



# 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. God is perfectly just and demands that all sins be paid for and punished. According to the following passages, with what does God threaten to punish sin?

*"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21).*

*"The soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezekiel 18:4).*

2. Saint Paul wrote: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:23-26).* In spite of sin, God has justified the world (*"all have sinned . . . and are justified"*), that is, he has declared all people "righteous," or "not guilty" (objective justification). What was God's motive in doing so?

On what basis did God make this declaration?

Has God's justice, nonetheless, been satisfied? If so, how?

How does an individual receive the eternal benefits of God's declaration (subjective justification)?

3. In spite of the fact that God has justified the world, many people will look elsewhere for their assurance of salvation. What reasons will people give for why they feel they are going to heaven?

4. Agree or disagree:

Christians will never be punished by God for anything they do wrong.

The certainty of forgiveness not only assures us of eternal life in heaven, but it is also a great comfort for our everyday lives.

If I am sorry for my sins, God will forgive me.

A loving God would never send anyone to hell.

It is Spirit-given faith alone that receives the eternal blessings that Christ won for us through his work of redemption.

#### Luther said:

"This doctrine [of justification] is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour. . . . This is the heel of the Seed that opposes the old serpent and crushes its head. That is why Satan, in turn, cannot but persecute it." (Plass, Vol. 2, p. 704.)

#### Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we confess that our lives are sinful; we have nothing to offer that could earn your favor. Forgive us, and lead us to rejoice daily in the fact that we have been justified freely by your grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. In his name we pray. Amen.

#### At home

- Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.
- Read Romans chapter 3.

#### Helps

(1) God threatens to punish sin with his anger and with troubles during this life and with temporal and eternal death. (2) By his grace alone, that is, his undeserved love for fallen mankind, God has justified all people. He did this on the basis of Christ's redemptive work. Christ our substitute's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary paid for the sins of the world, satisfying God's justice. By faith alone, and not by works, we receive the eternal benefits of Christ's work in our behalf. (3) Rather than trust God, people will base their hope of salvation on their works, the sincerity of their faith, the depth of their repentance, their history in the church, or their intentions. Such a foundation for salvation is not firm, because it depends on weak, sinful humans rather than on the words and promises of a gracious God. (4) While Christians may undergo the loving discipline of the Lord and suffer natural consequences of their sins, Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice for their sins assures them that they will never be punished, because the punishment for their sins was already paid at Calvary. The assurance of forgiveness is a great comfort for our everyday lives, because we constantly sin and deserve God's punishment. God's forgiveness does not depend on our sorrow over sin or on any other work or human effort, but on Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Repentant, Spirit-worked faith is simply the hand that receives forgiveness. God is both loving and just. In his undeserved love, he has provided salvation for all people. Those who in unbelief reject God's salvation will suffer his just and eternal punishment.