

Words of Truth

Exposing The Lutheran Church (Part 1)

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Many religious errors exist because a group of people wanted to leave a false doctrine and they do so by creating another man-made church. The Lutheran Church exists because Martin Luther opposed the errors of Roman Catholicism. It is good to expose the errors of the Catholic Church or any other false Church (Romans 16:17-18, Ephesians 5:11, and Jude 3-4). However, forming another human creed is the wrong answer to false doctrine (Galatians 1:6-12 and Colossians 2:8; 18-23). Let's begin our series on the Lutherans by finding out who they are and exposing them from that.

Who Are Lutherans?

Obviously, Lutherans wear the name of Martin Luther. Thus, whether they like it or not, they are followers of a man. There is only one name the saved will wear and that is the name of Christ (Acts 4:10-12, I Corinthians 1:10-13, and II Timothy 2:19). The Lutherans are willing to answer the questions of who they are. Here is their answer to our question: "In 1517 a Catholic monk named Martin Luther posted a list of 95 theses to protest various theological and practical abuses that existed in the church. (The background to this page is of this event.) This led to a firestorm of theological discussion. Soon Luther and his followers would be excommunicated from the Roman Catholic church. The Roman Catholic Church and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire tried to prevent the spread of Luther's ideas, but to no avail. God's Word, and especially the Gospel, was being preached again and put into the hands of the common people, and nothing could stop this 'reformation'.... Lutherans throughout the world are descendants of this great movement: to depend on Scripture alone for our understandings relating to God, to trust in Jesus alone for our salvation, to trust in grace alone for Scripture declares no one shall be saved by works (Romans 3). In the Lutheran faith the ancient battle cry and confession still rings out: Scripture alone! Faith alone! Grace alone! Christ alone (http://www.lutheran-resources.org/who_are_lutherans.htm)! You just read that the cry of Lutherans begins with, "Scripture alone". Really?

Do They Really Believe In Scriptures Alone?

For one, if anyone is a true believer of the Lord they will stand upon the Scriptures alone (Psalms 19:7, Proverbs 30:5-6, Luke 4:4, Luke 11:28, Romans 1:16, and II Timothy 3:15-17). The Lutherans are not true believers, for they DO NOT really believe the Scriptures are the lone standard to which we should walk.

Aside from holding to the "95 Theses of Martin Luther", they also admit to following other human creeds: "This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life. This church

accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this church. This church accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it In faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. This church accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church. This church confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world" (<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Statements-of-Belief/ELCA-Confession-of-Faith.aspx>). They are also ignorant in their statement of "Faith Alone! Grace Alone?"

Which Is It – Grace Or Faith Alone?

The second and third cry of Lutherans, which we read about above, is faith alone and then grace alone. You cannot have grace without faith (Romans 4:16 and Romans 5:1-2), but they are separate actions (Ephesians 2:8-10 and I Timothy 1:14). Saying one is saved by faith alone, and then stating one is saved by grace alone, is ignorant. That is like saying I only want a cheeseburger, which alone will satisfy my hunger. Then, I say that I only want an order of onion rings, which alone will satisfy my hunger. Anyone taking that order would be confused. They would ask if I want the burger or the onion rings. If I then answered just the one, they'd want to know which one.

Aside from the confusion of faith or grace alone, we need to understand that salvation exists neither by faith or grace alone. Salvation requires more than any one, two, three, four, or even five steps. Many things that work TOGETHER save us. For example, the word of God teaches that we are saved by endurance (Matthew 10:22), hope (Romans 8:24), the gospel (Romans 1:16), grace (Acts 15:11), calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21; cf. Acts 22:16), baptism (I Peter 3:20-21), continuing in the faith (Colossians 1:23 and I Timothy 4:16), confession (Romans 10:10), repentance (II Corinthians 7:10), knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4), and on we could go. The Scriptures state very plainly that we are not saved by faith alone (James 2:14-26). Grace has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11-14), but few will be saved (Matthew 7:13-14 and Luke 13:23-24). Therefore, we know that grace alone does not save! So, having made these things clear, what about their statement of "Christ Alone"?

What Is Meant By Their Saying "Christ Alone"?

Salvation in Christ alone seems innocent (cf. John 14:6). However, it is just an extension of their belief in faith only, which the following statement teaches. Notice: "By this faith in Christ, through which men obtain the forgiveness of sins, is not meant any human effort to fulfill the Law of God after the example of Christ, but faith in the Gospel, that is, in the forgiveness of sins, or justification, which was fully earned for us by Christ and is offered in the Gospel" (http://www.lutheran-resources.org/lutheran_beliefs.htm). While we've already answered this, consider that remission [forgiveness] of sins is not through faith alone in Christ (Acts 2:38-41).

Conclusion

As is common in these articles, there is more to be said. We will continue exposing the Lutheran Church in the next article. We will be exposing how Lutherans are really just modified Catholics.