



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. The word *sanctification*, used in its broad sense, refers to all of the work that the Spirit does when he calls people out of the unbelieving world to be holy, which he does by bringing them to faith in the Savior and by keeping them in the faith. *Sanctification* is also used in a narrow sense. According to the following passages, to what special work of the Holy Spirit does *sanctification* refer?

"[Jesus] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:14).

"It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

2. Saint Paul says that Christians are "*eager to do what is good*" (Titus 2:14). Which of the following statements best explains why Christians are eager to do what is good? Explain your answer.

Christians know that God has promised to reward their good deeds.

Christians gladly do good works as an expression of their love and thanks to God.

Christians know that good works are necessary for salvation.

3. The Bible provides God's people with guidelines for doing good works. Read the following passages and then fill in the blanks in the paragraph that follows.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6).

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

"Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

"As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people" (Galatians 6:10).

A good work in God's sight is everything a _____ does, speaks, or thinks in faith, according to the _____, to the _____ of God, and for the _____ of his or her neighbor.

4. One system of ethics (moral principles and values) is called teleological ethics. It claims that the end always justifies the means. Give an example. Compare this ethic and what we learned in question 3.
5. Another system of ethics might be called feel-good ethics. In other words, if something feels good and doesn't hurt anybody, then we are free to do it. Give an example of feel-good ethics. Make a comparison between feel-good ethics and what we learned in question 3.
6. Respond to the following statements:

I want to do what is right, but I just can't do it. I can't possibly be a Christian. (Read Philippians 2:13.)

I'm not a Christian, but I live the same kind of life, doing the same sort of good things as my Christian neighbor. If there is a God, I'm sure I'm just as acceptable to him as my neighbor.

Luther said:

"The former teaching, that of the Ten Commandments, does not by itself make anyone a Christian; for the wrath and displeasure of God still remains upon us because what he requires of us we are unable to do. But this other teaching, that of the Creed, brings us sheer grace; and it makes us upright and pleasing to God because through this knowledge we get to love and delight in all the commandments of God." (Tappert, p. 420.)

Closing Prayer

Spirit of God, our Sanctifier, work in us through the Word and the sacraments. Strengthen our faith. Enable us to overcome our sinful flesh and to live our lives more and more to the glory of our Savior-God. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.

Helps

(1) When the Holy Spirit brings us to faith, he also leads us to hate sin, fills us with the desire to do what is God-pleasing, and enables us to live a life filled with good works. (2) Christians gladly do good works to express their love and thanks to God for all his goodness. Although God has promised to reward their good deeds, this is not the Christian's motivation for doing them, for even the reward is one of grace. Good works are necessary, not because they earn God's favor, but because they are the evidence that saving faith is present. (3) A good work in God's sight is everything a Christian (believer) does, speaks, or thinks in faith, according to the Ten Commandments, to the glory of God, and for the welfare of his or her neighbor. (4) Examples will vary; stealing food in order to feed the poor, telling lies in order to spare someone's feelings. Such acts do not glorify God, nor are they in agreement with God's law. (5) Example: consensual sex between unmarried persons. Such acts do not glorify God, nor are they in agreement with his law. Contrary to the idea that such actions do not hurt anybody, Scripture tells us that any violation of God's law is always harmful and does not serve the welfare of one's neighbor. (6) Even the desire to do what is God-pleasing is evidence of Spirit-given faith, albeit a weak faith that needs strengthening. The unbeliever may perform acts that appear good and praiseworthy in the eyes of others, but because they do not proceed from faith and from the proper motivation, they are not pleasing in the eyes of God.