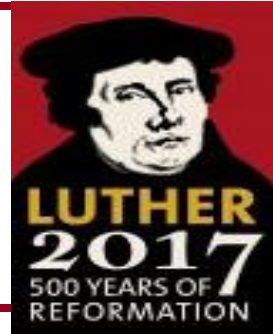


# A Little Lutheran Latin

Psalm 51:1-12 Romans 7:15-25 Luke 10:25-37

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## Did you ever take Latin in school?

When I was growing up, the only language options in school were German, French or Spanish. **Latin** was not an option. Maybe it was the same for you. But regardless, we all have learned some **Latin** from common use. In fact, you'd probably be surprised by how much **Latin** you already know. Words like *memo, alibi, agenda, census, veto, alias, via, and alumni* are all Latin words. Even some entire Latin phrases have come into common use, like *bona fide, alter ego, persona non grata, vice versa, alma mater, and quid pro quo*. You probably know more Latin than you think you do!

Latin was the **international** language of scholarship, medicine, and science until well into the 18th century. **Latin was also the international language of THEOLOGY for centuries...and even during the days of the Lutheran Reformation.**

As we celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation today,  
let's learn a little "Lutheran Latin" ! ☺

The first **Lutheran Latin** phrase from the Reformation-era that is important to know is ***Incurvatus in se***. ***Incurvatus in se*** means **to be turned in on yourself, or curved inwards**. This is one of the ways that Martin Luther described sin in our lives. It is the idea that we are totally self-absorbed, self-serving, and selfish. I had a seminary professor who called it "navel gazing"...all you do is look to yourself. You are turned in on yourself. No matter how good and noble an action you might do, at its core there is a self-serving motive. ***Incurvatus in se*** reflects how the Scriptures describe sin in our lives.

It is written: "No one is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." ROMANS 3:10-

Sin makes us look to ourselves for salvation; and to think only of ourselves and not our neighbor. **Self-centeredness is the sinner's lifestyle.** *Incurvatus in se* leaves you with no fear, no love and no trust in God; and it leaves you without love, without care, and without concern towards your neighbor.

This is why **REPENTANCE** is so important. Your sinful nature is powerful, it is corrupt, it is truly *Incurvatus in se*. Confession stops the downward spiral; Absolution forgives and renews you. Only the love of God in Christ Jesus can turn you **outward**/ Only the Gospel can turn you away from yourself, and toward others. Only the Holy Spirit at work through the Word of God can give you faith in God and love towards your neighbor. Only God in Christ can make you a Good Samaritan, who looks beyond yourself and to the needs of others.

*Incurvatus in se* is a Reformation-era phrase to describe sin that means **to be turned in on yourself, or curved inwards**. Only God in Christ turns you away from yourself and towards others.

A second **Lutheran Latin** phrase from the Reformation-era that is important to understand is *extra nós*; *extra nós* means “**outside us**”; it refers to the fact that salvation comes from “**outside of us**”. Because of the total corruption of *incurvatus in se*, we cannot do a thing to save ourselves. Salvation does not come from “**inside**” of us. There is nothing “in us” that we can offer God for our salvation. We need someone to do it for us; we need someone to come from the **outside** and save us --- and God does through His Son Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection rescues us not only from sin, guilt, and death --- but also from *ourselves and our corrupt, self-centered sinful nature!*

- *Extra nós* means that the **Gospel** is outside of us: it is objective and it is true. It is not dependent on you, your feelings, or your thoughts.
- *Extra nós* means that **Jesus is the Son of God**, it's an objective reality no matter what the world might say, or how much doubt you might have.
- *Extra nós* means that **Jesus is the Savior of the World**, that He did the work of salvation for every single human being ever conceived; that He died on a cross for you and your salvation, & He rose from the dead on the third day.
- *Extra nós* points you to the places where God works on your behalf: Holy Baptism, Holy Scripture, and Holy Communion. These are the Means of Grace: the places where God Himself chooses to forgive your sins. The

**Word and the Sacraments** are *extra nós*: they are outside of us. They are objective realities where God has placed His promise of eternal salvation.

**Ironically, through the Water, the Word, and the Meal outside of us, the Holy Spirit works faith inside of us!** The Holy Spirit works to lead you to repentance and faith in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ! The Holy Spirit creates love and trust in God; and He drives you to love, serve and help your neighbor... like a Good Samaritan!

*Extra nós* is a Reformation-era phrase to describe salvation coming from “**outside of us**”. Only Christ is our Savior who’s death and resurrection saves us from our sins!

A third **Lutheran Latin** phrase from the Reformation era that is important to understand is "*Simul justus et peccator*". "*Simul justus et peccator*" means that a Christian is at the same time both **RIGHTEOUS** and **SINNER**. You recognize the word *Simul* from the English word *simultaneously* --- it means **at the same time**. **In this context, you are simultaneously righteous and sinful**. A more common way to reference this is to say that you are both “*sinner and saint*”.

Remember that “**righteous**” is the legal verdict of God. God has declared the legal verdict of “not guilty” over you through faith in Christ. You are righteous through faith in Christ. This is how God chooses to see you. God chooses to see you through His Son and His righteousness. You are 100% **righteous** in His sight.

But yet, we still live in a broken, sinful world and our old sinful nature still corrupts and taints everything we do. We still battle with *incurvatus in se*; we are still curved in on ourselves. We remain totally and thoroughly **sinful**. Thankfully, the Lord forgives our self-centeredness in Christ, He does not count our sins against us, and He chooses not to see us in our rebellion and immorality!

*Simul justus et peccator* creates a conflict within you. There is a part of you that desires to love God and serve your neighbor, and there a part of you that is totally self-centered and evil. This is the battle of the Christian faith and life.

**This is spiritual warfare!** *Simul justus et peccator* creates a conflict of good and evil within you. Here is how St. Paul described the conflict:

For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ROMANS 7:18-19

The only way to overcome this battle is through Christ and His Word. *Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!* **As Christians, our focus is never on ourselves and our sinful nature; our focus and attention is always on Christ and His Word.** Christ empowers you to live a holy, Godly, and righteous life. You remember your Baptism, you hear His Word; you believe His absolution; and you eat His Meal. God works *in and through* these things to strengthen you so that you grow and mature in the Christian faith and life. **Every time you are reassured in your Christian faith you are also renewed in your Christian life.** God works *in and through* His Word and Sacraments so that you are *zealous* for the things of the Kingdom of God. God works *in and through* His Word and Sacraments so that you become more and more biblically literate, doctrinally sound, mission minded, and loving, kind, and patient towards others! God is at work in you so that you can love the Lord your God with all your heart, and strive to be a good Samaritan at all times with all people!

*Simul justus et peccator* is a Reformation-era phrase to describe our Christian life as **RIGHTEOUS** and **SINNER** at the same time. You may be *Simul justus et peccator*, but your focus is on the *iustus: righteousness!*

I hope you had some fun today with a “**Little Lutheran Latin**”. But at the end of the day, it really **doesn’t matter** if you know the Latin or not --- **what is important** is that you understand the concepts.

Because of sin, you are **turned in on yourself** and are separated from God with no hope of saving yourself; salvation has to come from **outside of us** – from God who sent His Son Jesus to be your Savior. Now, in faith, you are a **righteous and sinner at the same time**: you have an ongoing struggle to overcome your sinful nature and live as God’s Righteous People. Amen!