

# TABLE TALK

Official Publication of the LMS-USA

...these words... shall be upon your heart; you shall teach them... and talk of them... Deut. 6:6,7



August 2018

Vol. 25 No. 3

## Biblical Faith and The Importance of Teaching and Knowledge

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. **You shall teach them diligently** to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:6-8



"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them** to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20

"...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to **teaching.**" 1 Timothy 4:13

"And this is eternal life, **that they know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." John 17:3

But **grow in** the grace and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18

[All Scripture quotes are from the ESV © 2001 Crossway]

The Bible makes clear that since the Fall, the teaching and knowledge of God and what God has revealed as to His will and ways, and especially of the salvation He would, and now has, made possible for sinful humankind, is something God com-

mands. The importance of *knowing* in connection with all of this is seen in our Lord's own words. It is intrinsically tied to one's possession of eternal life (Jn. 17:3). We are to start this teaching with young chil-

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## The Place of Teaching in the Kingdom of Heaven

By Jacob Tanner, A.M., S.T.D.

The Kingdom of Heaven is God's rule in the hearts of men through Jesus Christ. It is therefore a kingdom to be found in the hearts of men.

**Scope and aim.** The scope and aim of the Kingdom are pregnant with the most far-reaching effects. To rule in the hearts of men means to rule over their motives and innermost feelings, thoughts, plans, dreams and visions, energy and acts, words and work. It will control not only the inner life of a man, but all the activities in which he becomes engaged.

There is a still wider aim. Through the control of the heart-life of the individual, God will control the individuals, the homes, the communities, and every part of the life of the country. All the activities that individuals jointly undertake, they will undertake as Christians ruled and guided by the Spirit of God. Christians can not participate in anything jointly which they could not do, if every one stood alone.

The Kingdom, however, reaches still further. Through control of the the individuals, the Kingdom will control the nation and every activity of the nation. By controlling the nations, God would then control the international relations. Christ Jesus

would be not only the most potent factor in the life of individuals, but also in the life of the nations and in international relations.

This is a superhuman task. The obstacles caused by human selfishness and all other forms of sin are sufficient to discourage the most courageous. Different temperaments heritage, tradition, education, even means of livelihood and climate add to the difficulties.

Nevertheless, Christ commanded to make all nations disciples, and He meant it. His vision was world-wide. His Kingdom was to be a kingdom embracing the whole earth.

**Means.** By what means can such an undertaking be brought to a successful completion? God's answer is surprisingly simple. It is given in God's word about Abraham when He says: "I have known him, to the end that he command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. 18:19.) This is further developed in Deut. 6:4-9.

In the New Testament Christ lays down the general principle for the

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dren (Deut. 6:7), we are to teach in the public assembly (1 Tim. 4:3), we are as individuals to continue to work to grow in such knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18). Our teaching text is to be all of Scripture [*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* (2 Tim. 3:16)], and the teaching is to be of the *whole* counsel/

plan/purpose/will of God (see Acts 20:27). Specific to this knowledge and the teaching of it in the New Testament era, is that of the person and work of Jesus Christ [*God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have life* (Jn. 3:16)]. And Jesus stated this necessity in these words, *I am the way and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me* (John 14:6; See also Acts 4:12). Ω

building of the Kingdom. He said: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." (Matt. 28:19-20.)

It must, therefore, be clear that teaching is fundamental in the work to build the Kingdom of Heaven. In fact, it must be said that according to the Word of God, the coming of the Kingdom and the future of the Church depend upon teaching the children to believe in and to obey Jesus Christ. This is true educational evangelism, and it should be the first and main concern of the local congregation.

**A Specific Knowledge.** It is a specific knowledge that is needed in this building work. Not any kind of knowledge is suitable, not even any kind of religious knowledge. There are too many people who believe that if a little religious sentiment is mixed into the instruction, they are teaching the children what they need to know in order to occupy a place and be a building force in the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is Christ that has established the Kingdom. It is His Kingdom and He tells us what kind of knowledge is necessary. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." It is knowledge of Christ, His person, life, work, and commandments, that is needed. This is an important truth to be remembered. As true knowledge of Christ will build the Kingdom of Heaven in and through the children, so false knowledge will lead them astray and build up the kingdom of Satan.

**Baptize and Instruct.** When we study the pedagogical plan for the building of the Kingdom as set forth by Christ, we find that it consists of two steps. The first is to make the children members of the Kingdom through baptism, and the second to give them Christian instruction. Even

in the Old Testament we find the same plan. Through circumcision they were made members of the covenant, and as members they were to be instructed.

Baptism has a fundamental place in the work of building the Kingdom. This is evident from Christ's own words when He instituted baptism. It is proper here to call attention to a well known fact. The translation of Matt. 28:19-20 in the the authorized version of the English Bible is wrong. It reads: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them .... teaching them . . . ."

The Greek text uses three words. The first is *matheteuein*, which means to make one a disciple. The second is *baptizem*, which means to baptize. The third word is *didaskein*, which means to teach, to instruct. It is the word *matheteuein* that is used first in this command of Jesus and must be translated: to make disciples. It is thus translated in the revised version and in all modern translations. Christ first gives the general command to make all nations disciples, and then He tells how it is to be done - by baptizing and teaching them to keep what Christ has commanded.

When Christ places baptism before teaching the only possible explanation is that the ordinary procedure in making a nation disciples should be to bring the individuals into the Kingdom through baptism before they are old enough to be instructed.

The first converts in a nation are, of course, adults, as was the case in the apostolic Church. It was, therefore, inevitable that the first to be baptized were adults. However, as soon as the parents were converted and thus Christian homes established and Christian nurture made possible, the children were also baptized. As the Christian homes multiplied, infant baptism also multiplied and became the prevailing rule.

**Christian Nurture.** In our Church we instruct mainly baptized children.

Our instruction must therefore have the character of Christian nurture. Christian nurture is to furnish the nourishment needed for the spiritual welfare and development of the child. This nurture must affect the whole life of the child. It must develop a Christian consciousness and conscience, a willing obedience, a spiritual outlook upon life, a purpose in harmony with God's plan for our life, in short — a Christian faith.

Through baptism a new spiritual life is created in the child. The Holy Spirit creates in the soul a faith that did not exist before. At first this faith is undeveloped. But it is implanted as a new life principle which through nourishment is to grow and unfold all that which lies even in the unconscious beginning of the Christian faith. The Christian instruction must furnish the nourishment needed for this development.

A healthy spiritual atmosphere is a part of Christian nature. By this is meant that those who deal with the children must be Christ-like in their attitude and life. Such spiritual atmosphere is an important part of teaching the children to know, believe in, and love Jesus Christ.

To teach the children about Jesus Christ is therefore not only an intellectual work demanding intellectual qualifications, but a spiritual work as well, demanding spiritual qualifications and preparation.

***Christian Instruction and Morals.*** Attention must also be called to another important side of the teaching of Christianity to children. There is the closest relation between Christianity and Christian morals. The importance of Christian morals should be self-evident. Without a sense of responsibility, obedience to law, honesty, purity, respect for life, and property, there can be no civilized, let alone happy, society. It seems, however, not so self-evident to many that without Christian faith, there will in the long run be no Christian morals.

He who does not love God above all things, can not love his neighbor as himself. A person without a working sense of responsibility to God, will not have a working responsibility to man.

It is at all times necessary to build up Christian morals in the coming generation. The future rests upon the success of this work. The ordinary strain upon the morals from the Devil, the world and the flesh, is severe enough. A complicated civilization adds to this strain. Modern conveniences of all kinds have produced new complications, new problems, and placed before our young people temptations in new forms. It is therefore doubly necessary to build up the morals of the growing generation.

In the religions of the ancient world, religion and morals were not united. The religion of Israel was the only exception. In all other religions a man might be very religious and at the same time break all recognized moral standards. In fact, the worship of the gods consisted often in acts of unbelievable immorality. Christ, building on the foundation laid in the Old Testament, united religion and morals inseparably. Love of God should manifest itself in love of man. And He always emphasized that the life spring of right morals was in Him. "Without me ye can do nothing."

***Christian Motive.*** Christ also introduced an adequate motive for Christian conduct. This motive is Christ Himself. When the Apostle said that "it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20), he stated the inner secret of a Christian life. Christ expressed the same truth when He said: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14:16.) The love to Christ kindled in the heart of one who is saved by God's love in Christ Jesus becomes the source of his whole life. He lives in and for Christ. Out of this Christ-centered life Christian morals flow.

It is therefore necessary through the teaching of the Word of God to instill in the children a love of Christ that will become a motive power strong enough to make them live a Christian life. We know, of course, that it is the Holy Spirit who creates love of God in our hearts. But, according to the Word of God we also know that by teaching the children God's Word, we furnish the knowledge which the Holy Spirit uses to create and sustain this love.

**Use Psychological Knowledge.** If we shall succeed in teaching the children the Word of God in such a way that the result will be faith in Christ and living for Christ, we must understand and make use of the laws of the soul. The soul functions according to certain laws, called the psychological laws. These laws are created by God and as it is necessary for us to know the laws of nature in order to succeed in our work to produce food, heat, and other necessities, and as it is necessary to know the laws of health in order to maintain our efficiency, so it is also necessary to know the laws of the soul in order to succeed when teaching the way of salvation.

**A Destructive Psychology.** Modern psychology has greatly increased the general understanding of children. However, much of this psychology is purely speculative, based on a materialistic philosophy and built up according to the theory of materialistic evolution.\* The mental process according to this psychology may be stated as follows: A stimulus comes in over the sensory nerves to the sensory center. A path, created by heritage and the past experiences of the individual, leads over to the motor center. This bridge is called the "bond." From the motor center the stimuli go out over the motor nerves to produce the action. In other words, the stimuli follow through the whole course the line of least resistance and operate with mechanical necessity. This psychology eliminates choice,

and it also eliminates moral responsibility. Not all psychologists of this type would state the process in such a crass materialistic way. However, the psychologists who accept the mechanistic principles as governing human conduct, have no place in their system either for free choice or moral responsibility.

This psychology is antagonistic to Christian faith on every point. The motive for man's action is found in what is pleasant or painful. The source of altruistic conduct is in our social relationship. There is no such thing as eternal truth. Truth is subject to an ever changing process of development. A man's religious experience is a self-deception. There is no place for God or grace. All Christian moral values are destroyed.

It is necessary to call attention to this type of psychology, because it has been gaining ground in education. At the present it is at work to mould the religious instruction of the Sunday schools of the country.

This psychology is contrary to the teachings of Christ. He saw in every man a spiritual "I," a conscious center or personality who is not governed solely by physical influence. To Him the motive for our acts should be that love of God and man which has its source in God's love of us. The source of right conduct is not in social relationship, but in God. Christ speaks of religious experiences as the highest reality, and so they appear in His own life. And truth, according to Christ, is eternal. Ω

\*Note: For a further study of this phase of modern psychology see "The Pedagogy of Jesus in the Twilight of Today," by Walter A. Squires, pp. 171-296. This summary is partly drawn from Squire's book.

This article is chapter one in the book, Ten Studies In Religious Pedagogy, by Jacob Tanner. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, MN, 1930. Used with Permission



## Handling the Word of Truth

As individuals, as teachers, and preachers, we are not free to deal with the Word of God as we please. The apostle Paul gave young pastor Timothy this admonition, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly [correctly/accurately/properly] handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

These are skills that must be learned, and if they are to be learned they must, in one way or another, be taught. This instruction should begin in the home (see introductory article), but as has also been made note of, it is to be the function of the church, and as the Lutheran Church is structured, it should be central to Confirmation instruction. "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." And should we not suppose that one of the most important aspects of this training ought to be the 'right handling' of God's Word?

As a demonstration of what might be accomplished in the instruction of young people in the home and in the church, and more specifically in the Confirmation instruction of our youth, the program at Christ Lutheran, Chetek, WI is here outlined.

The time of formal Confirmation instruction is two years. The two years includes instruction both in the Sunday School (with a lay teacher) and in weekly midweek classes (with the pastor). There is instruction in Luther's Small Catechism

(memory work required) and besides this, the pastor and students work their way through C. S. Lewis', *Mere Christianity*; a study of Church History, using the volume, *Church History*, by B. K. Kuiper; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing; and also a study of Hermeneutics, incorporating the volume, *Hermeneutics, Principles, and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*, by Henry A. Vinkler; Baker Books Publishing.

All this has not always been incorporated into the course of study, but through the years, and taking serious note of what our young people need if they are going to be equipped to live as Christians in this world as well as being equipped to witness to the faith, this is the course of study that, up to this point in time, has evolved. Students are also encouraged to participate in our congregation's Midweek Bible Study.

Also, students are not automatically confirmed at the conclusion of their study. Rather, when they, their parents, and the pastor feel they understand, and are ready, to take the confirmation vow, they will then be confirmed.

As part of the confirmation rite, the following presentations were given by this year's confirmands. The assignment was to compose, then share with the congregation, one aspect of John 14:6. Three of these students are 14 years of age, one is 16. Ω

**"Jesus said... 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.'" John 14:6**

### Jesus - by student 'a'

Who is Jesus? To some, He was a good person. To others, like the Pharisees, He was a false teacher and a blasphemer. But to us, He is much more. He is the light that gives us hope in a world that is

filled with darkness. In John 8:12 Jesus says, "...I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." This verse says that if we follow Christ, we will have the

light of life. But, how do we know Him? Why is knowledge of Him important? How does knowledge of God's word impact our personal relationship with the Lord?

We know Jesus through the Bible where He reveals Himself to us through the Word. We see Him through His followers, who try to do as He did. We can also see Christ through His creation as outlined in Romans 1: 20 where it says, "For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." All of these examples show us how we can know Jesus better. We can learn about Him through His Word, we can see some of His attributes in His followers, and we can see a glimpse of His beauty through His creation.

Knowledge of God's Word is important to guide our lives. It keeps us close to the Lord in a world that pushes us to go away from Him. Knowledge is also important when sharing our faith with others, as well as defending it when it is challenged. 1 Peter 3:15 states, "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect." Our knowledge of God's word impacts our relationship with

the Lord because it is foundational to our belief in Him. Without this knowledge, we would be 'up the creek without a paddle' so to speak. Without God's word, we would have no truth, and thus have nothing to base our beliefs on. This is why the Word is so important.

In our culture today, we largely reject the Lord which results in darkness, emptiness, broken families and no guidance for life, to name a few examples. With Christ, we have guidance for life! Galatians 5:22-23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...." with Christ, this is what we have. When we believe in Christ, this fruit will be evident in how we live our lives, and others will see Christ in us.

Jesus' actions are shown to us throughout Scripture, and we should follow His actions as we live our lives. The more we do this, we will affect our culture in a positive way as we share Jesus' love. This is our challenge: to fulfill the great commission in Matthew 28:19 where Jesus says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." By knowing who Jesus is and having knowledge of His Word, we can fulfill this command. Ω

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## The Way - by student 'b'

The first question we need to ask ourselves is, "What is the way?"

Thomas once asked Jesus this very question. In John 14:6, Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Note the definite article "The Way." It states that Jesus is the one

way. Same thing for "the truth," and "The Life." Jesus tells us no one comes to the Father except through Me.

We need to follow Him to the best of our ability. The way we do that is by following His examples, teachings and keeping His commandments.

There is no way we can earn our way into heaven. If that were possible we would not need Jesus.

The second question is, "How is Jesus' way different from others?"

Jesus is righteous  
He exists  
He is non-contradictional  
Jesus is patience  
Jesus is merciful

Jesus' word and works are evidential. Jesus paid the price for me John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Many religions teach that it's your good works that will save you. But like in Islam even if you had good works and Allah is having a bad day you can still be thrown into hell.

The third Question is, "Why is following 'The Way' important? John 14:6 "...no one comes to the Father except through me." If we do not follow Jesus' Way, we can't come to the Father. And we all want to go to heaven.

If you wanted to take your family on a vacation, and a friend said, "I know the perfect spot, let me give you a map," you would load up the car and start following the directions that your friend gave you.

How important will it be to drive on the roads that he laid out? Very important. If you leave the map and take little side streets and see the next little town, it will not be long before it will be hard to remember the way back. Plus that would mean backtracking a long way and that would be inconvenient and no one wants to admit that they are wrong and abruptly turn the car around. And as the gas tank gets lower and the day starts to fade, the inescapable conclusion is that you have lost your way and will not make it to the perfect spot that your friend told you about.

In life we have been given a road map "The Way." Just like the map for the vacation spot, if we don't stay on 'The Way,' all those turns and side streets will try to ensnare us and keep us from returning to Heavenly Father.

On to the fourth question. "Why does the world challenge the idea of 'the' Way? These are but a very few of the reasons.

- 1) You will be accountable for your actions. If accountable, then to whom? To God.
- 2) It will mean that God was real and that they would have to be subject to His laws and would on the last day have to give an account of their actions.
- 3) It's work to stay on "The Way." "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many" Matt 7:13. The key word here is easy. The world today is largely people trying to make their lives easier. We have automated everything now days, right down to Alexis who will tell us what to think because it's easier than thinking.
- 4) It means putting things and people before self. "Love your neighbor as yourself. Pray for those who persecute you. Turn the other cheek. Honor your father and mother. Have no other gods before me." In essence it means that God and not the mirror is the highest priority.

I know that God is faithful and one of the verses that I love is Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."

So let us hold on to our faith in Jesus and use the road map that Christ has given us, so we might not become lost. Ω



## The Truth - by student 'c'

I will be answering questions like, what is truth? How can we tell what is true? Is truth relative? And finally what impact do these questions have on society?

### What is truth?

I would like to share with you a quote by Dr Ravi Zacharias who said this "Truth is that which affirms propositionally the nature of reality as it is." I would like to repeat that for the sake of emphasis "Truth is that which affirms propositionally the nature of reality as it is." Truth is not what we want it to be, but quite simply, what *is* regardless of how we feel about it.

For example, if I read a math book regardless of my personal feelings when it comes to  $2+2=4$ ...  $2+2$  it will still equal 4. This is why you cannot tell the author what he or she wrote. And you cannot tell gravity that you "identify as superman." You still can't fly. Truth is what is.

Jesus said, "I am the way the TRUTH and the life. No one comes to the father except through me" John 14:6. What does the Bible mean when it says that Jesus is the truth? It means that 1) He holds the truth, 2) that the truth is in Him, and 3) what He says is true. In John 18:37 Jesus also said, "For this reason I was born and for this reason I came into the world to testify of the truth. And in John 8:32 we read that the "truth shall set you free." This tells us Jesus came into the world to testify of the truth to set us free.

This is why truth is so important, so crucial to our faith. Because by TRUTH, Jesus sets us free. Truth must be our ultimate goal in any religious debate or study. Truth is more important than our personal feelings or emotions. Truth must also supersede our presuppositions, meaning that truth must be put above our own personal bias or doctrinal stance.

Acts 28:27: "For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them." Where in your life and in my life is the truth standing in front of us, and we only close our eyes and plug our ears?

If you only get one thing from my talk I hope you will put the truth above your feelings. Because truth and reality DO NOT end where your feelings begin. Feelings are important but they do not supersede or overrule truth.

### This said, how do we tell what is true?

There are two main categories in determining what is true. One is coherence, And the other correspondence. When we look to see if an idea is true, we need to be looking first for coherence in all of the claims that the idea makes. And secondly, we need to look and see if the idea corresponds to reality.

Now let's use this theory to see if there is any truth in the statement, "Truth is relative."

If we investigate the statement 'truth is relative' we find it to be self defeating, because the statement itself must either be relative, or objective. If the statement is relative, meaning subjective to our opinions, then it is not always true. If, on the other hand, the assertion truth is relative is objective, meaning that it is an absolute truth, then the statement is denying the existence of absolutes with an absolute.

In either case the statement truth is relative, has neither coherence in its claim, nor correspondence to reality. Therefore, truth cannot be relative. What is true must always be true. Truth must be objective.

So why does our culture seek relative truth? Because if truth is relative, and Jesus said "I am the way the truth and the life," than in making truth relative, the world is trying to relativize the very Son of God thereby relativizing God Himself.

Relativism is yet another attempt to destroy personal and cultural accountability. If there are no absolutes, there is no absolute law, and if there isn't an absolute law, then there is no law at all. If everything is relative to our opinions, then what you think is wrong, I think is good. And if there is no law, there is no sin. Relativism also destroys Jesus and his word. Jesus said in John 14:6 that He is the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Him. If truth is relative and Jesus said that He is truth,

then in making truth relative, Christ and His authority must also be relative. Again what is truth must be absolutely true.

So what is truth? As Ravi said, truth is that which affirms propositionally the nature of reality as it is.

How do we tell what is true? By looking for coherence and correspondence to reality

Can truth be relative? No, because the statement "Truth is relative" is self-defeating.

Why does our culture long for relativism? Because if truth is relative than God is also relative.

I would like to close with a quote by C S Lewis who said, "Human history: the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy."

Relativism is only the next thing. Ω

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## The Life - by student 'd'

In John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." What did He mean by "the life"? Jesus' definition of life differs significantly from modern society's view. Because of these differences, we as Christians have a commission to model His way of living for a fallen world. So, how do we do this?

When we don't have life in Jesus, we have nothing. Without a reason to live and a purpose to strive for, we don't even know why we are here. Only Jesus can give us that reason. I'm so glad that He did not leave us lifeless! He sacrificed Himself so that we can become His children and live for Him. We'll still stumble and have trials, but now the hopelessness is gone. One of my favorite Bible verses is Jeremiah 29:11, which says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Only in Christ

do we have "a future and a hope." Jesus is the only one who will ever give us lasting joy. Only when we let Him live in our hearts and surrender to His will are we truly alive! Without His light in our lives we are all dead inside.

Ever since the beginning of creation, people have refused this wonderful gift of life. They purposely make themselves blind to good things, things that would help them so much if they just asked. Everywhere we look, we see so much brokenness around us. Envy, rivalry, deceit, and anger have existed since the Fall and are no different today. Humankind is willingly falling into the same trap, over and over again. This brokenness is the result of spiritually dead people, people who are so lost that they won't ask to be found. This is a sad problem, but it is one that we as Christians are called to battle.

Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19-20

are true: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." If we answer the call of the Great Commission, the Lord will be with us as we follow His will.

As we think about "the life" to-

day, remember that Jesus, God's Son, is our only source of eternal life. It is our duty to use this perfect gift of life as God wants us to by living as He did. By following His example, we can transform the darkness of our broken world into God's amazing light. As Christians, what will you do with your gift of life? Will you leave it wrapped, or will you use it to impact the world as Jesus calls you to do? Ω

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## The Value Of Godly Knowledge

The Apostle Peter in his Second Epistle (II Peter 1:2,3) writes of how grace and peace can be ours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. We can expect, if we have a true knowledge of God and of His Son, that grace and peace will be conferred to us in abundance. Grace... the grace that pardons and sanctifies; and peace... peace of conscience, reconciliation with God, and calmness in the trials of life (see Barns on 2 Peter 1:2). And what a difference these gifts will make in the life of the believer... he or her heart need not be troubled or afraid (Jn. 14:27).

One of the things that concerned Peter in connection with the first generations of believers among whom he ministered, was their slowness, and in not so few cases their lack, of growth in their faith and lives. The church was made up mainly of new believers and far too many were remaining babes in the faith which left them vulnerable to their own questions, doubts, false teachings, and of course also to the enemy of their souls, i.e., Satan.

We gain Godly Knowledge from the Word of God. Way back in Deut. 30:11,14, Moses explained to the Israelites that what he was commanding them was not that difficult for them or beyond their understand-

ing... "The Word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may obey it."

The many truths that are revealed to us in Scripture - - the truth about ourselves... the truths concerning God [His person; His triune nature; His many attributes; the many examples of His working in, with, and among His people; His faithfulness to His people; His patience with them]... the salvation God has made possible... the many promises contained in Scripture... the hope of heaven... what we were without God in our lives... what through Christ we have been become (see II Cor. 5:17)... what more we may become as we live our lives in faithfulness to Him, and await the blessed hope of his coming - - all these things and more enable us to live as people of God, and with the assurance that we are truly His now, and forever.

*Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. Ω*

Table Talk  
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The LMS-USA is Lutheran Church body describing itself as *Biblical, Confessional, Evangelical, Liturgical and Congregational*. It is a 'Forum' in which there is an on going discussion of theological issues and concerns among clergy and lay alike. The LMS-USA meets annually for a Theological Conference and this publication, besides carrying news of the Ministerium and Synod, functions also as a vehicle for this continuing dialogue.

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