let us not become so desperate as to desert our own..." "Therefore" means there are reasons. What are those reasons?

Previously Luther has emphasized love as the thing that should motivate us to serve our neighbor. What does he use in this paragraph?

Summary

How easy it is to create a "reason" from an "excuse"?

What are times we *could* help people in need? What sorts of reasons do we have for not helping them?