

# IN DEPTH BIBLE STUDY: SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS

## CLASS 5 and POWER POINT 5:

1. To Koeberle, these three forms of spirituality are tied to the mind; Moralism the Will. Speculation the intellect and mysticism the emotions.
2. LS (Lutheran Spirituality) begins with the reality that all efforts to reach God are futile. To Luther the Will is in bondage to sin. Not can't fulfill the law, but don't want to. The intellect is in bondage, bound by its limit and tainted by the sinful will. The emotions are in bondage as well, and will lead us more away from God than closer to Him, we would run FROM God.
3. LS is what God does! He rescues us depraved and miserable sinners. He became human Himself. The God man did what moralists couldn't do. He was perfect and took upon Himself all of Human punishment for all moral failures on the cross. The Spiritual life is about what GOD DOES and CONTINUES to do through the HOLY SPIRIT!
4. To Koeberle, LS addresses the moral impulse of the will by Law and Gospel, L and G. In place of speculation is the Word of God. In place of mysticism experienced by emotion, LS focus is on God's union in Christ and the phenomenon of faith. GOD DOES it all.
5. LAW and GOSPEL: (L=Law, G=Gospel) (LS=Lutheran Spirituality)  
God's law shares a more serious condition as the Bible requires perfection. The Bible shows God's disdain for any kind of wrong doing. The Bible demands perfection and outlines what that means, both the external and internal must be pure. Jesus expounds that just not adultery, but lust is sinful and hatred and anger are just as sinful as murder. The most holy of persons squirms at the Bible's Law. With will power we might control behavior, but not consistently. But what about inner temptations and desires? Lust, pride, envy, if they undo our good works. They arise against our will.
6. Isaiah tells us that our righteous acts are like filthy rags. We are fallen, under Adam and Eve's curse and complicit in disobedience. Romans 3:12, "There is no one righteous," demolishes the human spirituality of Moralism, Speculation and Mysticism. A genuine look at God's Law destroys complacency, moralism and self-righteousness. Guilt and fear of hell are reserved for those who disobey the righteousness of God. One way is to deny it all and hold out that I'm a good person, and God's Word is false. Admitting failure and agreeing with my condemnation is the first step in LS.
7. In LS God's law restrains, and is a guide, but has a spiritual use, it cuts through self-deception to see just how lost we are, and brings conviction of sin—repentance. Spiritual language is empty; bliss, ecstasy and power. The LS side of the law is negative, depressing, unpleasant. Today its treated as a pathology, low self- esteem, more mental health. In America this all may seem to be 'strange' indeed.

8. The L precludes the G. The L breaks one and convinces one they can't save themselves. The message of the G is good news, a relief. Despairing people can achieve perfection only by the cross. They cling to it and Christ's Word, they're open to Christ's lifesaving gifts. This is what is meant by being 'justified by faith.' Christ takes their punishment and are forgiven by sheer grace. Gratitude replaces fear, this is not from speculation, but God's Word. They are connected just not mystically, but The Holy Spirit enters their lives. All are set free.
9. Faith is not an intellectual ascent and it is not positive thinking as Kierkegaard regards it. (Joel Osteen anyone?) Faith is not an experience, this is mysticism. LS is not a decision for faith, making salvation a function of the will is Moralism as this is what a human does. In LS faith is a gift, His action through the Holy Spirit. Faith is trust, dependent on Christ. Faith is not a good work a person does, faith only accepts the promised mercy. Christ is the one who saves on the cross. Faith is dependent on that gift. LS is close to other theologies. Other churches emphasize experiences for conversion. L and G are the fabric of LS, it's not just a one time thing, but must be entered into again and again.
10. This pattern is repeated every Sunday with Confession and Absolution. The Pastor's sermons all have L and G. Luther went further, "We are to be broken by the L and animated by the G every day." The Old Adam drowned in sorrow and confession. In baptism the new person arises in life, cleansed and righteous.
11. Those justified are changed inside and good works FLOW from Christ. Each Christian has two natures; The 'New and Old' man. These are in conflict as the Christian life is one of turmoil, (struggle). Christians daily fight temptations. Christ is at work inside the Christian. Prayer, Word and Sacrament ministry, and worship and enable a Christian to grow, this is Sanctification.
12. At times Christians need to hear the L and at times the G and pastors can apply when and how to preach L and G. People who are prideful and oblivious to sin need the L. Hurting, guilt filled people need the G. LS is not a state of bliss. It swings from highs to lows, it is the knowledge of sin and forgiveness, repentance and assurance. The G must predominate, in LS a Christian lives in the state of G.

#### PARADOXES OF LS

13. We need to be conscience of sin, but not fall into Moralism. LS has a deep intellectual theology, but can't fall into Speculation, but only God's Word. LS is skeptical of emotional mysticism, but there is a deep inner piety. The central paradox is that Jesus is both God and Man. Paradox is the 'both/ands' and this resonates throughout LS and plays into the role of a Christian in the secular world.
14. LS in theology and spiritualism is a series of paradoxes. They seem like contradictions, but are actually two poles of truth and experience. The Christian according to Luther is "Simil Justus et Peccator," (Same time sinner and saint!). The Christian is free, but a servant to all in service to all. These paradoxes aren't formulas, but polarities of the spiritual life. When EV found the true depths of the G, he found the impulses that made him a Moralism, a Speculator, and Mystic were all resolved or the tension there was swallowed up by the cross.