



# 19 Minutes with Luther

## The Keys and Confession

- 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)
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- 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

### The Public Use of the Keys

*Second: How does a Christian congregation use the keys?*

A Christian congregation with its called servant of Christ uses the keys in accordance with Christ's command by forgiving those who repent of their sin and are willing to amend, and by excluding from the congregation those who are plainly impenitent that they may repent. I believe that when this is done, it is as valid and certain in heaven also, as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us himself.

*Where is this written?*

Jesus says in Matthew, chapter 18, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

1. "The use of the keys is that special power and right which Christ gave to his church on earth: to forgive the sins of penitent sinners but refuse forgiveness to the impenitent as long as they do not repent" (Small Catechism). The keys are administered publicly in a congregation through its pastor. According to the following passages, who only may serve as pastors in our congregations?

*"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient . . . not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:6-9).*

*"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:11-13).*

*"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (Acts 20:28).*

2. Which of the following best completes the statement? Explain why you made your choice. We do not have women pastors because . . .

. . . women are not as qualified as men to serve as pastors.

. . . God prohibits them from serving in the public ministry.

. . . God says that they are not to have authority over men.

3. A Christian congregation calls a pastor to preach and teach God's Word publicly, to administer the sacraments (so that everything in the church may "be done in a fitting and orderly way" [1 Corinthians 14:40]), and to use the keys publicly. According to the following passages, how will a congregation with its called pastor use the binding key? the loosing key? Why will a congregation with its pastor use each of these keys (in other words, what is the desired outcome)?

*"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault. . . . If he refuses to listen . . . tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector"* (Matthew 18:15,17).

*"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her . . . that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins"* (Isaiah 40:1,2).

4. Discuss the following:

Other forms of the public ministry (in addition to the office of pastor) and the responsibilities of each.

On what things the pastor's ministry and work should focus.

How we may encourage our young people to consider the public ministry.

How the practice of excommunication demonstrates love for all of a congregation's members.

#### Luther said:

"If anybody does not go to confession willingly and for the sake of absolution, let him just forget about it. Yes, and if anybody goes about relying on the purity of his confession, let him just stay away from it. We urge you, however, to confess and express your needs, not for the purpose of performing a work but to hear what God wishes to say to you." (Tappert, p. 459.)

#### Closing Prayer

Bless the leaders whom you have given to our church, dear Lord. Give them strength. Instill in their hearts your love for souls. Fill them with the courage to boldly share your truth without compromise. And move us to support, honor, and obey them as our God-given overseers. In Jesus' name we ask this. Amen.

#### At home

Memorize the Public Use of the Keys.

#### Helps

(1) Only men who have all the qualifications established by God and who have been properly called by a congregation may serve as pastors. (2) We do not have women pastors, not because they are less qualified than men or because God forbids them to serve in the public ministry. (consider other forms of public ministry where women do serve), but because, at creation, God established an order in which he forbids women to have authority over men. The office of the pastor is one of authority. (3) A congregation with its pastor will use the binding key to exclude from the congregation (excommunicate) those who are plainly impenitent so that they may repent. The congregation and pastor will use the loosing key to forgive and welcome back the excommunicated who repent so that they are not led to despair, but may experience the joy of salvation. God's forgiveness is also announced publicly in worship services and privately to individuals. (4) God gave the church the freedom to establish, according to its needs, various offices of public ministry in addition to that of pastor: missionary, professor, family minister, youth minister, teacher, and such. The pastor's work should focus on "the ministry of the word of God" rather than "waiting on tables" (see Acts 6:1-7). We can encourage our young people to consider the public ministry by speaking pointedly to them about it, by supporting those who are attending our worker training schools, by familiarizing our young people with our worker training system, by conducting recruitment Sundays, and so on. Excommunication not only demonstrates a deep love for impenitent sinners by attempting to lead them to repentance through seeing God's wrath; it also demonstrates a love for the entire congregation by making a clear testimony to God's Word.