

What Does it Mean to be a Lutheran?



THE CROSS

All human beings are born into a sin-filled world where we are separated from our Creator. Sin not only describes how we fall short from living the way God intended us to live. Sin also means "separation from God."

- "for there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

The cross symbolizes Jesus' sacrifice for our sin. By his death on the cross, he took the sin of the world upon himself and saved us. Salvation is not something that is earned or deserved. It is God's great gift to us through the sacrifice of Jesus.

- "for by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not the result of works, so that no one may boast." - Ephesians 2:8-9

- "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." - John 3:16-17



THE WORD OF GOD

The word of God is a living and life-giving word, which empowers us to live our lives as God intended us to live. It is a written word which comes to us through the Holy Scriptures, written by human beings, but inspired by God. It is our norm for life and faith. It is a spoken word that is proclaimed in preaching and in teaching. It is a holy word in that it comes to the church and to us from God and reveals to us the Good News that Jesus is God's son and through him we have eternal life.

- "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." - John 1:1

- "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient and equipped for every good work." - II Timothy 3:16

- "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God and what is good, acceptable and perfect." - Romans 12:2

THE SACRAMENTS

A sacrament is a means by which we receive God's grace.

In the Lutheran tradition, there are 2 sacraments:

Holy Baptism

Holy Communion

BAPTISM

brings us into life with God through:

- Water (common element)
- The Word of God ("The one who believes and is baptized will be saved" - Mark 16:16)
- The Command of Jesus ("Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." - Matthew 28:19)



BENEFITS OF BAPTISM:

- Forgiveness of sin
- Freedom from death and the devil
- Eternal salvation
- Acceptance into God's family
- Becoming a "child of God"

HOLY COMMUNION

(The Eucharist) renews our life with God, as we receive Jesus Christ in, with and under:

- The Bread and Wine (Common Elements)
- The Word of God ("This is my body . . . this is my blood." - I Corinthians 11:24-25)
- and the command of Jesus ("Do this in remembrance of me." - I Corinthians 11:24-25)



BENEFITS OF HOLY COMMUNION:

- forgiveness of sins
- God's love and grace received
- renewal of my relationship with God
- remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for me
- participation in the community of faith

According to Martin Luther, **sacraments include three basic things:**

- a common element (water, bread, wine)
- the word of God which is combined with the common element
- the command of Jesus (do this . . .)