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HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Words from the Cross

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*I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God
in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.*

Acts 20:21 NIV

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Although I spend most of my reading time studying God's Word, where the only true Wisdom (Jesus Christ) is found, in my leisure time I also try to read books written by secular thinkers, just to see what they have to say. Quite frankly, most of it (especially the very recent stuff) is sheer vanity and godless drivel, but sometimes I run into something interesting. As I was reading Sigmund Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents I found this rather insightful passage:

Long ago he (man) formed an ideal conception of omnipotence and omniscience, which he embodied in his gods. To these gods he attributed everything that seemed unattainable to his wishes, or what was forbidden to him. One may say, therefore that these gods were cultural ideals. Today, he has come very close to the attainment of this ideal, he has almost become a god himself, ... Man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown onto him and they still give him trouble at times. ... Future ages will bring with them new and probably unimaginably great advances in this field of civilization and will increase man's likeliness to God still more. But in the interests of our investigations, we will not forget that present-day man does not feel happy in his Godlike character. (p.38-39)

What Freud stumbled onto was man's proclivity to idolatry, which is essentially self-worship. As we have become more technologically advanced, our inclination to play God has increased. This is why the Christian call to repentance is just as important, if not more important, than it was in Paul's day. To repent is to accuse and condemn ourselves, to take God's view of our behavior and attitudes, to feel shame and Godly sorrow because of our sin. By nature we love and think well of ourselves, hide our spiritual deformities, and excuse our faults. But God in His holy Law does not allow this and lays bare all of our efforts to hide our fallen nature. It is at this point that God, through His Holy Spirit, enables us to acknowledge our sin and come before Him with a contrite heart. He then treats us with the healing balm of the Gospel: the forgiveness of all sin by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who lived a perfect life in our stead and died a perfect sacrificial death on Calvary's cross, blotting our sins out of God's sight forever.

As we continue our journey through the penitential season of Lent, may God through His Word and Sacrament continue to work true repentance in our hearts, causing us to turn away from our constant inclination to play God, and to turn us to Christ who was and is true God. Jesus, who suffered and died on the cross to remove all our sins, has in fact removed our transgressions from us as far as the East is from the West. With our sins washed away in the blood of Jesus, may we live our lives to His honor and glory.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Skelton