

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

“We Are His Workmanship”

Date: 11-10-24 Lesson: 27

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THE TEXT - (Ephesians 4:13-16)

(15) Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into **him who is the head, into Christ,**

(16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.



(Rom 7:4; 9:1; 12:5; 1 Cor 10:16-21; 11:23-34; 12:12-27; 2 Cor 4:10;
Col 1:15-20; 2:16-19; 2 Thess 1:3; Heb 10:10; 13:3;
1 Pet 1:22; 1 Jn 2:1-6; 3:18; 2 Jn 1:1-4; 3 Jn 1:1-4)

STUDY HELPS

LARGE CATECHISM ARTICLE III

*Note: The salvation **Christ** won on the cross has truly come to pass (objective reality). But unless the **Holy Spirit** applies that salvation to us personally and individually (subjectively), it will remain hidden from us. Sanctification is often understood to refer to our good works. Here Luther uses it, as the Bible often does, to describe the entire work of **the Holy Spirit** bringing us salvation, including justification. Luther drives home the point that “Church” is, first and foremost, the **people the Holy Spirit** is gathering together through the preaching of the Gospel. It is not primarily a building or an institution. Luther suggests it is best to understand the “communion of saints” as a “community of saints” or a “holy community.” It is not holy because of their works, but because of **the Holy Spirit’s** work in their midst. Within the Church **the Holy Spirit**, through preaching and through “signs” (that is, the Sacraments), forgives us and keeps us in the faith. Therefore, in this sense, it is right to say that outside the Church there is no salvation. This is not because of an infallible papacy, but because of what is going on by the Spirit’s power. He works the forgiveness of sins and continues that work to the very end of time. (See AC VII/ VIII; SA III XII.)*

[61] Now this is the article of the Creed that must always be and remain in use. For we have already received creation. Redemption, too, is finished. But **the Holy Spirit** carries on His work without ceasing to the Last Day. For that purpose He has appointed a congregation upon earth by which He speaks and does everything. [62] For He has not yet brought together all His Christian Church [Christenheit] [John 10: 16] or granted all forgiveness. Therefore, we **believe in Him** who daily brings us into the fellowship of this Christian Church **through the Word**. Through **the same Word** and the forgiveness of sins **He** bestows, increases, and strengthens faith. So when **He has done it all**, and we abide in this and die to the world and to all evil, He may finally make us perfectly and forever holy. Even now we expect this in faith through **the Word**.

[63] See, here you have **the entire divine essence, will, and work** shown most completely in quite short and yet rich words. In these words all our wisdom stands, which surpasses and exceeds the wisdom, mind, and reason of all people [1 Corinthians 1: 18– 25]. The whole world with all diligence has struggled to figure out **what God is, what He has in mind and does**. Yet the world has never been able to grasp (the knowledge and understanding of) any of these things. But here we have everything in richest measure.

[64] For here in **all three articles God has revealed Himself and opened the deepest abyss of His fatherly heart and His pure, inexpressible love [Ephesians 3: 18– 19]**. He has created us for this very reason, that He might redeem and sanctify us. In addition to giving and imparting to us everything in heaven and upon earth, **He has even given to us His Son and the Holy Spirit**, who brings us to **Himself** [Romans 8: 14, 32]. [65] For (as explained above) we could never grasp the knowledge of **the Father’s grace and favor except through the Lord Christ. Jesus is a mirror of the fatherly heart** [John 14: 9; Colossians 1: 15; Hebrews 1: 3], outside of whom we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge. But we couldn’t know anything about **Christ** either, unless it had been revealed **by the Holy Spirit** [1 Corinthians 2: 12].

[66] These articles of the Creed, therefore, divide and separate us Christians from all other people on earth. Even if [or: Even if we were to concede that]* all people outside Christianity— whether heathen, Turks, Jews, or false Christians and hypocrites— believe in and worship **only one true God**, they still do not know what His mind toward them is and cannot expect any love or blessing from Him. Therefore, they abide in eternal wrath and damnation. For they do not have **the Lord Christ**, and, besides, are not illumined and favored by **any gifts of the Holy Spirit** [1 Corinthians 2: 9– 16; Hebrews 6: 4– 6].

[67] From this you see that the Creed is a doctrine quite different from the Ten Commandments. For the Commandments teach what we ought to do. **But the Creed tells what God does for us and gives to us**. Furthermore, apart from this, the Ten Commandments are written in all people’s hearts [Romans 2: 15]. However, no human wisdom can understand the Creed. It must be taught by the **Holy Spirit alone** [1 Corinthians 2: 12]. [68] The teaching <of the Commandments>, therefore, makes no Christian. For **God’s wrath and displeasure** abide upon us still, because we cannot keep what **God** demands of us. **But the Creed brings pure grace** and makes us godly and acceptable **to God**.

[69] For by this knowledge we have love and delight in **all God’s commandments** [Romans 7: 22]. Here we see that **God gives Himself to us completely**. He gives all that He has and is able to do in order to aid and direct us in keeping the Ten Commandments. **The Father gives all creatures. The Son gives His entire work. And the Holy Spirit bestows all His gifts**.

[70] Let this be enough about the Creed to lay a foundation for the simple, so that they may not be burdened. Then, if they understand the substance of it, they themselves may afterward strive to gain more, refer to these parts whatever they learn in the Scriptures, and may ever grow and increase in richer understanding [**Ephesians 4: 14– 15**; 2 Peter 3: 14]. For as long as we live here, we shall daily have enough to do to preach and to learn this.

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LIFE APPLICATION

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into **him who is the head, into Christ**, from whom the whole body...”

Explain the challenges of:

- 1. -SPEAKING THE TRUTH**
- 2. -IN LOVE**
- 3. -WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST**