



PREACH THE
WORD
It's Still All About
Jesus

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

Gal 2:15-21 2 Tim 3:10-17 Mark 4:30-34

November 1 2020

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Can you imagine if the government took over all the churches; and created *One State Church* instead. No other church would be allowed, and if you tried to maintain *conservative* Lutheran worship and beliefs, your pastors would be arrested and you would be fined.

That's how it was in the early 1800s in Germany. King Frederick William III created the *Prussian Union*, the merging of all the Protestant churches into one State Church. In this *Prussian Union*, the clear Gospel of Jesus Christ was lost; the doctrines of Holy Scripture were watered down; and people's consciences were violated.

A group of Lutherans from an area in eastern Germany called Saxony decided to leave their homes and their vocations and emigrate to the United States. They wanted the freedom to worship the Lord as *conservative* Lutherans. After extensive planning, 700 German Lutherans left for America in 5 ships: the *Copernicus*, the *Johan Georg*, the *Republik*, the *Olbers*, and the *Amalia*. The 3 month journey across the Atlantic Ocean was long, treacherous, and dangerous --> the smallest ship, the *Amalia*, was lost at sea; 105 souls perished.

The remaining ships landed at New Orleans, and then they chartered a steamboat up the Mississippi River to St. Louis. They soon purchased land about 100 miles south of St Louis in Perry County, Missouri.

Things were not easy for these German Lutherans. It was hard labor clearing the land and creating homesteads. In addition, they had significant leadership issues and fiscal mismanagement of the common treasury; they also suffered from poverty, prejudice, hunger, and disease. They didn't know English; they all spoke German. All of this caused some of them to return to Germany, and others to move to back to St. Louis. Those who remained continued to build a German Lutheran settlement in Missouri¹.

¹ For a detailed and riveting account of the Saxon emigration, see "Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839-1841" by Walter O. Forster. You can borrow this 600 page book from me if you would like. This is the story of our *direct* spiritual ancestors of the conservative Lutheran tradition.

These German Saxon Lutheran emigrants are our direct spiritual ancestors! These men and women would go on to build Lutheran churches, Lutheran elementary schools, high schools, colleges, hospitals, orphanages, and even Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. They would publish Lutheran materials and gather together other conservative German Lutherans from other parts of the United States. In 1847, just 8 years after emigrating from Germany, they formed the *German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States*². The small mustard seed of their *violated consciences* and their *emigration to America* has now grown into a large tree, known today as the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), and it includes over 2,000,000 members, 6,000 congregations, it is in every state of the Union, and it is a leader of *conservative*³ Lutheran doctrine around the world. Trinity Lutheran Church is part of this – we are a congregation of the LCMS!

Let me highlight three things that means for us today ...

1. Obviously the first is that we are **Lutheran**. Being “Lutheran” does not mean that we worship Martin Luther. Rather being *Lutheran* means that we hold to the teachings that Martin Luther taught from God's Holy Word. Specifically, it means that *we hold that we are saved by grace, through faith, apart from works for the Law (Romans 3:28)*. Luther lived in a day and age when the Roman Catholic Church taught that men were saved by good works, prayers, money, and suffering. Luther discovered that **Scripture** teaches that we are saved by **grace**, through **faith**, in the Lord **Jesus** Christ alone.

God sent His Son Jesus to take our place under sin, to die for us cross; and in His resurrection on the third day, God freely forgives us just because He loves us; ***not because of*** our works, prayers, money, and suffering. The most important thing about being a *conservative* Lutheran is our vigilant and careful focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of salvation for us. This is the first

² This was the first name of what later became shortened to “The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod”.

³ In theology, “conservative” and “liberal” can be thought of as holding to the Word of God or not. Liberal theology does not recognize Scripture as the sole authority; whereas conservative Lutheran theology holds fast to Scripture as the sole authority in matters of faith and life. As a “conservative” Lutheran Church, we confess: “We have another rule, namely, that the Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel.” SMALCALD ARTICLES

and chief doctrine of the Christian faith, it is the heart and core of Holy Scripture, and it affects every other Biblical doctrine as well. We guard and defend the Gospel Good News of Jesus at all costs. Being a conservative Lutheran can be summarized by these phrases from Reformation history 500 years ago:

Scripture alone!
Grace alone!
Faith Alone!
Christ alone!

The more you understand *conservative* Lutheran doctrine, and especially in comparison to what's going on today under the name of "Christianity", the more thankful you become that you are a *conservative* **Lutheran** Christian⁴!

2. A second thing to note is that, as a part of the LCMS, we are unashamedly a *conservative* Lutheran Church. In theology, being "*conservative*" means that you stick to the Bible; that you hold Scripture as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. In "*liberal churches*", including *liberal* Lutheran churches, the Bible has been thrown out the window; it is no longer that authority; they pick and choose what they want to believe, most deny that the Bible is the Word of God in the first place, and the doctrines of Christ are usually replaced with the current thoughts and trendy ideas of the world.

There are plenty of *obvious* examples of this:

⇒ *Liberal churches* have wholeheartedly accepted all aspects of the homosexual and transgender agenda, even though it directly contradicts Holy Scripture. The LCMS on the other hand, as a *conservative* Lutheran Church, identifies homosexuality and transgenderism as a sin against the sixth Commandment and rebellion against the Creator, and calls people to repent who are caught up in it or support it and to find forgiveness and renewal in Jesus as their Savior.

⁴ If this is new to you, then it might sound prideful and arrogant. But it is not: rather it is deep seated conviction of the truth of God's Holy Word. A conviction like this comes from years of careful study of God's Holy Word and an honest look at the other denominations, groups, and teachers under the umbrella of Christianity. Not all "Christians" teach the same thing --- not by a long shot. It is absolutely essential that you strive to become biblically literate and doctrinally sound so that you do not get misled by the plethora of false teachers and false doctrines at work under the name "Christian". Remember, 26 of the 27 books of the New Testament warn us of false teachers!!

- ⇒ *Liberal churches* readily encourage women to have abortions under the guise of “a woman’s right” even though it directly contradicts Holy Scripture. The LCMS on the other hand, as a *conservative* Lutheran church, confesses that life begins at conception, and calls people to repent of abortion and to be healed and forgiven by the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ⇒ *Liberal churches* teach that God goes by many names, and that all faiths are equal and true. The LCMS on the other hand, as a *conservative* Lutheran church, confesses that the Holy Trinity is the only True God, and those who worship others (*idols*) are called to repent and believe in the one, true and only God.

There are countless other examples of *liberal churches* forsaking Holy Scripture --> their apostasy is jaw-droppingly unbelievable.

One of the things that you learn as you study Scripture and grow in faith is the wonderful blessing of belonging to a *conservative* Lutheran Church.

3. Finally, a third thing to note is that we are a “*Synod*”. The word *Synod* comes from two Greek words that mean to “*walk together*.” We *walk together* – in *Synod* – with over 6,000 other congregations, plus a plethora of other conservative Lutheran Church bodies across the world. By *walking together*, we can do much more than we could ever do as a single congregation. As part of the Lutheran Church Missouri *Synod*, we help and support

- ⇒ Pastors and Deaconesses being trained at our two Seminaries
- ⇒ Lutheran Teachers and other Church workers are trained in the Concordia University System
- ⇒ Lutheran books and resources are created and printed
- ⇒ Missionaries are sent around the world to proclaim the Gospel of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

By *walking together*, we can do much more than we could ever do as a single congregation. That *walk together* is captured with the word “*Synod*”.

The days of emigration are long over ... but the *bold courage*, the *deep conviction*, and the *many sacrifices* of those German Saxon Lutherans **180 years ago** directly affect us even right now -- we are their spiritual descendants in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod! Amen!