

The Christian “Faith”

Ephesians 4:1-16 2 Timothy 4:1-4 John 17:1-3, 14-23

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Pastor Dave Bolte



The **Christian Faith** is the **truth** of God's Holy Word¹ that reveals God and His love to us. The **Christian Faith** is the **doctrines** that we believe, teach, and confess as Christians. The **Christian Faith** is the **essential truths of the Gospel** that all true Christians hold in common. When we use the term **Faith** in this sense, we are using it in an objective sense; “**The Christian Faith**”; it's the **body of teachings** that we learn from Holy Scripture.

This is what our **personal faith** believes in. We hear the truths of the **Christian Faith**, especially the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit creates **personal faith** so that we know that they are true and that they apply to us². The object of your **personal faith** is **Christ and His Promises**.

The truths of the **Christian Faith**, is what we study and learn throughout our lives as we grow and mature as Christians. For instance,

⇒ In the **Christian Faith**, you hear the truth of God's Law, and apply it to your life; you let it do its work of exposing your sin and leading you to repentance. It's God's love and care for you so that you do not continue to fall deeper and deeper into sin and lose your faith forever. The Law of God exposes your sin and leads you to repentance.

¹ The Scriptures are the truth of God because they are inspired and inerrant. As conservative Lutherans, “We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and norm according to which all teachings, together with <all> teachers, should be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testament alone.” The Formula of Concord, Epitome, I.1 [Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions](#)

² In theology, this is expressed with the Latin terms *fides quae* and *fides qua*. *Fides quae* means “the faith which is believed” – this is the objective sense of the word “faith”. *Fides qua* means “the faith which believes” – this is the subjective sense of the word “faith”. *Fides quae* is **THE** Christian faith; *fides qua* is your personal faith that makes you a Christian.

- ⇒ In the **Christian Faith**, you hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the good news that Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection forgives your sins and reconciles you to God. You hear the Absolution of your sins: God's verdict of "*not guilty!*" and that you are set free!

**The Gospel of the Lord Jesus
is the central and most important teaching
in the Christian Faith.**

- ⇒ In the **Christian Faith**, you learn that you are holy and set apart as God's very own. You live your life glorifying God, serving your neighbor, and growing in faith. The **Christian Faith** teaches us about our Sanctification.
- ⇒ In the **Christian Faith**, you learn about the Holy Trinity, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; you learn how to view the world and understand the times; you learn about love, peace, and hope; you learn of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

The **Christian Faith** teaches you the truth of God; there is no other place. This is what your **personal faith** connects you to!

The **Christian Faith** is outside of us, it is objective, it is the body of teachings, the content of Scripture, the truth about God and His Kingdom.

This **Christian Faith** is where your **assurance** is found. God's Word and promises do not change; they are in effect throughout your life. No matter how you may feel at any given time, no matter what might be happening in your life, you have complete confidence and assurance that God will keep His promises to you. You belong to Him! Your sins are forgiven! He is at work in your life! You have a home in heaven!

Your **assurance** is **not** found in your **personal faith**,
which fluctuates and wavers at times;
your **assurance** is found in the **Christian Faith**:
the Words and Promises of Christ in Holy Scripture.

They are the solid rock in which you stand; they are the anchor of your life; they do not change. Your *assurance* is found in Christ and His Word and promises.

In this *Christian Faith*, we gather together with other believers in the *Holy Christian Church*.

**By the power of the Holy Spirit,
the Christian Faith creates the Christian Church!**

You are in fellowship with other believers, you “share” in the truths of God's Holy Word. In the “*Communion of Saints*” we are bound together by the doctrines and teachings of Christ. We are specifically **conservative Lutheran Christians**, as we hold that a man is justified by faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone³. There is a unity in the **One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church** as we hold to the teachings and doctrines of the *Christian Faith*.

In these **Last Days** and **End Times**, Scripture warns us that there will be many, many false teachers teaching false doctrines. These poisonous vipers are found **inside** the Christian Church; but they do **NOT** teach the *Christian Faith*. They teach the ideas of men, the ways of the world, and the doctrines of demons. Therefore, we are to *be aware* and to *avoid* them; and to **contend** for the *Christian Faith*.

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to **contend for the faith** that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Jude 3-4

³ We find that the doctrines of the Lutheran Church, as they are laid down in the Book of Concord of the year 1580, agree with the Word of God in every respect. ... When we say that the Lutheran Church is the true, or orthodox, church, we do not mean to say that it is the only saving church, or that all its members are true Christians and will unfailingly be saved. Membership in the Lutheran Church is not identical with membership in the invisible church. But what we do mean to say that all its official teachings agree with the Word of God and are, therefore, positively true, and that all doctrines differing from them are heterodox and false. When we say that other churches are false churches, we do by no means wish to insinuate that there are no Christians in those churches, or that it is impossible for anyone to be saved in them. We are passing judgment, not on the personal faith of the members, branding them hypocrites and heathen, but only on those public doctrines, which do not agree with the Word of God. A Summary Of Christian Doctrine, E. W. A. Koehler, p. 247

The word “contend” comes from the athletic world and specifically wrestling. In this word picture, you are wrestling with false teachers and their poisoned doctrine *so that it does not contaminate you*.

Contending for the Faith takes hard and diligent work. It is holding to the truth of Scripture no matter what. It is a continuous battle with evil men and dark demons who would **wrestle** the truth of God's Holy Word away from you. You contend for the faith when you boldly proclaim God's Holy Word; when you expose false teachers and false doctrines; and most importantly, when you keep yourself biblically literate and doctrinally sound as a disciple of the Lord Jesus!

The danger from false teachers and false doctrines is **immense**⁴!

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2 Timothy 4:3-4

One way that you *Contend for the Faith* is by supporting this congregation with your tithes and offerings. Your faithful support enables us to *Contend for the Faith* here at Trinity as we preach and teach the Gospel and hold fast to the truths of God's Holy Word. Thank you for your faithful support for the *Christian Faith* here at Trinity!

The *Christian Faith* is the greatest treasure God has given to us! The *Christian Faith* teaches us about Christ, His death and resurrection for us, and the gifts of eternal salvation that He so freely gives.

The *Christian Faith* unites us with other believers in Christ; it is the unchanging rock of our assurance; and it is where we take our stand as we live our lives. Amen!

⁴ Remember that 26 of the 27 New Testament books warn us about false teachers and their false doctrines. Jesus says they are wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15); St. Paul tells us that their teachings are like gangrene: they spread and they kill faith (2 Timothy 2:16-17). **HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH A FALSE TEACHER** ... in person, on TV, in a podcast, on the internet, in books, on the radio, offering financial support, etc., etc. (Romans 16:17). Both Jesus and Paul warn that their words grow and spread → *they are not neutral*. They are dangerous! **HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH A FALSE TEACHER!** False teachers always ignore or minimize Christ and focus on you and what you must do in one way or another.