

IN DEPTH BIBLE STUDY: SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS

CLASS 6 and POWER POINT 6:

PARADOXES OF LS

1. 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.
2. 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.

THE MEANS OF GRACE: (The Presence of God)

3. When someone asks, "When were you saved?" The answer is 2000 years ago when Jesus died on the cross. Christianity is not a set of behaviors or experiences or a belief system as it is with Christ. We are saved solely by the action of God, He saved us by performing all we could not!
4. God caused Him to be born God in the flesh who kept the law perfectly for us. In the greatest miracle perhaps ever, He was tortured on the cross and took upon Himself on the cross every sin, transgression committed and every punishment we deserved as "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23). He experienced God turning away from Him as He cried, "My God, My God, why hast...." God was turning away from all evil in the world, which Jesus inherited and this constitutes hell. Having atoned for all the sin of the world, He rose.
5. In exchange all of the sin, the selfishness, vices, greedy egotism, and hurting others is credited to Jesus, and killed on the cross. And all of God's righteousness, driving out the money changers, the temptations, feeding the sick, healing the ill, all goodness is credited to the Christians and as Christ rose from the dead, so will we. The Christian has the same access to God as Jesus does. When we come to God, He doesn't view us from judgmental lenses, but through the lens of Christ, He sees us as Christ. To be saved means that our mediator paid for them all and provides all the good works we need, not our righteousness.
6. Lutheran theologians speak of "objective justification," this took place outside of us in the historical events of Christ, His death and resurrection. 2000 years ago, our salvation was due to an objective event. This objective event has profound impact on us now. Our vices and sins were there on the cross with Him. Despite our subjective feelings of guilt, or what we've done in the past, forgiveness is objective. This is an astonishing teaching, it's hard to believe when broken apart logically, morally or theologically, it seems too easy or too good to be true. This is "Good News," the 'evangel,' from which evangelicals take their name and it impacts every facet of their spirituality.

7. To other Christians, many who call themselves Evangelical (EVAN), they were saved when I 'decided' for Jesus or had an encounter/experience with the Holy Ghost. Lutherans don't talk that way. They believe in conversion, but decisions and experience take away from Christ to focus on what "I have done." We go back to the UNEVAN to having to save myself. This brings us back to Moralism and its uncertainties and self-deceptions. Instead of building hope on shifting sands of our own works and inner lives, we can look at Christ with confidence, "He died for me!" Lutherans wrench their attention from their own lives to the OBJECTIVITY of what Christ did for me.
8. What about the connection of our lives, the here and now with Golgotha? Christ died for the whole world, He atoned for all, but not all have faith. If there is Objective justification, there must be an inner justification, where Christ's cross has an impact on the life of the individual. If faith is not a decision or experience, and if salvation is the work of God, it seems that faith would be the work of God as well. How do we attain a life-saving faith?
9. Answer: In LS it has to do with the "Means of Grace," we are connected to Christ and the Holy Spirit works both faith and good works in our lives by the means of the Holy Spirit. (See chart)
10. Next class, "THE WORD OF GOD!"