

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

“Justified” and Then What?

The heart of the Gospel rediscovered by the reformers is “since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed.” (*Romans 3:23-25*) We Lutherans have been champions of this “Good News” and are rightfully proud of it. This emphasis is one of the gifts we bring to worldwide Christianity.

However, Jesus also said: “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (*John 8:31-32*) The operative point is “If you continue in my word...” Continuing is essential. Not resting in one spot, but continuing. Continuing is of vital importance not just to the individual Christian but also to the Christian Church and its local expression—the congregation.

Hence, my title: “‘Justified’ and then what?” We Lutherans have been good at getting right “justification.” (*Romans 3:23-25*) We have not been so good at getting right “sanctification”

Sanctification has to do with the “then what” after justification occurs.

All who are redeemed by the grace of God in Christ Jesus through faith have been redeemed for a purpose. That purpose is to serve God in His mission to redeem the world. We are to be His instruments in His accomplishing His task.

That is the “then what” that we as faith communities and Christian individuals need to live into. That is the implication of “if you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples.”

A proper honoring of our heritage would be to live out both justification and sanctification.

Love,
Pastor Dean
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