

“Confessing the One, True God”

With the uniqueness of these new members confessing the Christian Faith this morning – I am using St. Matthew 10:32-33 as our text this morning. “Whoever confesses Me before men,” Jesus says, “I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

These are the words that Jesus speaks to His Twelve apostles – as He prepares to send them out before men to confess His saving name. And as He does – He warns them of persecution – and encourages them to have no fear.

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul,” He says. “Rather fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.”

It’s not a simple thing for you to confess your faith before men today. To do so sets you apart from the world – and it marks you for persecution. The world, it seems, will continue to ratchet up their persecution of Christians – but if not the world, you can be sure that the devil will marshal his troops against you.

And yet Jesus says, “fear not.” Confess Me before men. “Fear, love and trust in God above all things” – that is – live by faith in me.

We do rejoice with thankful hearts that you ALL have been baptized and have received the teaching of the Lord – that you have confessed the faith, and been absolved of all your sin. And it’s GOOD for all of us to hear YOUR-OUR confession! And all of this in the way of the Third Article of the Creed.

“I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me [to faith in Jesus] by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith ...”

To renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways is to stir up his wrath against you! And yet, you do so boldly and confidently – for he is not your lord and master. In faith, you “fear, love and trust” in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You hear and follow His voice – trusting Him to protect, and provide you with all that is good.

You confess that the Holy Scriptures are not just true – but they are true because they are the very Word of God – given by God Himself – so that you can stake your life on them. And from this Word you confess that the teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (summarized so beautifully in the Small Catechism) are a faithful confession of God’s Word – so that they guide your life – a treasure you desire to pass on to your children.

You have promised to live by that very Word of God – because you know it is GOOD for you, and for your neighbor. You promise to continue steadfast in this confession and Church “and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it.”

When you promise to suffer “even death” – that’s pretty serious. But so that we do not misunderstand – you are not promising to remain members of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Eagle, Nebraska – rather, you are promising to hold onto and treasure the confession of the Holy Christian Church – to remain steadfast in the one true faith.

To fall away from the one true faith is death. Without faith in Christ – there is no life and salvation. And because we know that of ourselves – we would easily wander away like a sheep, give in to the desires of our flesh, and latch on to some other false god who promises great things but are only lies – we confess that it is only “by the grace of God” that we may continue steadfast in this faith and life.

The Scripture passage that Taira selected for her confirmation verse is one for all of us to cling to. Colossians 2:6-7 says – “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

“As you received” – that’s Gospel folks. Poor, miserable sinners – receiving the love of God that we don’t deserve – receiving His gracious gifts – and walking in His forgiveness, life and salvation.

That Gospel is good news. It does abound in thanksgiving – always looking to, and trusting in, the Lord for all good things.

Nick & Taira, Logan, Ron & Leslie – we rejoice that you will receive the Lord's gifts with us here at Immanuel. Indeed, your confession this day shows forth that we are in communion with one another. We have a common union with Jesus Christ our Savior – and a common union with one another.

We are truly brothers and sisters in Christ ... so let us ALL love one another, as brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.