

# Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Christ the King - November 22, 2020

*Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?'*

*- Matthew 25:37-*

In the Formula of Concord, the second generation of Lutherans defended their theology and pointed out differences between what was taught by the “Papists” (Roman Catholics of their day), and the Reformers. This piece on Good Works is illustrative of the nuances that often cause us to get stuck living according to the Law, rather than relying on God’s grace:

Therefore, of works that are truly good and well-pleasing to God, which God will reward in this world and in the world to come, faith must be the mother and source; and on this account they are called by St. Paul true fruits of faith, as also of the Spirit. For, as Dr. Luther writes in the Preface to St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans: Thus faith is a divine work in us, that changes us and regenerates us of God, and puts to death the old Adam, makes us entirely different men (sic) in heart, spirit, mind, and all powers, and brings with it [confers] the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, powerful thing that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing. Nor does it ask whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked, it has wrought them, and is always engaged in doing them...

[Justifying] faith is a living, bold [firm] trust in God’s grace, so certain that a man would die a thousand times for it [rather than suffer this trust to be wrested from him]. And this trust and knowledge of divine grace renders joyful, fearless, and cheerful towards God and all creatures, which [joy and cheerfulness] the Holy Ghost works through faith; and on account of this, man (sic) becomes ready and cheerful, without coercion, to do good to every one, to serve every one, and to suffer everything for love and praise to God, who has conferred this grace on him, so that it is impossible to separate works from faith, yea, just as impossible as it is for heat and light to be separated from fire.

While we strive to please God, all of our good works come from him who grants us faith. In faith, God uses our lives for his purposes. This is not something we do on our own, by our own thoughts and will. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through our lives. Amen.

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