

Christ Lutheran Church

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June 2022

“GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.” (ROMANS 1:7)

The story is told of a man who was on a long flight home, when the airplane entered the dark clouds of a violent storm. As the plane was tossed about in great turbulence, it felt like it could break up and crash. The man looked around the aircraft and saw many passengers filled with terror, some crying, others praying. He himself was fearful that he would not make it home alive that day.

Then he spotted a little girl seated across from him who seemed completely calm in the storm. As the faces of many adults were filled with anxiety and fear, there was no worry on this child's face. She looked completely at peace.

When at last the airplane landed safely, the man asked the little girl how she had remained so calm throughout the storm. She replied: "Because my daddy's the pilot, and he's taking me home!"

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:7). What a difference these words make for us as children of our heavenly Father, through faith in His Son! No matter what troubles are going on in the world around us and in our own lives, we live each day in the unchanging grace and peace He gives us. In every storm, He is in control for our good.

How great are the storms we face in life. At times we feel shaken up by the turbulence of wars and violence, and the evil that seems to rule the day. We feel shaken up by political and economic turbulence, and concerns about our security. We feel shaken up by turbulence in relationships, wondering how it will all turn out with someone. We feel shaken up by the turbulence of sickness and death, and fears about our future.

Perhaps at times we begin to wonder where the hand of God is in all this. In the midst of the

storm, we may doubt that He still cares for us. We may look at our sinful lives and be shaken up by guilt and regrets, troubled by the ways we have messed up our own lives and hurt others, fearful of the ways we have offended God.

In many ways we may feel tossed about by *"conflicts on the outside, fears within"* (2 Corinthians 7:5). In all the turbulence our troubled hearts may wonder how we can make it through this world, let alone safely home to heaven.

But this is why the grace and peace of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ means so much. The grace of God is the undeserved love He has for us, that while we were still sinners He sent His Son to die in our place and win our salvation. On the cross, Jesus paid for all our sins by His own blood; there He won our peace with God.

Now through the faith given by the Spirit of God, we live in His forgiveness and favor as His children. We live in His promise of eternal life.

There will always be storms in this life, turbulent times in a world affected by sin and evil. But we can be like that little girl on the airplane, confident in the midst of the storm because her daddy was the pilot.

As children of our heavenly Father, He is always in control for our good. He who gave His Son to win our eternal life will see us through every storm in life. We live in His unchanging grace and peace, and nothing will be able to separate us from His love in Christ. As our God and Savior, He will bring us through it all; He will bring us safely at last to the heavenly home He is preparing for us.

In His grace and peace,
Pastor Smith

How Can My Words Convince Anyone of God's Truth?

June 2022

Sometimes we don't tell others about Christ because we doubt that our words could be effective. Or we worry that we might injure a friendship.

Martin Luther offers encouragement when discussing the Samaritan woman mentioned in John 4. This woman is like many people we know. She came from a long line of people who didn't know the true God or listen to His Word, or who had a generic faith and a hazy view of Bible teaching. The Samaritans were drowning in the false beliefs of their culture.

Luther says, "But look how gently the Lord deals with her! He does not break off talking to her." Jesus was *gentle* and *patient*. Emphasizing Jesus' words, "God is seeking such to worship Him," Luther explains that Jesus is saying, "I am seeking you Samaritans." Jesus did not dismiss, but welcome.

This teaches us to: (1) Deal Gently with People as Those Whom God Wants.

The Lord isn't gentle with sin, but He is gentle with sinners. Emphasize the tender love of God for sinners, that He wants to pull them close. This is why we, too, can deal gently with them.

God chooses humble instruments, like us, to speak His Word. Luther says: "When God wants to speak and deal with us, He does not avail Himself of an angel but of parents, of the pastor, or of my neighbor. A poor speaker may speak the Word of God just as well as he who is endowed with eloquence.... There is no difference between the Word when uttered by a schoolboy and when uttered by the angel Gabriel.... This ought to be a comfort to us."

This teaches us to: (2) Trust That God Will Work through the Words You Speak.

God will work through a pastor's human flaws to create and preserve faith in the hearers, through the preaching of His Word. The same is true in the home: Has God given you children? He's made you the one to teach His Word to them. The same is true in your community: The friends you have? God's made you the one who can speak His Word to them when they need to hear it, knowing what is going on in their lives.

Luther said that "a schoolboy" can do this just as powerfully as the angel Gabriel spoke God's words to the virgin Mary, because the power and the promise come from God! It isn't our skill in speaking that matters, but how the Holy Spirit blesses the Word of God that we speak, which is powerful enough to reach the person,

soften stubborn hearts, and create faith. (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Matthew 10:19-20; Romans 10:17)

What the Samaritan woman did next offers us further encouragement. She spoke to her townspeople about Jesus. She wasn't specially gifted. She didn't have a great résumé. She had multiple divorces and was currently living with a man, unmarried. Why would her townspeople listen to her? She knew very little about Jesus except what His words told her.

But she had *evidence* that Jesus knew everything about her, which showed that He was God who knows all things. And she had *Jesus' words*, in response to her statement about waiting for the Messiah to come, "*I Am*—the very one who is speaking to you."

This average person, laden with sins but now cleansed in her conscience, became an evangelist simply by echoing Jesus' own words. They "believed in Him because of the woman's testimony."

This teaches us to: (3) Simply Speak to Others the Words of Christ That Comfort Our Own Troubled Hearts.

The Samaritan woman's strength as an evangelist is that she was *a troubled sinner who found comfort in the words of Jesus*. She doesn't pretend to know all the answers, but she models the right question: "Could this be the Christ?" She sends people to Jesus, and His words do all the work.

They replied, "We no longer believe because of what you said. Now we have heard for ourselves. And we know that this really is the Savior of the world."

Instead of letting our misgivings silence what we would say, we can let others know that we don't have all the answers. But Jesus does. Scripture does. We aren't perfect Christians either; we are sinners who need forgiveness and comfort for our troubled hearts. So we give others the words and the truths with which Jesus comforts and blesses us in our troubles. God promises us that His Word will do the saving work.

As Luther said, "This ought to be a comfort to us!"

Rev. Jerome Gernander serves as pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church in Princeton, Minnesota.

Learn More:
www.els.org/apologetics

Quotations of Martin Luther are from *Luther's Works: American Edition*, vol. 22 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), 525–29.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 1:7)</i>			1	2 Adult Instruction 1:00 pm	3 Adult Instruction 2:00 pm	4
5 <i>Day of Pentecost</i> Worship with Holy Communion 9:30 AM Voters' Meeting After church Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:30 PM	6 <i>Happy Birthday Ashlyn Smith</i>	7	8	9 <i>Happy Birthday Kelly Ruiz</i> Adult Instruction 1:00 pm	10 Adult Instruction 2:00 pm	11 Memorial Service for Barbara Walker 11:00 AM
12 <i>Holy Trinity Sunday</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:30 PM	13	14 <i>Flag Day</i>	15	16 Adult Instruction 1:00 pm	17 <i>Happy Anniversary Pastor & Maria Smith</i> Adult Instruction 2:00 pm	18 <i>Happy Birthday Margaret Howard</i>
19 <i>Pentecost 2</i> <i>Father's Day</i> Worship with Holy Communion 9:30 AM Voters' Meeting 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:30 PM	20	21 <i>Summer Begins</i>	22 <i>Happy Anniversary Randy & Jackie Bednar</i>	23 Adult Instruction 1:00 pm	24 Adult Instruction 2:00 pm	25
26 <i>Pentecost 3</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:30 PM	27	28	29	30 <i>Happy Birthday Dale Hauck</i> Adult Instruction 1:00 pm	<div>Evangelical Lutheran Synod Convention – Mankato, MN</div>	

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