

## SOME OF THE TREASURES IN OUR LUTHERAN ATTIC

One of Public Television's more popular programs is the *Antique Roadshow*. People are sometimes amazed at what treasures have been lying around their homes and just how valuable they are. Sometimes it takes a fresh look from someone who points out the value of an object to take it from the attic to a place in the living room or a place of honor. On this first evening, we want to not only dust off our treasures, begin to understand how they all really fit together and make sense of our lives and our relationship to God.

**CROSS, CROSS, AND MORE CROSS.** While the cross is a common symbol of Christianity, for Lutherans it is more than a symbol. It is at the heart of what the Gospel is all about. It also shapes how Lutherans understand the Church, how they measure success, how they deal with adversity, how they understand what Christ has done for them. "Theology of the Cross" is the term used to describe Lutheran teaching of the Gospel. Lutherans can't talk about God without talking about the Cross of Christ. Some have derided this as a morbid obsession with suffering and death. For Lutherans it is a source of hope, joy, consolation, and confidence.  
(Read 1 Corinthians 1:17–31)

**NO FINE PRINT IN THE BIBLE.** One of the frustrations in modern life is the fine print on contracts, labels, and instruction manuals. It seems like we read that fine print when it's too late — when pills have caused an

adverse reaction, when a mortgage agreement puts us in a bind, or when we have a bunch of parts left over after assembling a new bicycle. When Lutherans proclaim God's Word, they don't want to hide or cover up what God has to say. They are careful to distinguish and proclaim Law and Gospel. God's Law reveals God's will, uncovers our sin and need for Christ, and guides our life of faith in Christ. God's Gospel proclaims forgiveness in Christ, the death of sinners, the righteousness of Christ through which sinners can stand before God. Much of what is mixed up in the world and in the churches today can be traced back to not proclaiming full-strength Law and full-strength Gospel. Law and Gospel is more than a catch phrase for Lutherans. It is a constant impulse to preach all of God's Word, not with fine print, but **boldly**.  
(Read Romans 3:19 and John 3:16.)

**IT'S GOD'S STUFF AND HE USES IT WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW HE WANTS.** Spirituality is the "in thing." There are even atheists who seek to develop an atheist spirituality. Some people get so spiritual that they try to kick God out of the world He created. Others become so material that they find no room for God and claim that none of the stuff is God's. Lutherans take seriously God's Word proclaim everything to be God's creation. They also take God seriously when He uses the things of His creation to communicate His saving Gospel. The sacraments are not mere signs for Lutherans, but gracious realities through which God lets the Gospel touch our lives where they are at.  
(Read Titus 3:5-8 and 1 Corinthians 10:16.)

**BEGGARS AREN'T CHOOSERS.** When it comes to our salvation, we resemble those of whom Jimmy Durante said, "Everybody wants to get in on the act." When Lutherans insist on "grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone" they are in a sense standing in the way of all who "want to get in on the act." They understand that sinners can only offer God their sins. They understand that their joy and glory is that Christ died for them. They cannot claim any credit, only the gift which is Christ Himself. Lutherans are proud to be beggars because they are proud of what God has given them: His only-begotten Son.  
(Read Ephesians 2:8)

**THE POTTER, NOT THE POTTERY.** The German Philosopher Heiddiger wrote that the essence of a jar is that we can fill it with whatever we want. Unfortunately, this way of thinking has informed modern attitudes toward God and His Word. Lutherans insist that through His Word, God created all that exists. Through His Word He creates saints out of sinners. For Lutherans, God's Word is not a puzzle to figure out. It is not a set of Lego® blocks to make what we want of it. It is not a musty old book with mere sentimental value. It is the living Word. In order to understand God's Word, Lutherans know they have to *stand under* God's Word. This shapes how Lutherans preach. This shapes how Lutherans hear.  
(Read Isaiah 40:6–8 and Hebrews 4:12.)

The wonderful thing about the Lutheran treasures, is that there are always more to find and they all wonderfully fit together. They are worth taking out of the attic.

Treasures in the Attic  
Our Faith Is Not Clutter  
June 1, 2009

7:00 Responsive Prayer 2  
*page 285*  
Reading:  
1 Corinthians 1:17-31  
Hymn:  
Not What These Hands  
Have Done  
*LSB 567*

7:10 Presentation:  
Treasures in the Attic

7:55 Questions and Answers

8:15 Compline  
*page 253*  
Office Hymn:  
God, Who Made the Earth  
and Heaven  
*LSB 877*

I will also speak of  
your testimonies  
before kings and  
shall not be put to  
shame. Psalm 119:46

In the sight of God  
and all  
Christendom, we  
want to testify to  
those now living  
and those who will  
come after us.

Formula of Concord, Solid  
Declaration, Conclusion

Being Lutheran –  
Nothing to Be  
Ashamed Of!  
Treasures in the Attic  
Our Faith Is Not Clutter



St. John's Riverside  
Lutheran Church  
LC-MS  
5686 Highway 32 South  
Gillett, Wisconsin  
June 1, 2009