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HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Words from the Cross

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***“The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not at him;
his rage we can endure,
For Lo! His doom is sure,
one little word shall fell him.”***

Martin Luther, 1529

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A couple of years ago I read about a committee that was formed to decide the stance of a large main-line Christian denomination on a particular public sin. In their conclusion they wrote: “(this sin) is the result of, and influenced by, so many complicated and unsolvable circumstances that we have neither the wisdom nor the authority to address or decide it.”

When I read this, I was stunned. First and foremost, I was stunned because the issue they were speaking about was and still is clearly addressed in the Bible. Secondly, I was appalled at their complete surrender to the work of Satan and the abrogation of their duty as Christian leaders to speak the truth to the people of God they were supposed to be serving.

The reason why I am writing about this is that I believe it illustrates one of the greatest temptations we face as modern believers: to look at the seeming triumph of evil and confusion in the world and just give up. Giving up is a very easy thing to do, especially when it comes to matters of faith. It is so much easier to “go with the flow” but the problem with going with the flow is that the huge waterfall at the end of the river is called hell!

Now hear the Word of God: “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Beloved, during this penitential season of Lent as we ponder our many sins, it is important that we recall that the very Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, lives in us through our baptism. That same Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised that the Father would give us now dwells in us as believers. When we behold the perfect life, suffering, and death of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we see God at work and the great victory that was won for us. This should strengthen us in our faith by showing us that even when everything seems hopeless, God is winning. In fact, by faith in Jesus (Luther’s “one little word”), we have already won. By His shed blood on Calvary’s cross, all of our sins are forgiven, and the power of the devil over us has been undone.

What can we do? By the power of the Holy Spirit, we go out and boldly face the devil, the world, and our own sin-fallen flesh, unafraid to speak the truth in love, knowing that the victory is ours already and that our God will never forsake us. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Skelton