

# 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)!

“Therefore Christ decrees curtly and bluntly: “I will not manifest Myself to the world; I will do so to those who hear and accept My Word and love Me...”

### John 7:48

<sup>48</sup> Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him?

### Psalms 85:8

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the LORD will speak...

### Matt 11:19

<sup>19</sup> The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

### 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>22</sup> “Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him: Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world? <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him: If a man loves Me, he will keep My Word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Jn 14:22-23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

“My dear Judas,” Christ wants to say, “you must not ask whether king or emperor, Caiaphas or Herod, learned or unlearned, are involved in this. That does not matter, but the answer to the question whether I said this does matter. In these words of Mine, as also in the reign that I am about to establish, all people in the world are on the same level. I will not select anyone and raise him above the other. In the secular realm there must be a distinction of ranks and estates. A servant cannot be master, and the master must not be a servant; the pupil must not be a teacher, etc. But I have nothing to do with this, and it does not concern Me. I want to establish a kingdom in which all are regarded alike. A king born today, who is lord over much land and many people, shall come into My Baptism just as humbly and submissively as a poor beggar. And conversely, the latter shall hear the Gospel proclaimed or receive the sacraments and be saved just like the former.” Thus Christ wants to place all men on the same level. His intention is different from that of the world, which must have and retain its own order of things. Christ recognizes this and does not interfere with it. But He did not come to establish a worldly kingdom; He came to establish a kingdom of heaven.

For this reason He answers the apostle Judas as follows: “It will be immaterial what the world is, but it is important that I told you that I will manifest Myself to you and to those who love Me, not to him who wears a triple crown of gold or a scarlet mantle; not to him who is called noble, mighty, strong, rich, learned, wise, smart, and holy but to him who loves Me, whether he is called king, prince, pope, bishop, priest, doctor, layman, master, or servant, whether he is of high or of low estate. In My kingdom all such distinctions shall cease.

“And this is the very reason why I will not manifest Myself to the world, for it is so mad and foolish that it wants to teach and direct Me how I am to rule.” They say: “Why does He not reveal Himself to the chief priests in Jerusalem, so that they may bear witness to Him and confirm His doctrine?” Thus we hear them ask in John 7:48: “Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in Him?” Today people are also wont to say: “Where are the great kings, princes, and lords who accept the Gospel? If it were taught in Rome by the pope, the cardinals, the bishops, or in Paris by the scholars, and had been accepted by emperors and kings, we also would believe it.” But Christ declares here: “I will not do that. I refuse to have anyone dictate and prescribe to Me. They must be My pupils and gladly say: **Let me hear what God the Lord will speak (Ps. 85:8). I shall be glad to hear and learn what He tells me.**” Therefore I cannot manifest Myself to the world or agree with it. It shall hear Me and learn from Me, but it wants to be smarter than I and to dictate to Me what to do. **The egg wants to teach the hen;** and, as Christ says (Matt. 11:19), “wisdom is justified” and instructed “of her children.” That is like the insistence of the pope and his gangs of monks that they will all teach Christ to regard their orders and their special works and to grant them salvation in view of these. But Christ does not want to be coerced and instructed by them either.

Therefore Christ decrees curtly and bluntly: “I will not manifest Myself to the world; I will do so to those who hear and accept My Word and love Me, regardless of what titles they bear, whether they are decked with golden crowns or clad in coarse hempen garments. **He who wants to know Me must love Me, hold to Me, and not be ashamed of Me. If they do this, they will experience that I will manifest Myself to them. Then they will notice in themselves that they have believed aright and have not been deceived.** Therefore let the world be the world; let pope, bishops, councils, kings, and princes do, teach, believe, and decree what and how they please—the words still stand: ‘If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.’ Here is the parting of the ways. The world can and will not love Me. In fact, it does the opposite. It hates Me; it bitterly reviles and persecutes Me and My Word. **Yet it boasts that it is on good terms with God,** that it is just and holy, yes, that it alone is the true Christian Church. Pay no heed to this; but look to those who love Me, that is, to those who have and adhere to My Word. Keep to them as to My true church, with which the Father and I will dwell, as we shall see. **In Me these people shall have a faithful Savior, on whom they can rely and who will not fail them in life or in death.**”

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. 155-157). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.