



# 19 Minutes with Luther

## The Gospel and the Nature of God

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
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- **The Gospel & the Nature of God**
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
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- Baptism (Part 1)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
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- 6th Petition
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- The Doxology

I believe in God the Father almighty . . . in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord . . . in the Holy Spirit.

1. The two main doctrines in the Bible are the law and the gospel. These two doctrines differ fundamentally from each other and might even be called opposites. Fill in the missing words in the following paragraphs:

God's law makes demands on us. It tells us what \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ and what not \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness (or perfection). In addition, the law condemns us. It shows us our \_\_\_\_\_ teaches us that we fall far short of what God demands, and tells us that we deserve eternal \_\_\_\_\_.

With the gospel, however, God comforts our despairing hearts. The gospel shows us our \_\_\_\_\_, telling us what \_\_\_\_\_ has done for our salvation. It tells us that he made atonement for our sins and that through faith in him, we have the \_\_\_\_\_ God demands of us. Through Jesus, \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven is ours. This good news \_\_\_\_\_ us to live our lives for Christ

2. The God of the Bible is triune, that is, three distinct persons yet one God. How does each of the following passages support the doctrine of the Trinity?

*"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'"*  
(Genesis 1:26).

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one"* (Deuteronomy 6:4).

*"The LORD said to Moses, 'Tell Aaron and his sons, "This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: 'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.'" So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them'"* (Numbers 6:22-27).

*"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19).

3. Agree or disagree: Most Americans believe in God and, therefore, will go to heaven.

4. The Bible says that the true God is the triune God. It tells us that each of the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is not a part (that is, one-third) of the Godhead, but each has the whole essence of God undivided. Each is fully God. How are we to understand this? Why do we believe this?

5. What do the following passages reveal about God's characteristics? As you list each characteristic of God, explain how it serves as both a warning and a comfort to us.

*"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"* (Deuteronomy 33:27).

*"Lord, you know all things"* (John 21:17).

*"Nothing is impossible with God"* (Luke 1:37).

*"'Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the LORD. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the LORD"* (Jeremiah 23:24).

*"[The LORD] passed in front of Moses, proclaiming 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation'"* (Exodus 34:6,7).

### Luther said:

"How this intertrinitarian relation is carried on is something we must believe; for even to the angels, who unceasingly behold it with delight, it is unfathomable. And all who have wanted to comprehend it have broken their neck in the effort." (Plass, Vol. 3, p. 1385.)

### Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the love you have shown us in sending your Son to be our Savior. Lord Jesus, we thank you for the love you have shown us in offering your life as full payment for our sins. Holy Spirit, we thank you for the love you have shown us in bringing us to saving faith. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we praise your holy name. Amen.

### At home

- Read the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds (*Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* [CW], Northwestern Publishing House, 1993, pp. 18,19,132,133).
- Memorize Exodus 34:6,7.

### Helps

(1) God's law makes demands on us. It tells us what to do and what not to do, and demands righteousness (or perfection). In addition, the law condemns us. It shows us our sins, teaches us that we fall far short of what God demands, and tells us that we deserve eternal damnation. With the gospel, however, God comforts our despairing hearts. The gospel shows us our Savior, telling us what Jesus has done for our salvation. It tells us that he made atonement for our sins and that through faith in him, we have the righteousness God demands of us. Through Jesus, eternal life in heaven is ours. This good news inspires us to live our lives for Christ. (2) In Genesis 1:26, notice the plural us and our, and the singular *image* and *likeness*, indicating a plurality of persons in the one Godhead. Deuteronomy 6:4 tells us there is only one God, not three. The final two passages speak of the name (singular) of the one God: his name is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (3) All people have a natural knowledge of God. This knowledge, however, is not enough to save. Anybody who worships a god who is not the true God worships an idol. (4) The doctrine of the trinity (that 1 + 1 + 1 = 1) is beyond human comprehension and cannot be understood. We believe it because God reveals this truth to us in the pages of Scripture. (5) The passages tell us that God is eternal, omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (almighty), omnipresent (present every where), as well as those characteristics mentioned in Exodus 34:6,7 (compassionate, gracious). Each characteristic will speak to both the new man and old Adam (for example, God's omniscience means he knows our needs as well as our sins).