

A Little Luther



Martin Luther by Wilhelm Lindenschmit (1829-1835), wood engraving, published 1879

A Little Luther Goes a Long Way (“long” is eternal life, the “Way” is Christ Himself)!

“Thus it is established that Christ will pray the Father, and pray Him not to frighten us or cast us into hell but to send us another Comforter, the kind of Comforter who will abide with us forever and do this one thing among us, namely, strengthen and comfort us without ceasing.”

About A Little Luther:

Martin Luther was a German Reformer living in the 16th century. His writings contain much wisdom and understanding of God’s Holy Scriptures and are always subordinate to them, meaning the Bible itself is the sole true authority (*Sola Scriptura*). Luther simply had marvelous, God-given insight into His Word. Some of these nuggets are simply too good not to share. We’ve tried to highlight points that seem to us to summarize Luther’s teachings from these glorious passages of Scripture. May God bless your own studies of Scripture, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom 1:16).

The WORD

¹⁶...and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Jn 14:15-16). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.”

The world lives freely, smugly, and riotously, without fear and anxiety, and heeds neither God’s wrath nor His grace. Besides, it is giddy and reckless, and does not stand in need of comfort. **But the few who are called to believe, are baptized in Christ, and remain loyal to Him are in dire need of a Comforter to strengthen and preserve them, that they may be able to endure and bear all things.**

“Therefore since I am about to depart from you,” says Christ, “and can no longer be with you visibly, and since your sufferings will now begin, I will not leave you forsaken and without comfort. Until now, to be sure, you have joy and consolation in Me, but this has been only physical and temporal comfort and had to end anyhow. For I cannot remain with you forever this way if I am to enter into My glory and spread My kingdom through you. And in order that this may happen soon, it is necessary for Me to die, ascend to heaven, and leave you behind. But you shall not be forsaken; you shall take comfort in the knowledge that I will ask the Father to give you another Comforter, who will remain with you not only for a time, as I am doing, but will stay with you forever and will comfort you far more effectively than I have done by My physical presence. And this shall begin soon after My death and resurrection, and it shall not cease until I take you to Myself.”

Thus Christ now begins to preach about the Holy Spirit, who is to be given to Christendom and will preserve it until the Last Day.

We must learn to know and believe in the Holy Spirit and as Christ depicts and describes Him, namely, that He is not a Spirit of anger and terror but a Spirit of grace and consolation, and that the entire Deity reflects sheer comfort. The Father wants to comfort, for it is He who grants the Holy Spirit; the Son likewise, for He prays for this; and the Holy Spirit Himself is to be the Comforter. Here, therefore, there is no wrath, threat, or terror for Christians; there is only a friendly smile and sweet comfort in heaven and on earth.

Why is this? “You already have hangmen and jailers enough who terrify and harass you,” Christ wants to say, “simply because you believe in Me, proclaim and profess Me. The devil will not desist from frightening and plaguing you. The world will also take a hand in this, seize you by the throat, and assassinate the one and exile another. You will have devils enough even without all the devils and the torments of hell! In addition, you will have your own heart and your conscience, which will lie prostrate and groan: ‘Alas, I am a poor sinner, and I did not live and act as becomes a Christian!’ These I will not give you, nor will I pray for them. On the contrary, I will pray that an eternal Comforter, who is to be the Holy Spirit Himself, may be granted to you against all this, to strengthen and aid you in all your sadness, fear, and need, so that you may overcome this and be delivered from it.

“This is what you are to look for and expect from the Father and from Me. If, as Christians who believe in Me and hold to Me, you suffer or are assailed, whether it be by the devil or by your conscience, then the Holy Spirit will be your Comforter and will address Himself to your heart as follows: **‘Be unafraid, and do not fear; for you are baptized, and you believe in Christ. Therefore you need not be frightened either by the devil with all his angels in hell, by your own thoughts, or by your anxiety about your relation to God.** No, do not think otherwise than that God’s anger and all hell are totally extinguished. For that is surely true for believers, even though they still feel sin and weakness.’” It is for this very purpose that the Comforter is promised and sent to them, to fortify them against such terror and fear.

Neither should you fear the world, tyrants, and all who want to rob you of honor and goods, and even of your life, because of Christ. For even if they do deprive you of all this, here you have a greater treasure, which the devil and the world will never take from you. And since this Comforter, together with the Father and Christ, is yours, you have all you should desire. Therefore let your heart be of good cheer. Despise boldly everything that assails you, and say: “I will remain undaunted even if the devil and all the world were far worse than they are.”

Christians must be proficient at this, for this message is addressed to them alone. As to the others—the coarse and malicious multitudes who disregard God’s Word or persecute it with malice aforethought and, on top of this, are smug—it would be better for them if they were frightened enough to flee from a rustling leaf.

“Just hold firmly to Me with your faith and confession; remain My beloved disciples, and you will suffer no want. I will comfort you abundantly. If sin, death, hell, the devil, or the world confront you, I will attend you with the Holy Spirit, who will adequately comfort you.”

Luther, M. (1999). Luther’s works, vol. 24: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 14-16. (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 24, pp. 110-113). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.