

## **Text Study:**

### **Matthew 10:32-39   +++   Presentation of the Augsburg Confession**

#### **1) The Proper.**

+ **The Prayer of the Day:**

O Lord, favorably receive the prayers of your Church, that being instructed by the doctrine of the blessed apostles, we may always make a pure confession of your saving truth; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

+ **The First Reading: Isaiah 55:6-11.**

The Lord is merciful. In his great mercy he has given us his word. This word empowers us to call on his name in faith through which he saves us.

+ **The Psalm of the Day: Psalm 119:41-48.**

The God of unfailing love promises salvation to us through his word of truth. This word gives us peace in persecution, freedom to do the things that God asks, and confidence to speak God's Word before even the most powerful of people.

+ **The Second Reading: Romans 10:5-17.**

Because we cannot keep God's holy law, God has saved us through his Son, Jesus Christ. Through faith, God gives us the benefits of all that Christ has done for us to save us. God gives us this faith through his Means of Grace: the gospel in Word and Sacraments.

#### **2) Context.**

- + Matthew 10:32-39 takes place during Jesus' Galilean ministry.
- + This section begins at 9:35. At the beginning of it, Jesus tells us about his work on earth:
  - V. 36 - "compassion," *Naida/Louw*: **σπλαγγνίζομαι** (only in the plural): to experience great affection and compassion for someone. This is the desire of a gracious God toward sinners who have earned nothing but his anger and punishment through their disobedience of him (1 Tim 2:3-4).
  - This grace-motivation, the deep soul-concern for each person that Jesus has is important context to remember as we look at the verses of our text.
  - The great love of our Savior to "seek...the lost" (Lk. 9:10) motivated him to save them through his Means of Grace—Jesus sent his disciples out to speak (9:37-38).
- + Jesus sent them to carry out this saving work...
  - "...because the kingdom of heaven is near," (10:7)

- They went with God’s power and authority since they were going as his messengers using his Means of Grace.
- + Yet Jesus, in the words of our text, let his disciples know that serving as his representatives and ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:18-21) was not going to be easy.
  - Because of his own love and compassion to save, Jesus himself was rejected, was laughed at, was beaten, and eventually was executed.
  - If this happened to him, it will also happen to those who serve and represent him.
- + Jesus went on to strengthen and encourage his disciples in the face of this potentially disheartening prediction. In verses 26–31, Jesus tells his disciples not to be afraid:
  - + v. 26: Because God knows what is going on, and
  - + v. 28: He is the one who will certainly judge all people (Christ’s enemies can only hurt our bodies; Jesus has redeemed us body and soul and will take us to be with him forever), and
  - + v 31: Our gracious God loves you dearly! He sent his Son to redeem you. He goes with you and cares for you. He knows you and what you need even better than you yourself.

### 3) Looking at the text – Matthew 10:32–39.

- 32) οὖν:** “therefore.” With what he has said in verses 16-31 in mind, Jesus continues his thought. For those who remain faithful to him and his word, things will get difficult in this life from time to time. Yet through it all, his disciples focus on the truth that God has loved us and redeemed us, God is leading us to our eternal home, God is in control over all things for us.
- **ὁμολογέω:** “to acknowledge,” “to profess,” to express openly one’s allegiance to a proposition or person. Those who have been brought to faith in Jesus speak his word and declare their faith in the one who has saved them and given them an eternal hope. Jesus has “sent us out” to do this (Matt. 28:19-20).
- 33) ἀρνέομαι:** “to deny,” to say that one does not know about or is in any way related to a person or event.
- 32-33)** In verse 31, Jesus had told his disciples not to be afraid. In verse 32, Jesus is emphasizing that his disciples do not need to be afraid by showing them the bigger picture. Jesus is Lord over physical and spiritual death. His word alone carries weight with God the Father and gives eternal life. Those who love their Savior will be acknowledged by him before the Father on the Last Day. Who, then, would exchange eternal life with God for eternal separation from him by denying Jesus out of fear of what might happen to them in this temporary life? Those who

oppose Jesus, deny association with him, and work against his saving truth reveal the unbelief that is in their hearts. They stand condemned already (Jn. 3:16-18).

Believers in Jesus speak their faith in their Savior with their mouths and in their actions—it's what we do and what we were made for (Eph. 2:8-10). By God's Holy Spirit, believers in Jesus have the same deep, heartfelt compassion for all people that God has. In particular, we have a deep concern for those who are lost in unbelief (1 Tim. 2:3-4). As freely as we have received the grace of God that has taken our guilt away, so we freely share it. If the signs of (spiritual) life aren't there, the question is whether there is life there at all.

**34) Μὴ νομίσητε:** Force of the negative aorist subjunctive—"Don't even begin thinking like this!"

- **νομίζω:** "to surmise," to regard something as presumably true, but without particular certainty.
- **βάλλω:** "to bring about," to cause a state or condition, with focus upon the suddenness or force of the action.
- **ἦλθον** aor. act. indic. of **ἔρχομαι:** "to come." This aorist tense verb is translated as perfect tense: "have come."
- Don't subscribe to the thought that Christ came to force a type of earthly, temporal peace upon the earth. Many Jews thought that the Christ would come to lead a rebellion against the Romans and all foreign powers in their land, that he would reestablish King David's kingdom. Many today believe a modern version of that thought to be true. Jesus tells us emphatically that such a thought is completely different than God's actual plan in Jesus, the Messiah.
- "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth." Does this contradict what the angels sang on the night of Jesus' birth (Lk. 2:14)? Not at all. In fact, in context, they make the same point. The angels sang of a real peace between God and human beings that the Christ would effect. That plan for eternal peace had been born in Jesus. Simeon's words in Luke 2:34-35 are poignant with our text—God's plan to bring eternal peace with Jesus will cause the powers of hell to throw their worst against it. This negative reaction to Jesus and his truth is what causes the division that Jesus describes in these verses. The cross believers bear is the pain and sorrow we face in this ruined world because we bear the name of the one who has made peace between God and us.
- What is the "sword" Jesus brings? He is not talking of a physical sword. He is certainly not encouraging his followers to use any sort of violence in an attempt to proclaim his name. Think of the sword of the Spirit in Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12. Think of how this word convicts of sin and guilt and holds accountable to a just God. Think of the hostility that those who reject the word react with. Think of the use of God's word as described in the other lessons for today's service—Isaiah 55:6–11, Romans 10:5–17, Psalm 119:41-48. The word tells us that the mind governed by the flesh is hostile to

God (Ro. 8:7) and that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Cor. 1:18-31).

- 36)** The members of a believer's household or family (**οἰκεῖος**) will become his enemies (**ἐχθρός**). The unbelieving members of the family have rejected Christ and his Word. As a result, there is often a negative tension, an animosity toward their family member who does believe in Jesus. The believer is forced to make the decision – do I follow my Savior, or do I follow my family? The sanctified decision to follow Jesus breeds resentment among those who do not believe.
- Once we were enemies of God, but we have been reconciled to him through Jesus (Ro. 5:10). This is the peace that Jesus came to bring! This is the peace that believers enjoy even when suffering for it in this world because they hold that peace dearer than any earthly peace.
- 37)** **φιλέω**: “to love,” “to care for.” This verb means to have love or affection for someone or something based on association. The Greek verbs **φιλέω** (“love”) and **ἀγαπάω** (“love”) are often used interchangeably in the NT. There is no significance in the use of **φιλέω** here as opposed to **ἀγαπάω**. Whereas **ἀγαπάω** is a love of purpose and intellect, **φιλέω** denotes natural affection, such as within a family, and is an affection that is also appropriate in one's love for Jesus.
- How does loving someone more than Jesus make a person “unworthy” of him? The unbeliever, by his idolatry (Ex. 20:3, Mt. 22:37), has separated himself from Jesus and Jesus' sacrifice for his sin (He. 10:26).
  - Jesus points out the danger that we can be tempted to allow our earthly affections and relationships to trump our eternal one. Our need for Jesus exceeds all other needs.
- 38)** **ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω**: “to come with.” This verb means to follow or accompany someone who takes the lead in determining direction and route of movement.
- The phrase **ὀπίσω μου** “after me” indicates one who is followed as a leader (occurring with a variety of verbs indicating change of state or movement).
- 39)** The idiom **ἀπόλλυμι τήν ψυχὴν** means “to suffer the destruction of one's life,” “to have one's life destroyed,” or “to experience the loss of life.”
- What is the definition of “life” for you? If it is this life—its pleasures, its goals, its values, its beliefs—and Christ is set aside, then eternal life has been lost.
  - In Christ, believers have forgiveness of sins and peace with God. In Christ, we already have life with God that will last an eternity. Living with that life as the goal may mean that believers suffer for a time in this earthly life.

#### 4) Malady

- We fear the world and what it may do to us, so we keep quiet about our faith.
- We love the things that the world has to offer. It can look so fun and inviting, so we run after what it has and leave Christ and his Means of Grace behind.
- We think that the world is not all that dangerous, that we can make peace with it, so we don't speak about our faith so that we don't "needlessly" bring Jesus' "sword" into our various relationships.
- Prof. Balge, in Sermon Studies on the Gospels, series A, says on this text, "These are strong words. They convict us all. We must confess, "I am unworthy" (Ge 32:10). In one way or another, we have all failed to put God first. Jesus shows us the great loss we suffer if we prefer family members to him."

#### 5) Cure

- Because we are unfaithful and deserving of anger and yet he loved us anyway, God sent his Son, Jesus. Jesus put his Father first. Every time. Jesus spoke his word of truth without fear of what his worldly enemies might do or say. Then Jesus went to the cross, credited with our faithlessness and guilt, and was punished in full. Hear his word of truth—in him your guilt is taken away, and you are forgiven. In Christ, his righteousness is credited as your own. He will testify to this for you before his Father on the Last Day. Eternal life is yours.

#### 6) Virtue and telos.

- I want my people to rejoice in the forgiveness of their Savior Jesus. By faith, I want them to value Jesus and his word above all things. In his love I want them to live out the compassion that God has for all people so that they speak without fear about the Savior who redeemed them and the world. When they suffer because of their witness, I want them to take comfort in the peace only Jesus gives and the eternal life he has promised them and all believers.

#### 7) Theme and parts.

Speak up about the Son!

1. Who will speak for us before the Father (vv.32-33, 39).
2. Whose cross we carry for a time (vv. 34-38).

What follows below is the historical introduction that I included for the Bible study that accompanies this material. The "story" of the Augsburg Confession and the birth of the Lutheran church goes well with this text and its themes: being faithful to Christ and his word despite all earthly opposition and threats.

## 8) Historical background to the Augsburg Confession.

Happy birthday! Did you know that June 25 is considered the birthday of the Lutheran church? It was on this day in 1530 that the “evangelical party” (as the Lutheran protesters were called at that time) formally presented the confession of their faith at the official meeting of the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire (called a Diet) that was taking place in Augsburg, Germany. When the Lutherans’ Augsburg Confession was rejected by Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, and papal representatives, the evangelical churches became known as a separate denomination to the Roman Catholic Church.

Despite the grand-sounding name, the Holy Roman Empire was, in reality, a confederation of territories and free cities in areas that include modern-day Germany, Switzerland, and northern Italy. As a member of the Habsburg family (the family that also ruled Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, and Hungary), Charles V had a lot of power, but he still needed the support of the German princes if he wanted to accomplish any of his major goals in the Holy Roman Empire. In 1530, one of those goals was to repel the Ottoman Turk army under Suleiman the Magnificent that was encroaching upon the eastern side of the Habsburg lands. Another was to settle doctrinal controversies that had erupted in the Holy Roman Empire in recent years. Charles V figured that he needed to achieve the second goal so that he could achieve the first. Besides, even though he had political differences with the pope, Charles was still a faithful Roman Catholic and wanted to ensure that all his subjects were faithful Roman Catholics as well.

One of the concerns for Charles V was Martin Luther’s protest, which had been gaining support. In 1521, he had summoned Luther to the Diet at Worms and demanded that he retract the doctrines that Luther had been teaching and printing. Luther humbly refused since he had not been shown from the Scriptures where he was wrong, and Luther was declared a heretic. This had not stopped Luther’s work. He went on to translate the New Testament into German by 1522 and his Large and Small Catechisms in 1529.

In 1529, Charles V defeated many of his political rivals but still had to deal with the advancing Turks. To get all parties in his empire on the same page, he invited them to Augsburg with the positive-sounding intention to consider “with love and kindness the opinions and views of everybody, in order to reduce them to one single Christian truth and agreement” (*Concordia Triglotta*, Concordia Publishing House, 1921, p. 15).

The Lutheran party set out for Augsburg on April 4, 1530. Martin Luther was convinced not to accompany them since many feared for his safety, but to remain at Coburg Castle that was in the southern area of the electorate of Saxony, about 160 miles from Augsburg. Elector John the Constant was a Lutheran and used his position to protect the Lutherans under his rule. When the Lutherans arrived at Augsburg, they soon realized that they were going to need to do more than simply defend the reforms that John had carried out in Saxony. A Catholic theologian, John Eck, had arrived in Augsburg before the Lutherans and published a treatise called the 404 Propositions. In this document, Eck misquoted the reformers and accused them of all kinds of heresies that had been rejected and condemned throughout the history of the Christian church. Then, when Charles V arrived in Augsburg on June 15, it became clear that his goal was to force the evangelical party to compromise

their beliefs. The Lutherans realized they were going to have to make a complete confession of their faith.

Martin Luther's fellow reformer, Philip Melancthon, wrote the Augsburg Confession. During the process, he was in regular contact with Martin Luther via letter. The result was a masterful work that bore the gentle style of Melancthon and the theology of Luther. It was prepared in both Latin and in German, although one is not a direct translation of the other.

The Augsburg Confession is made up of twenty-eight doctrinal articles. The first twenty-one confess the clear teachings of Scripture while rejecting all errors that go against those doctrines. The last seven articles point out errors in practice that had crept into the Roman Catholic Church which had been corrected in Lutheran territories. Throughout the confession there is a faithful and persistent testimony to the magnificent Scriptural truths that human beings are saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone, with Scripture alone.

Both theologians and leaders of all evangelical territories chose to adopt the marvelous Augsburg Confession as their own confession before the Holy Roman Emperor and the Papacy. By doing so, they all put their lives on the line to testify to Scriptural truth. Because the Augsburg Confession is a clear witness to God's truth, it would serve as a foundational confession for the Lutherans in the turbulent years that were to follow the Diet at Augsburg. It remains foundational for confessional Lutherans to this day.