

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

1207 West 45 Street Austin, Texas 78756

Rev. Paul R. Harris – 512-453-3835 Church

Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM

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October 2018 – November 2018

He Promises, We Believe

(A Nine-Part Sermon Series on the 4th, 5th, and 6th Chief Parts of Luther's Small Catechism)

Advent 2018 – Lent 2019

I was going to go with the title “I Promise” from a life insurance commercial depicting a father saying, “I promise” to his daughter throughout her life. It shows them aging as he says it. Of course, his final one is as a gray-haired man. He can keep his promise by having life insurance. I thought the ad poignant. The words, “I promise” call forth the response, “I believe it. I trust you.” But I thought the “I” looms to large in the theme. Even though it refers to God's promising, we think of me, myself, and I. So I was going to go with “Promises, Promises.” But all I heard in my head was Dionne Warwick singing the song by that name from 1968. Promises aren't worth much in that song. So I landed on “He Promises, We Believe.”

Promise is a consistent thought across the last three Chief Parts. In fact, when the Means of Grace are considered as a promise of forgiveness, Absolution is counted as a third Sacrament. Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar were the parts specifically added by Luther. The Medieval catechism has the first 3 but not in the order Luther put them. He added the last three.

The Sacraments are God's promise for you, today! The more you use them, study them, remember them, the more faith, trust, and certainty grow in you. As much as pastors, myself included, have ragged on “Just as I Am”, there is powerful, good theology in the line “Because Thy promise, I believe.”

Finally a word of thanks to all of you who, particularly last year, came to the midweek services. Years ago, not at this church, I predicted the end of first Advent and then eventually the much older Lent. Now I don't think so. Now that the world – to

use a Stephen King phrase – has moved on from having any roots in Christianity, divine revelation, or in anything outside our fallen little hearts, my sense is that people can't find anything remotely like the divine, or truth, or certainty. So they value those places that still have them. All Service times are at 7:30.

Wednesday November 28

“Baptism is not Simple Water Only”

Wednesday December 05

“Baptism Benefits You Three Ways”

Wednesday December 12

“Baptism is Indicative of More Than You Think”

Ash Wed March 03

“You Should Confess”

Wednesday March 13

“God has a Franchise on Earth”

Wednesday March 20

“Communion is For You”

Wednesday March 27

“More Than Forgiveness is Being Communicated”

Wednesday April 03

“There Are No Benefits Apart from Faith”

Wednesday April 10

“You Can Be Worthy and Well Prepared”

WALSH: Dear Churches, If You Aren't Making People 'Feel Judged,' You Aren't Doing Your Job

Matt Walsh January 26, 2018

It was decided some decades ago that no one must ever feel uncomfortable, guilty, or, worst of all, judged. They especially must not feel this way at church. Church is a place where all must be welcome, we're told.

One of the most popular songs played at Catholic churches is called "All Are Welcome." Sample lyric: "Let us build a house where love can dwell... Built of hopes and dreams and visions." I'm not making that up, by the way. It's so bad that it makes the choirs of angels weep and throw down their harps in despair. But it drives home the point, anyway. This is a place for hopes and dreams and visions, not repentance and prayer and reverence.

Of course, it's true that "all are welcome." But the problem is that the modern American Christian insists on being welcome along with his lifestyle, his self-centeredness, and his sin. He wants all of that to be welcomed, too. And most churches are more than happy to oblige. He will not be called to repentance from the pulpit, and his favorite sins will not be denounced, because that would make the poor soul feel "judged," and one cannot feel welcome if he is being judged.

What, then, is the result of a Christianity devoid of judgment? Well, Pew Research Center ran an article this week giving some insight into that question. Unsurprisingly, a substantial number of American Christians, across every denomination, believe that abortion should be legal in all or most cases. A majority of Mainline Protestants hold this view, along with almost half of all Catholics. Evangelicals have a smaller share, but still around 33% believe it should be legal to murder children. There is no denomination with a truly small number of pro-abortion adherents.

Of course, on the topic of marriage the situation is even grimmer. Two-thirds of Catholics and mainline Protestants support gay marriage. Over one-third of Evangelicals are in the same boat. The vast majority of Christians see no problem with

divorce, and about 75% of all divorced couples in America are Christian. Overall, a staggering number of American Christians explicitly disagree with the definitions of marriage and adultery that Christ Himself provided. It probably goes without saying that the majority of Christian men are also regular porn viewers. And none of this matters in their minds anyway, because, according to a majority of Christians in America, everyone goes to Heaven regardless. About 30% of Christians between the ages of 30 and 64 don't even believe that Hell exists.

As I've already demonstrated, a huge preponderance of American Christians are outright heretics. But the heresy gets worse. Half believe that Jesus Christ is a created being, which means they reject the Trinity (though they don't realize they've rejected it). Thirty percent don't believe that there is only one true God, and over 60% think all forms of worship are equally valid. And on and on. You get the point.

I certainly blame the Church and church leaders for much of this, but I can't blame them entirely. Individual Christians are at fault for their own ignorance and apostasy. They don't know what their religion teaches because they're too lazy to investigate their own belief system. Not just lazy, but cowardly. They create their own religion because they're afraid to confront the truth and submit themselves to a law outside themselves.

And it's cowardice on the part of the churches and their "leaders" that they don't force their flocks to confront the truth. Frankly, they don't seem to care if their congregants burn in Hell. What other conclusion can I draw about pastors and priests who refuse to denounce sin and call for repentance? They're like a surgeon who refuses to perform a lifesaving operation on a sick man, instead giving the patient a pat on the back and a smiley face sticker, and sending him home to die.

This is not just a problem inside the walls of physical churches — I realize most Christians don't go to church so it's difficult to reach them there — but it extends far beyond the buildings themselves. For a country that claims to be "majority Christian," there are strikingly few Christian leaders who are willing to stand up and offer some clarity and direction to the legions of lost sheep bumbling around and casually apostatizing. All we hear is the same refrain, as millions of Christians slide smiling into Hell: We must not judge. We cannot allow

these precious, sensitive souls to feel uncomfortable. We must be welcoming and inclusive and tolerant. Or, as the Pope would say, we must "accompany" them.

But include them in what? Welcome them into what? Accompany them to where? The destruction of their eternal souls, it seems.

If I'm lost and moments away from walking over a cliff, I'd much prefer that you point me in the right direction than "accompany" me over the edge and "welcome" me to my demise and see that I am "included" at the morgue. That is all very polite, I guess, but your pleasant manners won't be much help to me when I'm a pancake. And what if I'm very lost? What if I'm distracted in my wandering, and obstinate, and arrogant, and unable to hear or unwilling to listen to your gentle reminders and subtle nudges? Well, then maybe you'll have to shout. Maybe you'll have to get in my face a little. Maybe, God forbid, you'll have to cast harsh judgments on my chosen path and make me feel bad and icky inside. If that's the only way to get my attention, I should be grateful that you took such a "harsh" and "judgmental" approach.

This indeed is the state of most Christians in this country today. We are lost, distracted, obstinate, arrogant, foolish, stubborn. We are cowards. We would rather walk gently into damnation than have our course rudely corrected. We would rather you whisper sweet nothings in our ears, convince us we can fly, and encourage us to walk over the cliff, than scare us with talk of gravity, falling, and broken bones. The moment you speak the truth to us — the full truth, unvarnished — we will automatically feel "unwelcome" because it will cause us to look critically at ourselves. We will whimper and complain that we've been "attacked." If you won't welcome ourselves along with our sins, we'll stomp our feet and run away crying like toddlers.

So be it. Let the cowards flee. Let them disavow the faith. It would be better for all concerned if they publicly renounced and became open enemies of the Church. At least then we'd know where everyone truly stands, and they'd know where they stand, and perhaps some progress could be made. But as long as millions of Christians who reject Christianity in substance are still made to feel "welcome" and "included" and not-judged, there is no hope.

"Judged" is exactly how Christians should feel. We should also have joy, but the "joy" that prevents us from feeling shame for our sins is a false joy. It's a joy from Satan, not from God. God wants us to feel judged because we are being judged. He is judging us. When we sit in church or listen to any so-called "Christian leader," we need to be reminded of that fact. And it's this judgment — the Divine judgment — that's really feared by all of people who constantly complain about "judging." They may call you judgmental for talking about sin and denouncing evil, but they don't care about your judgment. When they lash out, they're lashing out against the judgment of the Eternal Judge, whom they'd prefer to forget so that they can continue sinning in peace.

The Church does them no favors by obliging. Because one day they'll stand in Judgment all the same, and their whole lives will be set before them, and they won't be able to escape this time with the "poor me" act. There will be no homilies about tolerance, no church bands with acoustic guitars strumming little ditties about dreams and hopes and kittens, no rationalizing, no equivocating. They will have to face their own wickedness, once and for all, and it will do no good to scold God for being judgmental about it.

Better, I say, to make them aware of God's ever-watchful and judging Eye now; better to make them feel His presence now; better to make them feel judged now, while there is still opportunity for repentance. This is what churches and leaders of the faith ought to be doing. They should welcome everyone, yes, but welcome them to repent, to obey, to humble themselves before the Lord. Welcome them to pick up their cross and follow Christ. If they decline the invitation, that's on them. They'll have made their choice. But at least they'll know exactly what they're choosing

<https://www.dailywire.com/news>).

Churches Must Oppose Female Conscription

FR. ALEXANDER F. C. WEBSTER AND BOB MILLER

Fifty years ago, tens of thousands of young American men burned draft cards in public protests against the Vietnam War, while throngs of American women were burning certain items of clothing to encourage “women’s liberation.” If young women from 18 to 26 are compelled this summer by the U.S. Congress and president to register for Selective Service in another military draft someday, then a new resistance movement would be in order—this time women burning their selective service cards and refusing to comply with a U.S. defense policy that is both *contra naturam* and an offense against the divine order. Without serious reflection on moral considerations, the very debate that will soon grip both houses of Congress indicates that America is nearing the bottom of a slippery slope that began in the shadow of the Vietnam War in 1973 with, ironically, the abandonment of all military conscription in favor of a new “all volunteer” military force. Only a few years later Congress mandated sex-integration at the service academies at West Point, Annapolis, and Colorado Springs, and the Department of Defense abandoned all the 1940s-vintage separate women’s auxiliaries. By this direct integration of women, both moves effectively undermined the venerable notion that all *male* citizens have the potential moral duty to protect and defend the nation—if necessary, in combatant warfare.

Henceforth, an “all-volunteer” (really “all-recruited”) force would be assembled by whatever enticements might work. No longer would the U.S. military comprise just sons and husbands and, if necessary, fathers of their families, bonded in community for the dutiful protection of their own beloved women and children, the transgenerational treasure of a civilized nation. The modern combatant force would contain willing young women, gradually older women, wives, sometimes the mothers of infants, sometimes mothers of service members, and sometimes even grandmothers. War had become a pseudo-family

affair, with or without a husband or father even in sight.

We are already in the penultimate stage of a slippery slope to an ostensibly sex-less—though, in truth, obsessively “gender”—conscious—military. Through a toxic combination of relentless social activism, legislation, administrative policies, and silent acquiescence by our senior military leaders the American military structure and culture have gradually become fundamentally transformed. Whereas women were to be protected as “non-combatants” in the 1940s, now every military occupational specialty (MOS) is open to women who “qualify”—including the male bastions of combat infantry and armor, close-quarter submarines, the Army Ranger Regiment and Delta Force, and the vaunted Navy Seals. With women now eligible to serve in any military capacity anywhere in the battlespace—on land, at sea, or in the air—the final target of “gender-neutral” military activists is draft registration of women “equally” with men. In an international crisis that could entail actual conscription of men *and* women into the armed forces.

Thus the same Selective Service and military conscription that draft protesters and political liberals decried during the Vietnam era is, ironically, on the verge of indiscriminately compelling young women as well as men to register for a possible draft as a milestone of feminist-inspired egalitarian “enlightenment.”

Where are the traditional Christian and Jewish communities in the present crisis? The answer, for the most part, is AWOL—that is, “absent without leave.” In 1991, a Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces solicited testimony from Christian leaders. The [Commission’s report](#) to President George H. W. Bush in November 1992 included this surprising remark: “Among the major religious establishments in the U.S., none has adopted a position regarding women being assigned to combat positions on the basis of theology. The Commission concludes that although the U.S. has an undeniably strong religious heritage, it is not one that speaks clearly on the issue of women in combat.” Thus the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox voices were mute, despite the increasing drumbeat for assigning women to combatant ships and aircraft and the celebration of trailblazing women who bear and trigger lethal force, perish or

survive grave injuries in combat, and earn promotions to positions of ever increasing authority over male soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. The women whom God the Holy Trinity has ordained as humanity's life bearers and nurturers are increasingly proficient in the military arts of volitional, professional life-taking. Worse, many are demanding recognition of their absolute identity with men, despite the human biology under divine provenance, while men in authority are yielding, not always joyfully, but "not knowing a good (enough) reason why not."

The social transformation of woman from life-bearer to killer, protected by law since the Supreme Court's infamous *Roe v. Wade* abortion decision in 1973, has been aided and abetted by men in Congressional and military authority, by fathers and husbands, and by the duly ordained male Christian priests and ministers in America through silence and, therefore, tacit consent. The trajectory of social change seems inexorable with no compelling argument to dissuade men from abdicating the venerable vocation of manhood itself—nor a religious community that speaks clearly on the issue of women in combat.

Fortunately, we can point to the moral clarity of a widely revered saint of the undivided Church in the fourth century—St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, greatest preacher of his era, and, as it happens, the son of a military officer in Byzantium. In his fifth homily on the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus, he prophetically condemned the indecency of treating women as if they were men:

Woman was not made for this, O man, to be prostituted as common. O you subverters of all decency, who use men, as if they were women, and lead out women to war, as if they were men! This is the work of the devil, to subvert and confound all things, to overleap the boundaries that have been appointed from the beginning, and remove those which God has set to nature.... You suffer women to bear arms, and are not ashamed.

It may be unfashionable today to extoll the unique, complementary characteristics and duties of men and women as created by God the Holy Trinity, but we ignore, much less defy, them at our peril before the God, in whom we ostensibly trust, as a people. There is no manly virtue in causing or intentionally allowing the inherent beauty and charm of young womanhood to be grievously

disfigured by the physical and psychic wounds of war. Nor is there any moral imperative that obliges an infant daughter to surrender her mother for long deployments, or forever as a casualty of war. Perhaps the Christian sage and veteran soldier, C.S. Lewis, had that in mind when, in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, "Father Christmas" instructs Lucy not to fight in the battle, because "battles are ugly when women fight." By what high principle might honorable, kind, and loving men enroll women in the armed forces, especially against their own will via conscription, to kill and be killed on their behalf? Boys and girls, juveniles, depend on women, their mothers, to guard and protect them. It inverts the natural and divine order when grown men do so.

If the U.S. Congress and President Obama collude this year to require all young women in America to register with Selective Service, there will be no need to wait for an exigency that might compel the federal government to reinstate the military draft. The moral abasement of the U.S. armed forces would, in principle, already be complete. With that scenario in view, we propose that traditional Christians consider an uncharacteristically radical, proactive course of action.

As retired U.S. military officers, we recall with great joy the opportunity to serve our fellow Americans by responding, freely and without reservation, to the call to military duty. During our respective careers each of us had a distinct role in the adjudication of requests of soldiers or sailors to be discharged from military service as "conscientious objectors"—one as a chaplain tasked with ascertaining the sincerity and moral consistency of each applicant's convictions, and one as a commanding officer to forward up the chain of command his decision for or against an applicant's claim. The criterion for CO status is straightforward: "A firm, fixed, and sincere objection to participation in war in any form or the bearing of arms, by reason of religious training and/or belief."

If our federal government mandates that young women, without exception, register with Selective Service against their will, with a foreseeable possibility of conscription into the profession of arms, there will be fresh justification for conscientious objection—on both moral and religious grounds—by *men* as well as women to

refuse to bear arms in a military force opposed to the divine and natural order of creation itself. For the sake of moral integrity, and for the providential welfare of this “one nation under God,” we are dedicated to stand with such women and men. And we earnestly appeal to all Christian authorities to acknowledge the enormity of this national crisis and to take the same stand.

<https://www.crisismagazine.com/2016/churches-must-oppose-female-conscription>

A Janus-faced Synod

Posted on March 19, 2018 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

There are words in English that mean two different things. For example, ‘bolt’ means both secure in place and to dart away. ‘Dust’ means to both remove material and spread material. ‘Trim’ means to both add and to take away. ‘Cleave’ means to separate and to adhere firmly. The technical term for such words is contranym. The popular name for them is Janus-faced words from the Greek god Janus that had two faces looking in opposite directions (*Crazy English*, 86-90).

The LCMS is a contranym. Pastor Robert Rojas, Jr. wrote a stirring editorial on how confessional Lutherans are not alone, and his evidence is startling. Based on the 2016 Synodical Convention results: 95% are in favor of our understanding of worship and liturgy. 83% support closed Communion. 97% supported the Biblical understanding of marriage. 91% support protecting women from being drafted (“We’re Not Alone: A Brief Summary of the 2016 Convention, posted July 29, 2016).

Is this the Synod you live, worship, or pastor in? Do these numbers reflect what is going on in your District, your circuit? I have pastored 4 churches in 34 years of ministry, and the majority of churches around me have always practiced open Communion.

Here’s where I get hoisted on my own petard. I wrote to the CTCR about 10 years ago – it’s on our website somewhere (I think) – that Synodical conventions represent only 11% of the parishes but 100% of the Synodical bureaucracy.

That is true, so how did we get the above percentages?

Well, first, as I’ve said elsewhere, when the country is going liberal the LCMS convention in reaction goes more conservative. There was a definite sense in the summer of 2016 that the wheels were falling off the wagons of morality, marriage, sexuality, and society. I see these overwhelmingly conservative numbers reflecting a popular desire to put the brakes on the wagon.

Second, as one delegate told me, the convention was all orchestrated by the president’s office. He’s confessional, so the bureaucracy at the synodical level reflects that as well.

Does anybody think the 11% of the local churches and pastors represented at the last convention reflect what the 89% of the Synod at large believes, teaches, or confesses? Do a little casual web surfing. You will find that the majority of websites you happen upon don’t reflect the confessional positions the convention supported.

What now? If I have established that the LCMS is indeed Janus-faced, whoever considered being two-faced a good thing? Out of the same fountain can’t come both salt and sweet, says James 3:11. When both confessional and liberal positions are heard from the same synod, there are two fountains, two synods in reality.

The problem with this is that the bureaucracy at all levels refuses to admit this. So, they herd us into Communion celebrations at every level – circuit, district, synod – to celebrate a unity that doesn’t exist, and they know does not. This is sin on their part for which they will be held accountable as will we who so let ourselves be wrangled.

The Scriptural, Confessional, faithful thing to do is to stop these unionistic communion services until we can do as St. Paul says, “speak the same thing that there be no divisions among you” (1 Cor. 1:10). The pagan thing to do is continue to worship at the altar of Janus. We are contranym to the core because what we do is both.

How to Turn Christianity into a Secular Religion

Rev. Philip Hale, Omaha, NE

Christianity is easily perverted and transformed into something man-made that does not save, all while retaining a similar language, style, and feeling. Satan is fine with the outward aspects of Christianity, as long as there is no power to take away sins and sustain faith. What did Jesus say to the religious experts of His time? “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matt. 22:29). The Gospel of Jesus is not about looking or talking a certain way, it is the power of God to take away sins. But the doctrine of Scripture is easily robbed of its truth, so people lose hope, comfort, and the surety of Christ’s death which delivers eternal life—and focus solely on man’s actions, ideas, and notions.

One way Christianity is humanized and emptied of content is to redefine morality. If the Law, as the eternal will of God, is avoided, truth undetectably becomes centered on the self—on the sinful will and heart. Right and wrong then become personalized, moldable to fit the times and popular desires. It then never convicts of guilt and makes no absolute demands. The divine Law of the living God is neutered, never fully condemning anyone as a sinner, deserving of eternal punishment. God never seems to stand against man in this void, so man’s will imperceptibly becomes equated to and indistinguishable from the divine will. No submission is required; the Law is not God’s never-ceasing demands for man, but man’s expectations for himself. Man gets to be a god automatically in this secularizing trick.

Faith in God’s favor, won by the sacrifice of Christ, is central to Christianity. We rely on God’s promises, but faith is unmoored when the Maker and content of those promises are ignored. Faith is made vague, a mere expectation of earthly blessings: “things will get better.” Without an actual biblical basis for God’s promises, faith is a general optimism, a feeling of positivity. If faith has nothing divine and specific to believe in (like the forgiveness of sins and eternal life), it becomes a human hope, like wishing our favorite team would go undefeated. Presto, Christ and His death are not needed for this “faith,” only feelings and thoughts of a slightly better (earthly) future. A secular religion of only man’s faith, hope, and love is born. The desires of the sinful will replace Christ and His Word.

The future resurrection of the dead at the Last Day is a specific hope. It is a certain fact and promise that roots believers in this cursed creation and gives them something to look forward to—the end of the world. It also gives value to our physical bodies—the divine roles that we were made for—and bestows honor in the midst of bodily weakness. Judgment Day makes sin real and eternally condemned, because we know people can get away with evil in this world. But if the death and resurrection of our Lord are minimized, then the earthly takes precedent over the eternal. Perception shifts to getting what we want in the here and now. Our bodies become fully ours to do with as we please, under our dominion, not the Lord’s. Pleasure and evil desires become elevated over God’s biologically revealed will in our bodies. The significance of what we do in them is then put aside for purely spiritual concerns which have nothing to do with daily life or our created roles. Contrary to 2 Cor. 5:10, life without a bodily purpose becomes aimless and meaningless: *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.* Marriage is then transformed into a human institution all about our love, not God’s uniting of male and female into one flesh. If preachers only indulge in soul-talk, Christianity morphs into an imaginary sort of delusion, having nothing to do with real, bodily people, damning sin, or tangible absolution.

The specific places where Christ distributes His forgiveness and promises to absolve us are the creation-points of faith. They are the supports of faith and the locations sinners find Christ’s righteousness for them. These connection points to Christ can be attacked, while retaining lots of Jesus-talk. But when Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and the Word of Christ are minimized or denied, Christ Himself is too. Emotions and everything inside man becomes the new emphasis, instead of God’s action in justifying sinners. General Gospel-like language, without a real way given to access forgiveness in time, will only frustrate sinners and cause them to rely on works of the Law. Christ’s action was not just on the cross. He also works today in bringing His salvation to us, through the Spirit’s work in the Word. But if the sacraments are removed from Christianity, what we do and feel becomes greater than what God does and promises. Satan wants to direct us to ourselves. So, without

the concrete and physical divinely appointed means of receiving justification, spiritual language is really about us, not anything God does. Holiness becomes centered on man's actions, not the forgiveness of sins given by the Word of Christ. Christianity then becomes a message full of sound and fury, but incapable of actually doing anything. Love, as the emotional, fluttering murmurs of our hearts, is easily worshiped. Sinners will more gladly obey this unpredictable, always changing force, rather than the unchanging Word of God and the physical means to which He attaches it.

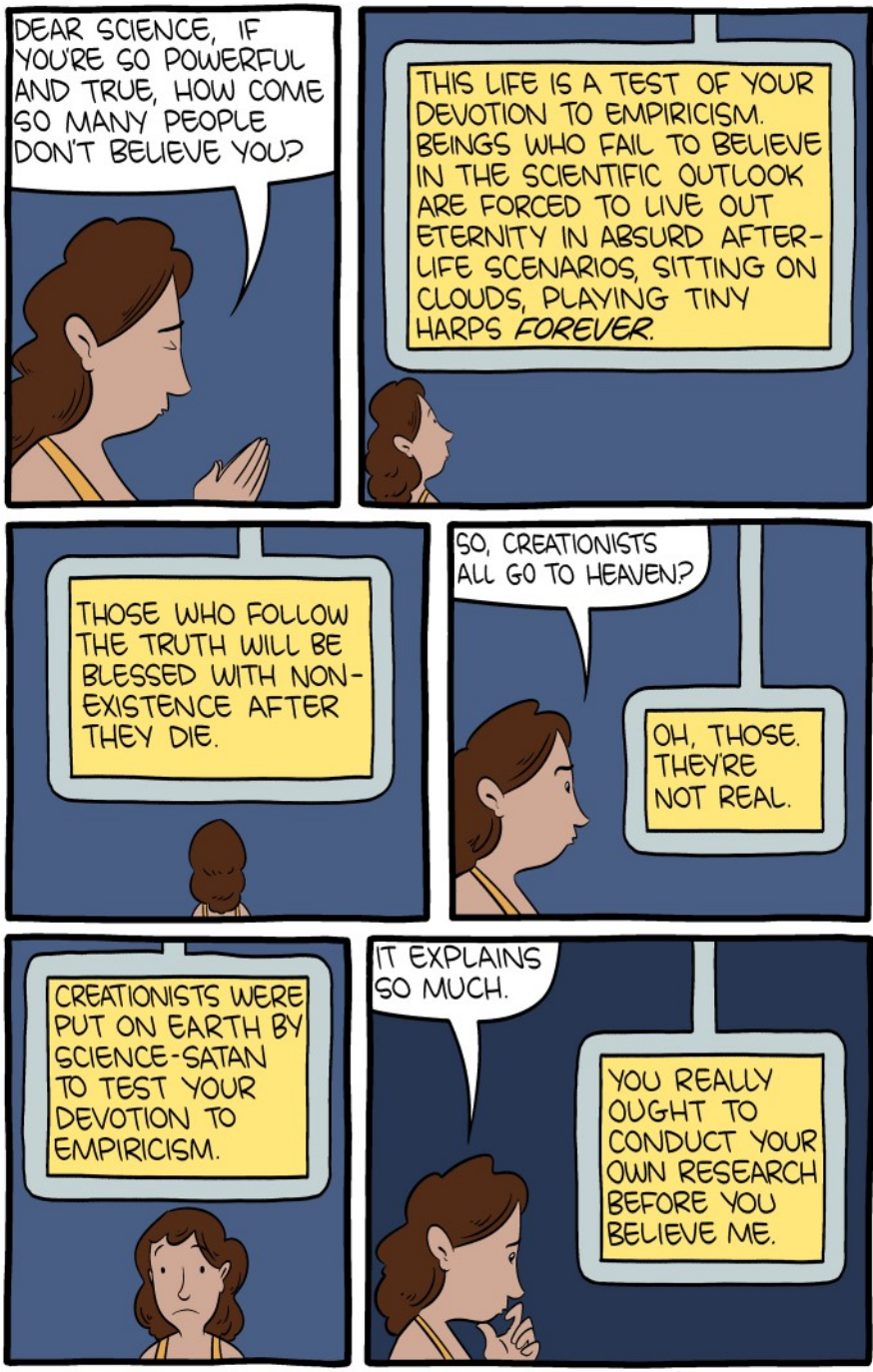
Facts and history can easily be made into non-spiritual things, having nothing to do with the real power of Christianity. But Christ became man and came into human history. So, facts ground and establish the Gospel. If the Bible is treated like myth, as less real than modern facts of history, Christ, and His work, recedes into the background. Dates, authorship, and specific words are made obsolete and impractical to this spiritual faith devoid of content. Then great words and verbal images can be spewed with verve, but nothing really connects to the world we live in. All this spiritual, non-historical talk does not touch man who cannot escape his history—being a fleshly sinner in this physical world.

True love is the working of the Spirit, but the word “love” can be twisted and made to strip Christianity of all content. If love is simply acceptance, not a true helping and leading to the Lord in repentance, nothing can be rejected with finality. This worldly love sounds good and can be extolled in lofty Christian language, but has nothing to do with biblical love, which does not rejoice at wrong. And without a denial and rejection of sin, no one is in need of salvation, a real saving from hell and damnation. This “love” then blesses every sin and accepts all evil, by putting a Christian stamp on lawlessness. Real church discipline is outlawed in practice and unthinkable in this flabby, weak-kneed love, so that sin reigns supreme. This secular god blesses sin and everything man does with the all-powerful word of “love.”

Order is an undeniable part of the fabric of our world. We all have people over us to whom Christ calls us to honor and follow. Scripture clearly calls us to submit—everyone must submit

within God's order in this world. Children, wives, husbands, and civil servants are to submit within the order God places them. This is God's will, which Scripture clearly states. It is not salvific, but it ensures good order for our protection and allows for the peaceful operation of this world. But the Gospel, a divine freedom that releases from sin and guilt against God, can be redefined as freedom from authority, instead of sin. Freedom from submission, in man's sight, replaces freedom and adoption to sonship in God's sight. So man hears the Gospel, unbound from any absolute purposes on earth, as permission to do what he wants, not freedom to do what pleases the Father in heaven. In a roundabout way, we are told to follow ourselves, not the God who saved us. Without earthly authority structures and divine external roles, Christ, who is true God, is disconnected from our lives. God the Father authorizes all authority, as the highest authority. Without physical, biological roles and vocations, authorized by the Lord, actual submission to Christ and His Word make no sense. Salvation is then really about destroying divine earthly structures, like marriage, family, and good order, not a promise that gives eternal hope beyond this world. Unfair earthly practices and situations replace sin against God—making the goal of Christianity a man-made utopia on earth, rather than hope in the life to come through Christ's resurrection. Sadly, this gospel of earthly liberation is only about human revolution and undoing good social order—rearranging chairs on the cursed and damned Titanic of this fading world—which only hurts society because unbelievers need order to restrain their sinful nature. This new “gospel” demands that we all individually act right now as saviors of the world, instead of blessing us eternally in Christ's righteous death.

There are many ways God's truth is subtly undermined. It is all the more damaging when these errors are done in the name of Christ and by the supposed experts of Christianity. But Christ, our God, became man and entered into this world, not to overthrow the social order or fix our problems right now, but to restore us to the heavenly Father. Jesus, in willing submission to the Father, died for our sins in our world, within normal, human history, and comes to us in clear verbal promises to give us real and everlasting hope. Amen.



Trinity Lutheran Church
1207 West 45th Street, Austin, TX 78756 512.453.3835 www.trinityaustin.com
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October 2018

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | 5 PM Jr. Confirmation | | 6:15 PM Choir 7:15 Romans | | | |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| Noon Adult Confirmation | 5 PM Jr. Confirmation | | 6:15 PM Choir 7:15 Romans | | | |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| Noon Adult Confirmation | 5 PM Jr. Confirmation | | PASTOR | ON | VACATION | |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| PASTOR | ON | VACATION | 6:15 PM Choir 7:15 Romans | | PASTOR AT | MINNESOTA |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |
| Noon Adult Confirmation Reformation Dinner 5 PM | 5 PM Jr. Confirmation | 6:30 PM Budget Meeting | <u>NO</u> Romans | | | |

November 2018

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|-----|-----|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | | | | | |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Noon Adult Confirmation | 5 PM Jr. Confirmation | VOTERS 7PM | 6:15 PM Choir 7:15 Romans | | | |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Noon Adult Confirmation | 5 PM Jr. Confirmation | | 6:15 PM Choir 7:15 Romans | | | |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Noon Adult Confirmation | <u>NO</u> Jr. Confirmation | | Thanksgiving Eve 7:30 PM | | | |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |
| Noon Adult Confirmation | 5 PM Jr. Confirmation | Elders Meeting 6:30 PM | Advent Vespers 7:30 PM | | | |

