

We Preach Christ Crucified!

1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 15:1-11 Luke 24:36-49

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One of the sad realities about the Christian Church is that not all churches are equal, and they all do not preach and teach the same thing¹.

- ➔ There are some churches that believe that the *most important thing* is *social involvement*, such as poverty, literacy, hunger, equality, and racial issues.
- ➔ There are other churches that believe that *the Christians lifestyle* is *most important thing*; and so the focus is on “how to live the godly life” or “five steps to a Christian family” or “the keys to a happy marriage” and so forth.
- ➔ There are other churches that believe that the *most important thing* is be *tolerant, diverse, and accepting* of all people, regardless of what they believe or how they live.
- ➔ there are still others that believe that the sign of true faith is being *healthy and wealthy*. Quite simply, if you're healthy and wealthy you have faith; if you are sickly and poor you are sinful.
- ➔ There's some that think *unity* is the *most important thing*; and so they unite with anyone who claims they have faith and loves God.
- ➔ And there is a tremendous amount of churches that are *inconsistent* in their preaching and teaching, because their pastors are untrained, and they rely on the internet for their content.

¹ In theology, this is referred to as the “Material Principle” – what a church considers its main focus; the content and emphasis in its preaching, teaching, and confession. For us as conservative Lutherans, our material principle is the Gospel. In Luke 24:46-47 Jesus teaches us that our focus is to be on His death and resurrection that leads to repentance and the forgiveness of sins. We do not set the direction of the Church nor its message: CHRIST DOES!

One of the sad realities about the Christian Church is that not all churches are equal, and they all do not preach and teach the same thing.

For us as conservative Lutherans, we believe that the *most important thing* is **Jesus, and His death and resurrection**. Jesus taught this to us on Easter night, in a post-resurrection appearance²:

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Luke 24:45-47

St. Paul echoes that when writing to the Corinthians:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 1 Corinthians 1:22-23

The Christian Church is about proclaiming eternal salvation, and that eternal salvation is only found in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His life, death, and resurrection. Only in Him do you find life, peace, and the forgiveness of sins!³

Only Jesus' death on the cross can pay the price required for your sins. Sin destroys our lives, and leaves us full of guilt. In sin we will die, and then face the wrath and condemnation of God for disobeying His commandments. Only

² This is not the only place, of course, but one of the clearest.

³ "Everything that the church does has to do with forgiving people their sins. Its pastors baptize in the name of the Triune God for the forgiveness of sins. The congregation gathers around the altar to receive the body and blood of Jesus that was "given and shed for the remission of sins." Scripture is studied because its words offer life and forgiveness. The Keys are used to impart the forgiveness of sins to the penitent. Even unrepentant sinners are excluded in the hope that they will repent and be restored. **So all that Jesus taught and that the Church is to do in His Name centers on the forgiveness of sins in one way or another.**" *The Keys: An Identification

Mark of the Church," Rev. Terry Cripe, [For the Life of the World](#), October, 2002.

Jesus can stand between us and God, and rescue us from our sin and its consequences. He does that through His death and resurrection.

In God's great love and mercy for us, He freely gives us the gift of eternal salvation because of the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. You are not saved because of one single thing that you have done; rather you are saved because of everything that Jesus has done for you! Salvation is by grace alone, faith alone, and in Christ alone.

This is the message of the Christian Church!
This is the gospel good news of eternal salvation!
This is how you are rescued from your sins!

And this is what we teach our children so that they too can have eternal salvation!

TODAY is *Confirmation Day* for a handful of our youth here at Trinity⁴. *Confirmation* is a time to **strengthen the faith** of our kids as they learn the great truths of Holy Scripture⁵. Confirmation **prepares** our kids to properly take Holy Communion. Confirmation teaches our kids to **identify themselves** as baptized, conservative Lutheran Christians who live bold and courageous lives in the faith. Confirmation is an **opportunity to confess** Christ as Lord and Savior.

Confirmation is a public rite of the Church that is preceded by a period of instruction designed to help baptized Christians identify with the life and mission of the Christian community.

Lutheran Worship Agenda, p.114

⁴ Today we rejoice with these 6 youth: Michelle Barbe, Jonathan Carson, Kenzie Ruehrmund, Joseph Legere, Brock Guiney, and Quaid Guiney. In addition, we commend their parents for seeing to their Christian instruction!

⁵ Our Confirmation instruction here at Trinity is a four year period of time where our kids learn about Christ, His Word and the doctrines of the Church. It starts in 5th grade, where they learn the great stories of the Old Testament; in 6th grade, they learn about Christ's life in the New Testament; in 7th / 8th grades, they study Martin Luther's Small Catechism, which summarizes the key teachings of Scripture, including the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion. In all of this, the key to understanding it is the Lord Jesus Christ and His life, death, and resurrection! **We pray that through these instructional years, the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens the confirmands faith, gives them a deep conviction of the truths of God's Holy Word, and empowers them to remain faithful to the Lord throughout their life! Please include our congregational and school children in your daily prayers!!**

Confirmation is a time to **teach our kids** how *important*, how *serious*, and how *special* their faith in Christ is.

The key truth throughout Confirmation instruction is the Gospel: the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection leads to repentance and the forgiveness of sins!

That Gospel is also your confession of faith!

By the power of the Holy Spirit, your eyes are open to understand that Jesus died and rose on the third day; and you were given faith to believe it was for you and your eternal salvation.

You have been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. You are united to Christ and His death and resurrection. Your sins have been washed away and you have been brought into God's Family.

You receive the very body and blood of the crucified and risen Savior in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, for the forgiveness of your sins and the certain hope of eternal life. Christ abides in you and you in Him as you live each day in the faith.

Your confession to the world is Christ *crucified and risen*; the *only* One who can rescue us from sin, grant us forgiveness, and give us eternal life!

For us as conservative Lutherans, **our focus is on the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death and resurrection that brings us eternal salvation.** We believe, teach, and confess that that is the most important thing in the Christian faith, and it is the content of our congregation's preaching and teaching, and it is the confession on our lips!

Amen!

God the Father, we thank you for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Today we remember that His work of salvation is the central teaching of the Christian faith. Help us to boldly confess that as a congregation, and to bear witness to that in our personal lives. As your word is proclaimed and confessed, we ask that you send your Holy Spirit to create and nurture faith in people. By your Spirit, work in and through us to make disciples of all nations. We pray this in Jesus our Savior's Name, Amen!

Luke 24:36-49

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish,^[b] 43 and he took it and ate before them.

44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.