



19 Minutes with Luther

The Third Article

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- **3rd Article (Enlightens)**
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him.

But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.

On the Last Day he will raise me and all the dead and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

1. When the Holy Spirit calls people to saving faith, he enlightens them, that is, he brings them out of the darkness of unbelief into the light of faith, where they see all of God's gifts. The Holy Spirit gives believers more than an intellectual knowledge of God's gifts; he leads them to accept and trust in God's Word and promises. According to the following passage, why is the Holy Spirit's work of enlightenment necessary?

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

2. The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is a free gift of God's grace and that it becomes ours through faith in Jesus Christ alone. How will unbelievers, living in spiritual darkness, respond to this teaching of Scripture? What might they offer in its place? What are the eternal implications?
3. While those living in spiritual darkness may be able to grasp the meaning of Scripture's words (an intellectual knowledge), they do not accept or place their trust in God's Word. What have unbelievers (and even some within Christian churches) said about each of the following teachings of Scripture? What are the eternal implications of doing so?

The creation of the world

The virgin birth of Christ

The bodily resurrection of Christ

4. Read the following passage. What tool does the Spirit use to enlighten? What happens as we use this tool more and more? Share an example from your life.

“Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts” (Psalm 119:98-100).

5. Read the following passages. What are some of God’s wonderful gifts that the Holy Spirit enables us to see by faith?

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

6. At times, Christians may not feel that they are forgiven, at peace with God, or objects of his love. What comfort and assurance does the Holy Spirit give in the following words?

“Whenever our hearts condemn us . . . God is greater than our hearts, and knows everything” (1 John 3:20).

Luther said:

“We were totally unable to come to a recognition of the Father’s favor and grace except through the Lord Christ, who is the mirroring image of the Father’s heart. Without Christ we see nothing in God but an angry and terrible Judge. But we could know nothing of Christ either, if it were not revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.” (Tappert, p. 419.)

Closing Prayer

Holy Spirit, God of love, who our darkness brightens, poured on us from heaven above, and our faith enlightens, in your light we gather here; show us that Christ’s promise clear is Amen forever. Amen. (CW 180.)

At home

- Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.
- Read 1 Corinthians chapter 12 (the gifts of the Holy Spirit).

Helps

(1) The Holy Spirit’s work of enlightenment is necessary because by nature all people are spiritually blind. They cannot accept or trust God’s Word and promises. (2) Unbelievers see the gospel as foolishness. They will naturally substitute work-righteousness for the gospel, trusting in their own works and merit to earn salvation. This only leads to eternal damnation. (3) Any denial of God’s Word is a denial of God and places one’s soul in eternal jeopardy. Darkened unbelievers will replace the creation account with the theory of evolution, denying the existence of the Creator and the immortality of the soul. They will deny the virgin birth, claiming that Jesus’ conception came about in a natural way. In doing so, they deny the truth that Jesus was born without original sin and that he was fully qualified to be our Savior. Unbelievers will also explain away the physical resurrection of Christ and, in doing so, will reject the truth that he is our Savior from sin and death. (4) The Holy Spirit uses God’s Word to enlighten believers. The more we use the Word—read, study, and meditate on its truths—the more our spiritual eyes are opened to understand and trust in those truths. (5) The Holy Spirit enables us to see God’s forgiveness, the peace we have with him in Christ, the joy that is ours, and the sure hope of eternal life. (6) In spite of what we might feel, the Holy Spirit convinces us that we are forgiven, at peace with God, and the objects of his love. Regardless of our subjective feelings, these are objective facts.