

A Life of Faith

Psalm 1 Luke 11:5-13 Romans 12:1-21

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A term that's helpful to learn and know when it comes to Theology, Christian doctrine, and the study of Scripture is *Gospel Motivation*.

Gospel Motivation is a way to describe that our Christian faith and life is motivated by the good news of eternal salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. *Gospel Motivation* keeps the proper order to things, so that you do not fall into the false teaching of *works righteousness*¹. *Gospel Motivation* means that Christ and His work on the cross comes first, *then afterwards*, we live a holy and godly life. Here is a passage from 1 John that summarizes *Gospel Motivation*:

We love because He first loved us.

1 John 4:19

When you remember this, then your Holy Life in Christ will be good, right, and true. If you get the order mixed up and change it around, then you are in to dangerous false doctrine, faith threatening error, and works righteousness.

Gospel Motivation is that We love because He first loved us.

Remember, that before you had faith in Christ, you were totally and thoroughly corrupt in sin. You had no idea about God's love, His mercy, nor His grace. You were lost and condemned. There was no desire to do good works, nor could you do a good work in God's eyes. **You were dead in sin until Christ made you alive.** Here is how we confess this as conservative Lutheran Christians:

¹ Works Righteousness is when your own works, effort, or merit secure your eternal salvation. This minimizes Christ and puts the focus on you and your work. This is a false teaching that destroys the Gospel. The Bible teaches that we are declared righteous ("not guilty!") by faith alone, grace alone, and in Christ alone – without our work, effort or merit!

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith . . . Martin Luther's Small Catechism

The Holy Spirit creates personal faith when you hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When you hear the promise of eternal salvation through His life, death, and resurrection, the Holy Spirit gives you faith to believe that promise. And with that faith comes a change of your heart; you are rescued from your sin, it's guilt, and all the darkness that went with it. Through faith in Christ, you now begin to desire to do good works, and you actually can do good works in the eyes of God.

You might recognize that everything we are talking about so far is the doctrine of **Sanctification**: *your holy life in Christ*. The Gospel changes everything about you: your outlook on life, your attitude towards others, and the priorities of your life.

*Because you are motivated by the Gospel,
everything you do is holy.*

Your life is lived out in the presence of God and your vocations are sacred. Those areas of your life where you have duties and responsibilities are there places where you bear witness to Christ. This is why you do what you do in the Christian faith! The good news of Jesus **drives you** and **motivates you** and **compels you** to live a holy and godly life! Think about the things that you do:

You pray to the Lord your God because you know that He is loving and kind to you in Christ. He is not an angry judge nor is He going to punish you for your sins and iniquities. Because of Christ, you boldly approach your Father in Heaven knowing that He cares about you and He watches over your life! He invites you into His presence, and promises to help you in your time of need! You have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, you know God is your Father, and you are welcomed into His presence! *All of that comes through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and now prayer is a daily aspect of your Christian faith and life!*

Think about loving other people. Before Christ, you would help people because there was something you could get out of it. Sin makes us all self-centered. But now, through faith in Christ, you love, care, and help other people because God has loved, cared, and helped you in Christ. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus drives you to help your neighbor; the forgiveness of your sins makes you compassionate to others; God's never-ending, non-stop love for you motivates you to love your neighbor as Christ has loved you. *All of this is comes through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and now loving other people is a daily aspect of your Christian faith and life!*

Think about your attitude towards Holy Scripture. Before Christ, you would have thought the Bible is a book of myths and stories. Through faith in Christ, your eyes are opened, and you now recognize that it is God's Holy Word; a sacred text to study, a body of doctrine to learn, and the voice of Christ to listen to! Holy Scripture is one of the holy things that God has given you in your life, and you hold it sacred and gladly hear it and learn it. That's why we ourselves study Scripture; that's why we send our children to Sunday school – or *Cross Training* as we call it here, Trinity Lutheran school, confirmation classes, and youth groups. The Bible is the authority in our lives because it's God's Holy Word. *The only way that you know all of this is through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and now Holy Scripture is a daily aspect of your Christian faith and life!*

Think about the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. On the outside looking in, without faith in Christ, they look simply like meaningless religious rituals. But through faith in Christ, you realize that these are truly **HOLY** things: it is God's water and God's meal where He gives us all the gifts of salvation, including the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, His abiding presence, and the Holy Spirit. God washes you clean in Baptism, any feeds you on your journey to Heaven. *The only way that you recognize these as HOLY THINGS is through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and now Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are treasured and sacred to you.*

Think about the hardships that you face. When we have pain and suffering and difficulties in our lives, we do not panic, fear, and collapse in worry. God has given us hundreds of promises that He will take care of us, that He watches over us with His mighty power, and that He is right there with us through it all. God's promises strengthened you, and allow you to patiently endure whatever it is that you are facing. *The only way that you can trust these promises of God it's because you know Him as your loving Heavenly Father through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and now trusting God and His Word and promises is a daily aspect of your Christian faith and life!*

Think about sharing your faith with others. Why would you do that? Before Christ, and without faith, you would think that you are shoving the faith down someone's throat or causing a scene at the supper table. But through faith in Christ, you realize that you have good news to share, you realize that you have the Words of Eternal Life, and you truly care about people dying in their sins and headed to hell. So you share your faith; with family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers. You proclaim the Gospel in good words and in good works. You hope and you pray that the Holy Spirit uses your witness to help other people learn about Christ and His salvation. *The only reason you have this desire to share Christ with others is because you first know Him yourself and believe in His life, death, and resurrection; you now have a passion to share Christ in your daily Christian faith in life!*

Sanctification is the word to describe all of this. It's your holy life in Christ. You have been set apart from the world by the Lord Jesus; and everything about you changes. Your thinking, your desires, your words, and your actions now reflect Christ and His Word.

Let the gospel good news of the Lord Jesus Christ, drive you, motivate you, and compel you to live a holy and godly life!

You are sanctified because Christ has first saved you!
Amen!
