

What Does This Mean?

"These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name." John 20:31

Two phrases: "What does this mean?" and "This is most certainly true" are well known to Lutherans.

They are found in Luther's Small Catechism and, with the answers that come before or follow each phrase, help us understand the teachings of God's Word, especially as it relates to Christ and His grace.

September is the time that our Christian Education programs gear up again after relaxing a bit for the summer. Fifth through eighth graders are involved in Pre-catechism and Catechism classes, Sunday School for children and adults is again in full swing, and other Bible classes throughout the week are once more being offered.

So, what does this mean? Well, it is God's Word that the Holy Spirit uses to bring us to faith and salvation in Christ, and sustain and strengthen that faith as we live out our lives. God commands (yes, commands) His Christians to study that Word for themselves and teach it to their children. Those who "despise preaching and His Word" sin against the 3rd Commandment and place themselves in very real spiritual danger. The importance of each one of us being in the Word cannot be overstated.

Also, in an age that is increasingly hostile to Christianity, while at the same time Christians are less knowledgeable about what the Scriptures teach, the last thing the Church needs to do is "dumb-down" its educational curriculum and shrink back from offering as many opportunities as possible for people to have access to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" that Word of Life. Who knows how long we have before the freedom to hear, read and learn God's Word will be no more.

And remember: even apart from all the dire things I spoke of above, by being a lifelong student of the Bible, you get to know Jesus better. I want to challenge you to become more firmly anchored in the grace and forgiveness and hope He gives through regular church attendance and Bible study. The Holy Spirit, through that very Word, and the Sacraments received in church, continues to develop you in Christ's image as His life is lived out through you.

This is most certainly true.

God bless you,

Past Lueke