

supporting the Lutheran liturgy, we find a defense of sound Lutheran and biblical theology to be equally required, if we are to be successful in our defense and support of the Lutheran liturgy.

It ought come as no surprise that when we oppose by theological argument, say, antinomianism, or neo-orthodoxy, or Methodist or Baptist views on the Word of God or the Sacraments, or even Critical Race Theory, or the recent transgender craze, we don't believe ourselves to be somehow drifting away from our purpose as a liturgical journal. Anyone who thinks so might even be well served to consider anew whether such theological arguments could be unrelated to the liturgy.

In a word, we can't help it. We are students of rich Lutheran theology, and as such, also quite adamant in our declaration: *Leitourgiae propria adiaphoria non est*. Literally, that means that indifference is not a property of the liturgy. But that's not only to be taken as far as the ceremonies of Christian worship, which need not be everywhere exactly alike (properly understood), but into Christian life itself. The liturgy of the Church is not about adiaphora. It's about Christian life itself.

So don't be surprised if you see the journal of the Lutheran liturgy drifting repeatedly into theological subjects and substance that are not, very strictly speaking, liturgical. We can't help it. That's who we are.



Commentary on the War: Toward Gaining Ground in the Ministry

Envy in the Brotherhood

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Envy and strife are the common lot of fallen men as seen in Holy Scripture. Cain was envious of Abel, Joseph's brothers of Joseph, and Saul of David. All of them resorted to violence. In the Gospels, John and James seek the higher seats. The cause of Jesus' enemies' hatred is explicitly named as envy. Envy also exists in the ministerium. It is already present in the New Testament. Acts records strife between Peter and Paul and between Paul and Barnabas. St. Paul writes to the Philippians from prison, stating that some of his brother preachers are preaching not solely for the love of Christ but also out of envy and strife. Their intent is to add to his sorrows by their preaching. In a great display of humility, Paul rejoices in their preaching despite their motives (Phil 1:15–18). In doing so he embodies the mind of Christ and

shows us an appropriate and healthy response to envy both in ourselves and in others.

Envy is a destructive and pervasive sin in the Church even as it is outside of the Church. It exists and does damage daily in our synods, districts, and even congregations. It is particularly unbecoming, however, among the ministerium. It is particularly grievous when its cause is nothing more than someone receiving due honor, glory, or compensation. Few things are so vile as a Christian being sad because of someone he loves receiving some good. Envy, though, usually arises from more complicated circumstances, such as the instance of preaching Christ to hurt Paul while he is in prison. In these cases the good received by someone else is wrong conceived of as a loss to the envious one, but it is also connected to some slight or injustice that is a loss to the envious one. Thus the complication.

Before we get to the particularities of envy, we need to allow that while the answer to all sin is the forgiveness and grace won by Christ and delivered to faith, the answer to temptation is more nuanced. Sin isn't completely removed from the believer on this side of glory. It is not counted against the believer; God reckons us as righteous. But some of sin's temporal consequences remain, though God does spare us much in His mercy. Often memories of sin, with attendant temptation back to its illicit pleasures, or shame and disgust, remain as well. This forgiven sin wants to recapture and rule the believer. Instead, having been freely forgiven and reconciled to the Father, the believer actively resists sin. The believer is ruled by the Word and grace of God. This battle to resist and amend our sinful lives is centered in and driven by forgiveness. It is only possible because of the singular and unasked for work of Christ in obedience to the Father that has stood in the gap for us. But this battle does call for Christians to set their wills and habits toward living a life worthy of the calling to which they have been called, that is, a calling that gives honor and glory to Christ and the name placed upon them in Holy Baptism. That resistance knows sin is real and crouching at the door.

The answer to temptation, then, is not simply the Gospel in the narrow sense but includes the Law's instruction. The Law teaches the believer what is good and what is evil, what is to be sought and what is to be avoided. This is the first step in resisting temptation. We learn from the Law to recognize the sin that sometimes springs from our hearts and into our minds as sin. Without the Law's training, the Old Man can easily mislead us and deceive us so that we dismiss the idea that sin comes from within us or is a real danger.

We all suffer many slight injustices from our brothers and sisters in the course of this life. A man might fall victim to a co-worker failing to make a fresh pot of coffee when he takes the last cup. In response, without

effort or awareness, anger might arise in that man spontaneously as he perceives that he has been treated unfairly. Left unchecked by the Law and without the Law's descriptions to comprehend what is happening and why it is evil, that man is unlikely to recognize that his anger is unjust. It is unjust in that it is inordinate, out of sync with the reality of the situation due to his pride. His anger also hides a sadness that is mostly unknown to an untrained mind that has not been convicted by the Holy Spirit through the Word. That anger can lead quickly to bitterness and resentment, a root of destruction that leads to perdition. It almost always results in the assignment of wicked motives to the co-worker who didn't make a fresh pot of coffee rather than explaining the coworker's actions in a kind way, let alone, the kindest way possible.

The Law instructs us to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are to rejoice with those who rejoice. The Old Man that seeks to take control of us prefers to leave sin inarticulate and unexamined. The Law, in goodness, wants to give sin a name. With a name, that sin might be recognized for what it is and put down. It is rarely enough to simply say that the sin is a lack of love or generosity. In this example, the real problem begins with pride. The man doesn't think he should have to engage in the menial task of making coffee or feels he isn't being honored and recognized for the pots he has already made. This pride will almost immediately jump to even worse sins by Eighth Commandment violations. Pride assigns evil motives and character flaws to the co-worker. It fails to look with mercy upon the weaknesses of others. It refuses to explain the failure to make another pot of coffee in the kindest way and instead assumes the worst, that is, that the co-worker is lazy or arrogant or fails to consider the feelings and needs of others.

The Christian wants to imitate and be like his Father. He wants to follow Jesus and His example. He loves the Law and sees in it true beauty and a description of the good life. The Christian can learn in the whole counsel of God to examine himself and therein to recognize what is contrary to the way of Christ in himself. By giving it a name, he can learn something of how to battle against and resist it.

Our pastors must learn to recognize their own envy, to know it for what it is. Next, they must learn from Paul's rejoicing in the preaching of those who meant him harm and who preached, in part, to insult him and add afflictions to his imprisonment, a marvelous example to follow. Paul doesn't rejoice in heresy. These weren't false preachers preaching a false Christ. Paul can only rejoice in orthodoxy, in a true confession and the pure Gospel. His epistles are written to condemn heresy and teach the truth. He does not turn a blind eye to that! These preachers, then, were true preachers of the pure Gospel, but they were afflicted by petty jealousies and arrogance. They sought to profit in some way from Paul's imprison-

ment and were driven by ambition. Paul's God-given ability and maturity recognized that God was working through them nonetheless and that He was extending His kingdom through their preaching. This was a marvelous grace born of Paul's humility. Those preachers' envy and strife tempted Paul to respond in kind, but instead, he responded with love and generosity and put the best construction on their work.

This is certainly what St. Peter has in mind when he writes: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins" (1 Pet 4:7-8, NKJV). He is telling us to put the injustices and insults we suffer in this life, even within the Church, into perspective: the end of all things is at hand. What does it matter if we aren't recognized among men or have to do more than our share of coffee making? He also means to teach us that we can and must learn to live in love, as the forgiven extending forgiveness, the mercy bestowed upon us begetting mercy for others. Our love and forgiveness doesn't redeem anyone. It doesn't cover their sins in that sense. Jesus does that. Our love and forgiveness for one another, that is, our looking past one another's sins where we are able and putting the best construction on what others say and do, enables us to live the good life together in the Church. It is a life worthy of our calling, and it is a life that is satisfying and peaceful, a life lived in and by God's grace.

St. Paul doesn't endorse or excuse the envy and strife of his brother preachers. These are sins. But he doesn't allow his Old Man to destroy his love for these brothers either. He doesn't escalate these sins to invalidate everything these men are doing. They meant him harm, and yet he responded in love. He chose to speak well of and even praise them for what is truly good: their preaching of Christ.

Strife, envy, and ambition will be with us until Christ's return in glory. So will heresies, schismatics, and divisions. We must learn to discern between that which cannot be tolerated and that which charity requires us to describe as weakness and to cover. David wasn't speaking hypothetically when he wrote that it is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity (Ps 133:1). He was stating more than a fact, as well. He was stating an ideal and a goal, something that we can actually work and pray for. Envy is a horrible poison. It destroys families, churches, and societies. Antinomianism and Gospel-reductionism are no antidote. Learning to see envy for what it is by the Law's education, renouncing it, and asking for grace is the only hope we have of overcoming it and living together in unity. 