

# Lutheran Identity – What does this mean?

June 17, 2012

- I. The Doctrine of Christian Freedom.....a matter of conscience.
  - A. What is the purpose of Conscience? Right and Wrong. Violation of conscience is sin. The erring conscience proves the inescapability of sin. But when we sin we have an answer.....

John 3.21f – For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. <sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. <sup>22</sup>And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. <sup>24</sup>And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

WRT conscience. Paul treats this in **Romans 14 and I Cor. 8;** about eating meat offered to idols.

**Strong Conscience** = Conforming, backed up by God's Word = There are no false gods, you are free to eat.

**Weak Conscience** = **Not sure if it's OK.** The strong must forego his right to eat lest he **destroy his brother** by leading him to do something he's not sure of. (Romans 14.23 whatever is not from faith - surety in God's Word - is sin.

**Erring Conscience** = Asserting a lie (legalism or antinomianism); Must be opposed directly and contradicted for the sake of God's truth and the repentance of the rebel. If they are tolerated, the freedom of the Gospel (FROM GUILT and TO WORSHIP/SERVE according to God's Word) will eventually be lost. Legalism creates sin out of what God has not called sin; antinomianism is false freedom to worship God or do what God has forgiven. Both destroy faith and lead to spiritual death.

- II. The Criticism of Old Lutheranism's ties to Rome:

- A. The Laundry lists. P. 1 col. 2 top; p. 2 col. 1; p. 9 col. 2 near bottom.
- B. The difference between the Catholic Teaching on Rites and the Lutheran: Bound vs. free consciences.
  1. Top down - Catholicism. Legalism (Mt. 15.1-9).  
Catholic Doctrine – Practice P. 4 column 2 f.
  2. Christ at the bottom: Freedom of the Congregation to institute/abolish rites. (Mt. 23.8-12; 1 Cor. 1.10; 3.21-23)  
Lutheran Doctrine – Practice P. 5 column 2f.
  3. Where freedom must give way to love for the weak and the brethren.  
Being a part of a Congregation. What does this mean? P. 6 col. 2f. (Collation problem pp. 7/8).

What about contemporary worship? What about the "Old Lutherans" who aren't so sure it's good? Are they right or wrong; weak or strong? If they reject it are they acting legitimately or legalistically? Is there something innately dubious about such temporary worship forms?

Next week: Let's look at that laundry list of "Catholicisms" in Lutheranism.