

# A Little Luther



Martin Luther by Wilhelm Lindenschmit (1829-1895), wood engraving, published 1879

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

### John 15:19

<sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own;

### Matthew 10:16

<sup>16</sup> Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

### 1 John 2:16

<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

### Gen 3:19

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread...

## 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

<sup>24</sup> “He who does not love Me does not keep My words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.”

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Jn 14:24). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

This means no one but the world and the false Christians. It is their nature not to be able to love Christ and to keep His words. For they seek and love only what is theirs, namely, the world and whatever pleases it, as Christ declares later (**John 15:19**): “If I were of the world, the world would love its own.” It follows that those who love Him are not of the world. We have heard that those who are baptized and cling to Christ are as sheep surrounded by wolves, as Christ Himself states (**Matt. 10:16**). The world does not hate any devil as it hates the Christians, and this hostility is far greater than any other hostility on earth.

But he who is to endure this bickering with the world, this scuffling with the devil, the hatred and envy of everyone, and whatever is inflicted on him must have a heart that thinks more of Christ and loves Him more than anything else in the world, with all its favor, friendship, and goods. He must be minded to say: “Whatever I suffer, I suffer for the sake of my Lord, who shed His blood for me and saved me from eternal death and from the power of the devil.” Out of gratitude to Him and to His honor and glory I am resolved to cling to the Word and to proclaim Him, sing about Him, and laud Him, no matter whom it may please or vex.” Whoever hesitates to do this shows that he loves the world more than he loves Christ and His Christendom. Therefore he cannot experience what Christ really is; nor can he attain the glory of becoming God's dwelling or of recognizing this dwelling, even though otherwise he may make much ado about Christ and Christendom, as is done by the pope and the sects, who are totally ignorant of the consolation and strength of the words of Christ the Lord.

Here, therefore, you have in brief a picture and description of the nature of the world; and you learn how we are to regard it, namely, as neither able nor willing to love Christ and to keep His words. This is because **its love and pleasure are centered elsewhere**. In **1 John 2:16** St. John speaks of “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.” **Those are the three forces that rule and really own the world.** The expression “lust of the flesh” means that the world seeks and strives solely for things that serve the comfort and well-being of the flesh, which is loath to undergo any toil, unpleasantness, or discomfort, although man is ordained to earn his bread in the sweat of his face (**Gen. 3:19**)

Secondly, there is “the lust of the eyes.” This is nothing else than greed, a vice so widespread today that it is practically futile to preach against it. There is hardly anyone in whatever position or office you can name who is not an oppressor, yes, an open usurer. What would they do for Christ's sake if they do not give their neighbor a penny without interest or refrain from exploiting him?

In the third place, there is “pride of life.” This means that everyone is eager to get far ahead in life and to lord it over others. If someone is a burgher, he aspires to become a knight. If he is a nobleman, he wants to be a prince. If he is a prince, he would like to be emperor. And even if he were emperor, he would not be satisfied. That is the order of the world. Nothing but sheer pleasure, greed, and pride reign and prevail there. And he who strives for these will never love Christ.

Therefore Christ says here that there will be many in the world who will make much of His name and His Word but will not keep His words; for they are not disposed to be willing to lose or suffer anything for His sake. And it is, of course, impossible for one to love the world and its possessions and at the same time to adhere to Him and keep His Word. It is out of the question on earth for these two ways of acting to get along together. The devil does not let those who want to be Christians retain the world's friendship and love. **It is also out of the question for flesh and blood to be able to cleave to its lust, greed, and pride, and at the same time to Christ.**

“Therefore,” says Christ, “if you want to be My disciples, be prepared to hold firmly to Me, to wager boldly, and to confide in Me. If I have not deserved your love, I shall not require it of you. I believe, however, that I have duly merited your love for Me above everything in heaven and on earth. For I shed My blood for you, unlocked heaven for you, broke hell asunder, reconciled the Father, and gave you everything through My own body. Your mammon, your goods, your honor, your sweet and easy life—none of this can ever achieve as much for you as I did. There is abundant reason why you should love Me more. **It is not My fault if you fail to love Me.** I have fully and richly earned your love. But it is due to your old Adam, to your flesh and blood, that you prefer a good, comfortable, grand, and sumptuous life, even though this is yours for only a short time and then is lost forever.

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. 160–161). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.