



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 Holy Spirit calls people to saving faith, enlightens them to see all the gifts God gives them in Christ, and fills them with the ability to live as redeemed children of God. There are spiritual enemies, however, who want to destroy the faith of Christians. According to the following passages, who are these enemies? Give an example of what each might do to destroy faith?

"I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3).

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

"The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want" (Galatians 5:17).

2. According to the following passages, what does the Holy Spirit do for us in addition to calling us to faith?

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being" (Ephesians 3:16).

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

3. Read the following passage. By what means does the Holy Spirit strengthen and keep us in the faith?

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk [that is, God’s Word], so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2).

4. Respond to the following statements:

A lot of churches today teach “Once saved, always saved.”

I don’t have to go to church to be a Christian.

Sometimes I wonder if, some day, I won’t fall into spiritual apathy and simply drift away from Jesus.

I don’t let my kids have friends who don’t belong to our church. This way they’ll never be tempted.

I pray every day. I don’t see a need to read the Bible or go to church.

5. What is the next step that you could take to grow in your faith? What is the next step your family could take? What could your congregation do to help you take these next steps? What sorts of additional Bible classes (topics, formats) might your congregation consider offering?

Luther said:

“The Holy Spirit must continue to do his work in us through the Word, daily applying forgiveness until we reach that life where forgiveness will no more be needed.” (Tappert, p. 418.)

Closing Prayer

Holy Spirit, it was by your doing alone that we came to saving faith in Christ. But now there are so many enemies who want to destroy our faith, and we confess that we do not always guard and value your precious gift as we should. For Jesus’ sake, forgive us. Fill us with a love for God’s Word and, through it, strengthen our faith daily. Make us even more certain of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Amen.

At home

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

Helps

(1) The devil will use lies and half-truths to lead us to doubt or forsake our God. The sinful world will place one temptation after another before us. And even our sinful flesh, inclined to do only what is evil, will lead us astray. (2) The Holy Spirit strengthens our faith and keeps us in the faith. (3) The Holy Spirit keeps us in the faith through the same means with which he calls us to faith, namely, the gospel in Word and sacrament. (4) “Once saved, always saved” is not a scriptural teaching; the Bible shares examples of men who fell from saving faith and teaches us to guard and protect our faith, lest it be lost. While it might be true that a person doesn’t have to go to church to be a Christian, a Christian will want to go to church to obey Christ and to strengthen his faith. Christians who are concerned for their faith have God’s sure promise that he will strengthen and keep them in the faith through the means of grace so that they will never fall away. While choosing our children’s friends may be desirable at times, it does not mean that our children no longer have a sinful nature or that Satan will no longer be present with his temptations; Satan pays special attention to Christian homes. An active prayer life is commendable and is a sign that saving faith is present; however, the act of prayer is not a means of grace and does not strengthen faith. (5) Answers might include adding personal devotions or family devotions, attending Bible class and Sunday school regularly, attending the Lord’s Supper and worship regularly, and reading the Bible in a year.