

The Presentation of the Augsburg Confession  
St. John 8:31-36  
June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

### Abide in My Word

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Four hundred ninety years ago the protesting estates (which came to be known as Protestants) presented to Emperor Charles V their confession of the faith. They had met in Augsburg in the year of our Lord 1530 to present a clear understanding of what they believed and what they did not believe. This is why this confession to which we subscribed is called the Augsburg Confession. It is what we confess to believe and not believe. This is also why the letter UAC come after the title of our parish—Unaltered Augsburg Confession—because we subscribe to the original confession and not other altered confessions that came later.

The princes and electors of Germany were willing to lay down their life for the truth. They were promised by Emperor Charles V safe passage, but they were not guaranteed that that would remain the case after they arrived. The boldness of their confession should serve as a witness for us the future generations that have subscribed to the Augsburg Confession as a true exhibition of the Christian faith. They boldly confessed the faith at the peril of their own lives, because they favored the truth more than their own lives. We too should value truth in this same way. We should not let the ramblings of the evil and false world, ruled by the devil, dictate what we believe, teach and confess.

The truth of this confession was so important to the generations of Lutherans following the faithful men, that, as I said on Sunday after Bible class, on this day of celebration of the anniversary of the presenting of this confession it was customary in the churches of the Reformation to read from the pulpit the entire Augsburg Confession in lieu of a sermon. This is actually still done in some places—to a point—they read large excerpts from the Augsburg Confession, but not the entire thing. Even though I am not going to read the entire Augsburg Confession to you all today, it is appropriate that we spend time studying what we believe, teach and confess in our homes whenever we have opportunity. And not just the Augsburg Confession, but the entire Book of Concord, whose anniversary is also today. The Book of Concord was presented in the year of our Lord 1580.

This is why in the announcement section of the bulletin you will find every week a schedule of reading through the entire Book of Concord—Monday through Friday—every year. It is why I encouraged you all to join me in reading the entire Book of Concord during the season of Lent. It is important to know what we believe, teach and confess; to ascertain if it is the truth; if it is a true exhibition of the Holy Scriptures. This is also why I provide for you all a schedule of reading through the entire

Bible, including the Apocrypha, every year, and a list to pray through the entire Psalter every month. There is even a list for you to recite the catechism with your families every week, even as we recite the catechism in every service throughout the year. All of this is to preserve you in the one, true faith; to help you avail yourself of the weapons to defend yourself against our enemies of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh.

For if we keep ourselves in the Word of God, we are abiding in the Lord Jesus, for He is the Word, and it is His Word. For, what does our Lord + Jesus say to us today in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John? If you abide in His Word, you are His disciples indeed. And if we are His disciples, we shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free. The Augsburg Confession explains the truth of God's Word to us in simple terms that we all can understand and believe.

Who is God? He is Three Persons in One God, and One God in Three Persons. Who is man? He is a creation of the Triune Lord God, who fell into sin, and we have inherited that sin from our first parents Adam and Eve. The Jews in the Gospel reading never believed that they had ever been in bondage, because they were descendants of Abraham. Of course, this disregards the fact that their ancestors were enslaved by the Egyptians, and that they themselves were ruled by the Romans. But our Lord + Jesus, as He is prone to do gets to the heart of the matter. We are in bondage—we are enslaved—by sin. If we live in sin, we live in bondage—in slavery. We allow sin to be our master. We allow sin to condemn us to a life of slavery and bondage.

If we do not confess our sins—if we refuse to acknowledge that we are indeed poor, miserable sinners—we remain in bondage and slavery. This is why the third article of the Augsburg Confession gives us hope. Who is the Lord + Jesus? He is the Son of God, Who came down from Heaven, was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man. He is both God and Man. He came to fulfill the Law perfectly, the Law under which we are in bondage because of our daily and constant breaking of the Law of God. And after He fulfilled the Law perfectly, He offered up His life as an innocent ransom for our sins and the sins of the whole world. He atoned for our sins upon the tree of the holy cross. He suffered and was buried, and the third day He arose again from the dead, and now has ascended and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and will come again to judge both the quick and the dead.

All those who believe on Him are justified. This is explained in the fourth article of the Augsburg Confession, and this teaching is plainly taught in the Epistle reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Churches of Galatia. We are not justified by our works, by our keeping of the Law of God. This we cannot do. We fail time and time again. Every time we show hate for our fellow man, every time we curse other drivers, every time we get angry and lash out at our loved ones, we repent and say that we are not going to do it again. We are truly sorry for our sins, and wish to do better. But sin still inheres in our nature. It clings to us and pulls us back down into bondage and slavery. It continues to pull us into the grave. This is why our salvation is not found within us, or our strength to resist committing sin. We have our salvation in our Lord + Jesus Whose perfect works and sacrifice are a propitiation for our sins.

We are justified, that is, made right with the Triune Lord God, through faith in the Son of God. This faith is created in us through the Office of the Ministry, that is, the means of grace. Faith is created in us through the Teaching of the Gospel and the Administering of the Sacraments is what we learn in the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession. Through these means the Holy Ghost works when and where He pleases to create and sustain faith and life in all those who hear and believe on what they hear and are taught. This faith instilled in us by the Holy Ghost causes us to continue to ask for forgiveness every time we break the Law of God and come to the realization that we have sinned; every time we realize that we are indeed slaves in bondage to sin. The Holy Ghost enlightens us to understand that through the works and merits of the Christ we are free from the bonds of sin, and we have an eternal home in Heaven.

All these things are taught in the Church, which is the gathering together of all those who believe on the Lord + Jesus Christ, as we are taught in articles seven and eight of the Augsburg Confession. In this Church, where we gather together as two or three or more in the Name of the Lord + Jesus we receive the means of grace. We have been baptized, and we enjoy the meal of fellowship called the Lord's Supper (articles nine and ten of the Augsburg Confession). In this Church we daily confess our sins, and when it is offered, we privately confess our sins to the pastor, who forgives our sins for Christ's sake. For his forgiveness is the very forgiveness of the Triune Lord God. This we are taught in the eleventh article of the Augsburg Confession. Forgiveness is offered to all those who repent of their sins and confess their sins (article twelve).

And we could go through the entire Augsburg Confession and show that what we believe, teach and confess is what the Church has always believed, taught, and confessed. What the Augsburg Confession teaches is what the Holy Scriptures teach, for the Holy Scriptures point us to our salvation being found in the Lord + Jesus, just as the Augsburg Confession teaches us that our salvation is found in faith in the Lord + Jesus; that we are justified through faith in the Lord + Jesus Who atoned for our sins by His innocent suffering and death.

This is why we continue, as did the Protesting Estates did in the year of our Lord 1530, to boldly uphold and cling to the truth. For when we cling to the truth of God's Word, we are abiding in the Word of the Lord + Jesus. And if we abide in Him, then we will know the truth that salvation is found in Him alone—justification is found only through faith in Him—and we will no longer be slaves to sin. For our sins will be hung on the cross and buried in the grave of our Lord + Jesus Who offered up Himself as a ransom for our sins, so that He might make us free.

We are free indeed! We were in bondage to sin, death and the devil, but our Lord + Jesus has made us free; free from sin, free from death, and free from the power of the devil. He has prepared a place for us in Heaven; a place for all those who have been freed from the bondage of sin through His works and merits. By His shed Blood and crucified Body, He has redeemed us from slavery and made us sons of God. The Son of God has made us sons of God through His works and merits. We are free indeed because we have remained faithful to the truth of the Word of God even as our Lutheran ancestors did four hundred and ninety years ago.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us continue to give thanks for the boldness and faithfulness of those who came before us, so that even as they held firmly to the truth, we too, may hold firmly to the truth of the Gospel of our Lord + Jesus Christ. And as we remain faithful to the truth of the Word of God, let us pray that our descendants may also be preserved in the one, true faith until our Lord + Jesus comes again in all of His glory and takes all of us sons of God, who have been rescued from the bonds of slavery, to our eternal home in Heaven. May the Triune Lord God Almighty grant this unto us all. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*