



Steadfast in Christ

Bible Study

[**Please provide:** musical accompaniment; Bibles and copies of the first four pages for attendees.]

Answers to the questions can be found in the Apostles' Creed which is a summary of Holy Scripture. The Bible passages are given as references.

The dictionary defines "steadfast" as "firmly established, unchanging, not fickle or wavering." Oh, no! If this is so, how do we **become** steadfast in Christ? And how do we **remain** steadfast in Christ? The answer is – we can't! As human beings we sin daily in our thoughts, words, and deeds against God and our neighbors. The truth is, it is Christ who is steadfast to us! It is a gift! Our Heavenly Father's steadfast love to us flows from the cross of Christ and gives us everything that we need to be steadfast in Him. This truth of Holy Scripture is summarized in the Apostles' Creed. It is a baptismal confession of the early Church and is still used today in the Divine Service throughout the world. This study will take a brief look at God's steadfastness to us by using Martin Luther's beautifully crafted Meanings of the Three Articles of the Apostles' Creed.

The First Article – God's steadfastness: Caring for our physical welfare

What does this mean?

(We confess our faith together.)

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

1. God is the Creator and Preserver of all life. What does our Heavenly Father give us for our earthly existence? (Psalm 145:15-16; Matthew 6:25-34)
2. Why does God do this? (Psalm 145:9; Psalm 103:13)
3. How is God our Father? (1 John 3:1; Romans 8:15; Matthew 6:8-9)

4. Do we deserve this steadfast love and caring? (Romans 3:23-24; Genesis 32:10a)

5. How do we respond to God and our neighbor for these steadfast gifts? (1 Timothy 4:4; Psalm 118:1; Psalm 116:12-14)

The Second Article – Christ’s steadfastness: Becoming man and going to the cross

What does this mean?

(We confess our faith together.)

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

1. In the Incarnation Christ permanently, steadfastly joins Himself to mankind. Why is this important that He be true Man? (Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:8; Isaiah 53:5-6)

2. Why is it important that He also be true God? (Mark 10:45; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15: 55-57)

3. How does Luther describe our natural state? (Romans 3:10-19; Psalms 14:3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 64:6)

4. How did Jesus pay for our sins? (1 John 1:7b; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

5. How does Luther describe our new life as forgiven children? (Galatians 2:20; Luke 1:74-75; 2 Corinthians 5:15; 1 Peter 2:24)

6. What gifts of the cross does Christ's steadfast love give to us? (Ephesians 1:7; John 11:25-26; Psalm 13:5; Titus 3:3-8a)

The Third Article – Steadfast in Christ: Gift of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament

What does this mean?

(We confess our faith together.)

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

1. How does Luther describe our own ability to be steadfast to Christ? (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-2)
2. Who makes us steadfast in Christ? (1 Corinthians 6:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3)
3. What is another word we could use for being steadfast in Christ? Read Ephesians 2:8-9.
4. What does God use to give us faith? (Mark 1:15; Romans 10:17; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 6:11)
5. What gifts do we receive through God's Word and Sacraments? (Ephesians 1:7; Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Peter 3:21)
6. Where do we go to receive these gifts that make and keep us steadfast in Christ? (Acts 2:42; Matthew 28:18; John 20:20-23; Ephesians 2:19-22)

This is Most Certainly True!

Luther closes his explanations of the three Articles of the Apostles' Creed with words of great comfort and steadfastness: **This is most certainly true.** Here we have God's assurance and commitment to His unchanging, unwavering love. Here we have the absolute truth of God's great steadfastness to us in His Holy Word and Sacraments. Here we have His gift of faith in the forgiveness of sins making us steadfast in Christ. This is comfort to our trembling hearts. We are not on our own. Jesus has done it all for us. Through Him we are steadfast in Christ. This is most certainly true!

We sing together Martin Luther's hymn.

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing Your praise eternally.

O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.

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Steadfast in Christ

Written by Deaconess Carolyn Brinkley, Fort Wayne, Indiana

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Steadfast in Christ

Bible Study – Leader’s Guide

Answers to the questions can be found in the Apostles Creed which is a summary of Holy Scripture. The Bible passages are given as references.

The First Article – God’s steadfastness: Caring for our physical welfare

1. God is the Creator and Preserver of all life. What does our Heavenly Father give us for our earthly existence? (Psalm 145:15-16; Matthew 6:25-34)
He graciously gives us everything that we need to support this body and life. (Ask for specifics.)
2. Why does God do this? (Psalm 145:9; Psalm 103:13)
God steadfastly cares for every aspect of our earthly lives out of His great love for His creation.
3. How is God our Father? (1 John 3:1; Romans 8:15; Matthew 6:8-9)
God is our Father because His Son went to the cross to forgive our sins. It is only through Jesus that we can call God our Father as He has taught us in the Lord’s Prayer to pray “Our Father...”
4. Do we deserve this steadfast love and caring? (Romans 3:23-24; Genesis 32:10a)
No, we have no merit or worthiness within ourselves. We are children of the Heavenly Father purely through Christ’s atoning sacrifice.
5. How do we respond to God and our neighbor for these steadfast gifts? (1 Timothy 4:4; Psalm 118:1; Psalm 116:12-14)
We respond in joy by living a life of thanksgiving, praise, service, and obedience.

The Second Article – Christ’s steadfastness: Becoming man and going to the cross

1. In the Incarnation Christ permanently, steadfastly joins Himself to mankind. Why is this important that He be true Man? (Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:8; Isaiah 53:5-6)
Christ must be true man to take our place under the Law and thereby take all of our sin and our death into Himself on the cross.
2. Why is it important that He also be true God? (Mark 10:45; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15: 55-57)
Christ must be true God to be the obedient Son keeping the Law perfectly, die on the cross defeating Satan’s power, and rise from the dead.
3. How does Luther describe our natural state? (Romans 3:10-19; Psalm 14:3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 64:6)
We are lost and condemned creatures.
4. How did Jesus pay for our sins? (1 John 1:7b; 1 Peter 1:18-19)
Jesus paid for our sins with the ultimate price – His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.

5. How does Luther describe our new life as forgiven children? (Galatians 2:20;
Luke 1:74-75; 2 Corinthians 5:15; 1 Peter 2:24)

“... that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.”

6. What gifts of the cross does Christ’s steadfast love give to us? (Ephesians 1:7;
John 11:25-26; Psalm 13:5; Titus 3:3-8a)

Forgiveness! Life! Salvation!

The Third Article--Steadfast in Christ: Gift of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments

1. How does Luther describe our own ability to be steadfast to Christ? (1 Corinthians 2:14;
Ephesians 2:1-2)

On our own we have no power to accept, come or believe in Jesus. “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him.”

2. Who makes us steadfast in Christ? (1 Corinthians 6:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3)

The Holy Spirit makes us steadfast in Christ. It is pure gift!

3. What is another word we could use for being steadfast in Christ? Read Ephesians 2:8-9.
Faith!

4. What does God use to give us faith? (Mark 1:15; Romans 10:17; Acts 2:42;
1 Corinthians 6:11)

Faith is made ours through the Gospel which is His Word and Sacraments.

5. What gifts do we receive through God’s Word and Sacraments? (Ephesians 1:7;
Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Peter 3:21)

Forgiveness, life, and salvation!

5. Where do we go to receive these gifts that make and keep us steadfast in Christ?

(Acts 2:42; Matthew 28:18; John 20:20-23; Ephesians 2:19-22)

Church – the Divine Service.

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