



Interviews with God

- **I ASK:** *“Is There a Gospel According to Me?”*
 - **THUS SAITH THE LORD:** “Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ” 2 Corinthians 3:3.
“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” 1 Timothy 4:12.
“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” Matthew 5:16.
“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” 1 Peter 2:12.
 - **TO WHICH I RESPOND:** “Help me to remember, O Lord, that men who never read religious books, are reading me every day. God forbid that I should be guilty of inconsistencies which make my religion and my church contemptible in the eyes of my neighbours. Give me grace so to live that I may represent the Gospel, as a good witness for Jesus Christ, and thus glorify my Father which is in heaven. Amen.”
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Are you being tested?

When I think spiritually of the present climate created by the Coronavirus, I am reminded of the incident in the Book of Job when Satan presented himself before God amongst the holy angels. Viewing the ELCR, it’s like Satan said to God, “Take away access to their churches and they will forsake You and neglect the worship of Your Word.” It would have been very easy for many to simply say, “Well, I’m not allowed to go to church. I’ll just stay home.” But it has been of great encouragement to see the love for God’s Word that has motivated many households to stream services and keep up their public worship from home. May the Lord in His grace richly reward you for your faithfulness and love to His Word.

When a plague struck Wittenburg in 1527, Martin Luther made the comment that a spiritual struggle was taking place. Our faith too is being tested, tested to see if it’s up to the challenge of resisting the pressure of fear. We must recognise that while we are in this world there will be a constant struggle between the Old Adam and the New Man. Let us always think of our baptism and remember that we are in a struggle in which we must daily drown the Old Adam with all sin and evil lust and bring forth the New Man, who shall live before God in righteousness and holiness.

In the days ahead Satan will continue to test us. Let us consider these two tactics to assist us in overcoming him:

First, be honest. Ask yourself, “When am I tempted most?” Usually we are most vulnerable when we are under stress: when we are hurt, angry, worried, alone, bored, tired or after a big success or spiritual high. Learn to identify your patterns: “The highway of the upright,” their entire conduct, “is to depart from evil,” they avoid it by following the highway of strict piety; “he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul,” for it is by a careful following of God’s will and Word that a person keeps his soul from spiritual and eternal death. (Proverbs 16:17). Or put another way, “God’s people...protect themselves by watching where they go.”

Secondly, persistently look for God’s help. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15). Don’t be discouraged; God won’t give up on you. His Word says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” Hebrews 4:16.

If you have to cry out for God’s help every hour of the day, He will be there for you! Just as the roots of a tree deepen when storms come, each time you stand up to a temptation you become stronger.

Further Study: Hosea 1-5, Matthew 27:1–10, Psalm 32, Proverbs 9:10–16.

A Short Exposition of 1 Peter

(Continued from January – March 2020 edition)

Five reasons why true Christians are to bless and thank God the Father

1 Peter 1:3: **“Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”**

The first reason (from the last edition) was that True Christians have been made God’s spiritual children by regeneration.

The words “a lively hope” now gives us the second reason: True Christians through faith in Christ have a sure and certain hope of eternal life in heaven.

Lively hope:

The Greek means “a joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation,” Thayer, p 205. This Greek word for “hope” occurs in the New Testament in two senses, meaning either:

1. the act of hoping or
2. that thing which is hoped for.

Here it refers to that which is hoped for. In 1 Timothy 1:1, we learn that **“Jesus Christ... is our Hope.”**

What is this glorious hope that Christ gives? In Galatians 5:5 the Lord answers this question: **“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”** By faith in Christ and in His Work of Redemption the true Christian possesses the Righteousness of Christ, namely the forgiveness of sins, life and eternal salvation through faith. Those who possess the righteousness of Christ have a sure and certain hope, the forgiveness of sins, life and eternal salvation. All those who remain in true faith by the power of the Holy Spirit have this sure and certain hope, an intense yearning and eager waiting, for the joy and happiness of heaven. Hence in Romans 5:1–2 the Lord tells us the following: **“Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by Whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”**

Those who through unbelief despise His Word and reject Christ have “no hope” (Ephesians 2:12) and “**the expectation of the wicked shall perish**” Proverbs 10:28. Through the power of Christ’s grace, never reject the sure and certain hope offered to you in the Gospel of Christ.

Faith in Christ produces **hope** which is a fruit of faith. Concerning this hope Dr Luther writes:

“Faith and hope are so closely bound together that one cannot exist without the other. But there is a difference:

<u>Faith</u>	<u>Hope</u>
1. Is a new knowledge that enlightens the intellect.	1. Is the spirited courage of a new will.
2. Enlightens us with the right knowledge of God.	2. Motivates us to good cheer in all our troubles.
3. Is directed toward the Word and clings to what God has promised.	3. Looks with longing towards the fulfilment of the promise.
4. Comes first as the beginning of life.	4. Is born later when trials and afflictions come.
5. Is a teacher and a judge of the truth as it is in Christ.	5. Is a captain holding out against sorrow, impatience, despair, suffering and discouragement.

“Through faith in the Word of God we learn to know and apprehend Christ. As soon as we have become righteous by faith in Christ, the devil moves in on us to seek to destroy our faith. It is now that hope takes over by holding on to the treasures that faith has found and claimed until such a time when these assaults shall subside and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost return. It is hope that upholds us in trouble. Hope without faith is spiritual arrogance, since such a hope would not have for its foundation the Truth as it is in Christ.

“A Christian heart should be well instructed in the matters of faith so that hope may overcome in the evil day by the lessons it has learnt from faith. In this manner faith and hope serve each other in the heart.” *Luther’s Commentary on Galatians*, condensed and translated by Peter C Krey, C.N. 11 June 1973, p2.

The Christian’s hope is a **lively** or **living** hope. The worldlings say: “As long as there is life, there is hope.” But the true Christian firmly and joyfully says: “Even in death, I hope for the joys of heaven.” Because of faith which produces it, hope lives. It fills the soul of the person undergoing severe tribulation with such inward joy and happiness that it can “laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath;” that is why it is called the “rejoicing of hope” Hebrews 3:6. The hope of a Christian is the anchor of his soul—Hebrews 6:19; his helmet in the battles of life—Ephesians 6:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8. Dr Luther writes, “To those who believe and enjoy the divine promise, this life is merely a pilgrimage during which they are preserved by hope for that future and better life” *What Luther Says*, II, p670, No 2048.

Do you have this hope which is produced by faith? Can you in true faith sing with the hymn-writer:

My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
 On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,
 All other ground is sinking sand.

If you do, then how blessed you are! If you do, then show your thanks to your heavenly Father by clinging ever more firmly to Christ’s Word.

Martin Luther and his incredible response to the Black Plague

Any number of reactions happen when one hears the name of Martin Luther mentioned. For some, they picture Martin Luther approaching the Wittenberg Castle Church door with heroic boldness in order to nail his 95 Theses to the door and spark the Protestant Reformation. For others, they think of his stand at the Diet of Worms before Charles V, where he said when asked to recant, “I cannot and will not recant of anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen.”

One of the things most people’s minds don’t immediately think of, partly because it isn’t discussed all that much, is when the plague came to Wittenberg. The Bubonic Plague was a particularly nasty disease, spread primarily through the bites of fleas carried by small rodents—though it was also airborne, and could be spread by handling the infected. When people think of the plague, they typically think of the Black Death of 1347 simply because of the staggering death toll—yet the plague itself has popped up at numerous points in history, with at least three major epidemics. The plague was particularly violent; in just one day the infected could show signs of fever, delirium, speech disorders, and loss of consciousness. Shortly thereafter, they would break out in large boils, which infected the bloodstream and rapidly lead to their demise (often as a result of sepsis). To give an idea: a healthy individual could contract the plague and die within as little as three to ten days. The likelihood of survival was incredibly low, depending on various conditions—but suffice it to say, even at the best odds (70 per cent) it was nothing to be trifled with.

In August of 1527, the plague struck Wittenberg and numerous people fled in fear of their lives. Martin Luther and his wife Katie, who was pregnant at the time, remained in their beloved city in order to treat the infected. Despite the calls for him to flee Wittenberg with his family, Luther’s mind was set on helping the infected. He inevitably came to the conclusion that it was not inherently wrong for one to so value their life that they did not remain, but only so long as the sick had someone of greater faith than they to care for them. He balanced this position with the conviction that this one of greater faith ought not condemn the one of weaker faith who fled.

“Yes, no one should dare leave his neighbour unless there are others who will take care of the sick in their stead and nurse them. In such cases we must respect the word of Christ, ‘I was sick and you did not visit me...’ Matthew 25:41–46. According to this passage we are bound to each other in such a way that no one may forsake the other in his distress but is obliged to assist and help him as he himself would like to be helped.”

In other words, Martin Luther maintained that there was an obligation to help those who contracted the plague, but so long as they were helped, it was a matter of conscience if one remained to aide in this great task. He argued that it would be better for hospitals with trained staff to care for the sick, wherein each Christian should offer generous contributions—yet if one were not to be found, “...we must give hospital care and be nurses for one another in any extremity or risk the loss of salvation and the grace of God. Thus it is written in God’s word and command, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself,’ and in Matthew 7, ‘So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.’” So strong were his convictions on the matter that he said anyone who was overcome by horror and repugnance in the presence of the infected ought to recognize the intrinsic, spiritual warfare taking place—that Satan himself was filling their minds to drive them to anxiety, fear, and worst of all, “...to forget and lose Christ, our light and life...”

What is unique to Martin Luther is that all of these words were backed by his willingness to actually follow his own advice. Not only did he and Katie open their own home as a ward to the infected, but he recognized the opportunity to preach Christ to those literally days away from death.

Though the plague only lasted in Wittenberg until November of 1527, the events had a lasting impact upon his life. Death was not merely in the presence of Martin and Katie, but an intimate acquaintance they knew all too well. They would treat the infected day in and day out, not knowing if they would also contract the plague and succumb to death. They witnessed friends, neighbours and family

members die of the plague. Each of them abided in faith to service of those who had nowhere else to turn—and yet for both Martin and Katie, their life was one that knew constant opposition and hardship. Less than five years prior to the plague breaking out in Wittenberg, Martin Luther had been officially excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church and still faced a barrage of attacks, including the constant threat of death.

In the same year the plague broke out, Rome was under the siege of the mutinous troops of Charles V, which held massive repercussions for Germans. Luther's daughter Elisabeth, who just barely escaped the plague, was born in December of 1527, only to die eight months later. Christians holding to Lutheran doctrine were being summarily martyred or sent into exile with no provisions. They truly knew what it meant to not know if they would be alive when they woke, let alone make it through the evening as they slept. They certainly understood, with full force, what it meant to ask the Lord to give them their daily bread—and Luther, being the one whom they rallied behind, saw all of this unfold as a result of his teaching.

The constant companion of uncertainty, death, persecution, and pain multiplied the sorrows of German protestants, yet history records that it was sometime between the years of 1527–1529 that the reformer penned the great hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*. The hymn by Luther became an anthem to German protestants—and it is no wonder why when we see the sheer amount of political, social, natural, and spiritual instability surrounding them on every front.

—Grayson Gilbert, 5 March 2020

https://www.patheos.com/blogs/chorusinthecaos/martin-luther-and-the-black-plague/?utm_medium

The Duties and Obligations of Office Bearers

(Continued from January – March 2020 edition)

Meeting Procedure —Part III

Summary of Procedures for Normal Agenda

[Note: If the Chairman does not know this procedure off by heart, it would be a good thing for him to have a copy written in a diary, a notebook, or on a card for use at the meeting]

1. Meeting declared open by the Chairman
2. Visitors welcomed
3. Secretary calls roll
4. Apologies
5. Minutes of the previous meeting read by Secretary
 - a) Any additions or corrections
 - b) Minutes confirmed as read
6. Business arising from the Minutes
7. Correspondence (read by the Secretary)
 - a) Inwards—received
 - b) Outwards—endorsed
8. Reports:
 - a) Treasurer's Report—normally received; if audited—received and adopted
 - b) Any other reports
9. General Business
10. Elections (at Annual Meeting)
11. Date of next meeting
12. Vote of thanks (if applicable)
13. Meeting Closed by Chairman

F. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Secretary is asked by the Chairman to read the minutes of the previous meeting. As these minutes are read, the Chairman should take note of the various things which will come up in Business Arising out of the Minutes.

After the minutes are read, the Chairman asks if there are any additions or corrections. Minutes are read from the previous meeting only to ensure their accuracy. Should any member wish to make a correction or addition he may state his reasons. If the general opinion of the meeting agrees, the Secretary should cross out the incorrect word and the alterations agreed to be written in. Note: The Secretary should not erase the words that need to be changed.

Once all needed additions and corrections have been made, the minutes are either confirmed as read (if no changes), or confirmed as amended.

At the end of the meeting the Chairman and Secretary should sign the minutes, verifying that it is a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

G. The minutes

The Minutes are a brief record of the business conducted at the meeting. Since they constitute an official report of the proceedings, they must be clear and accurate. They should also record the time, place, and date of the meeting. All motions should be recorded in full whether they are passed or defeated. If a motion does not have a seconder and lapses, it should be still recorded in full.

Other points that should be recorded are the number of members present, apologies for absence and any reports given.

H. Correspondence

Inward: Inward correspondence is read by the Secretary, and received by motion and vote of the meeting. Any necessary action can then be taken and the Secretary instructed how to reply if a reply is called for.

Outward: Outward correspondence, written by the Secretary under instruction from a previous meeting, should be read to, and endorsed, by the present meeting.

I. Reports:

All reports should be formally received before any further action is taken. At the Annual Meeting an audited Treasurer's Report is first received on one motion and then, after being left open for discussion by the meeting, adopted on a following motion which may be moved by the Treasurer.

J. General Business:

This is the opportunity for those who desire the Luther League to take action on a subject to bring forth their ideas.

Formal parliamentary procedure states that no discussion is allowed unless a motion is moved and seconded. This is a good procedure to follow but often the Luther League will find that since meetings are somewhat informal, it will sometimes take some discussion amongst members until a proposed course of action is suggested. Therefore it is not essential to cling wholly to the formal procedure.

1. A motion is a definite statement proposing some action for the League to take. The mover of the motion states: "I move that such and such occur." Once a motion has been moved and seconded, it is then thrown open to the gathering for discussion. The Chairman should allow everyone the opportunity to put their case, but on the other hand must not allow discussion to drag on too long. Especially if the Chairman sees the speaker repeating something that has already been said, speaking for too long, or speaking away from the point at issue, he should request the speaker to keep to the point, limit his speech or refrain from repetition as the case may be.

2. An amendment may be moved to any ordinary motion once it is open for discussion, but it must not be a direct negative of the motion moved. For example, if the motion is that the Luther League have meat pies for dinner, it would be pointless having an amendment that the Luther League doesn't have meat pies for dinner.

The simplest way to negate a motion is to speak and vote against it. The object of an amendment is to modify a motion to make it more acceptable.

The Chairman puts the amendment to the meeting, and if it is carried it then becomes the motion, and is immediately put to the vote again. If the amendment is defeated, the original motion is voted on.

An amendment lapses if it fails to gain a seconder.

K. Elections

The procedures for elections are usually set out in the constitution. If someone is nominated to a position, this is sometimes seconded, depending on past practice of the group. If only one is nominated to the position, he is duly declared elected by the Chairman.

If several are nominated to the position, one is chosen usually by secret ballot. Two scrutineers should be appointed to count the votes and inform the Chairman of the result. The Chairman then announces the result to the meeting.

During the election for Chairman, the Vice Chairman takes the chair. After the election, the new Chairman takes the chair immediately, and conducts the remaining business of the meeting.

Next time we will examine the duties and obligations of the Secretary.

(To be continued).

—This section has been drawn up based on the booklet, “*Guide to Meeting Procedure*”
by

Australia Day Long Weekend Luther League Camp report 25-27 January 2020

We met at Nanango Aquatic Centre early Saturday afternoon and

After this we met at Kingaroy church for a Bible Study by Pastor Gavin Winter the topic being *Climate Change – What Does the Bible Say?* This is outlined with the following:

1. What is meant by climate change? There always has been and will be a change in climate, the believers in the recently invented terms “climate change” and “global warming” say that this is causing catastrophes and we must prevent this and subsequent extinction by undertaking climate action, attitude toward climate is affected by what is believed and it is important for Christians to refer to what the Bible says about this matter.
 2. The Bible on climate change. Man understands little of how the world and climate functions— God alone knows this fully. God who created the work and the climate also controls and preserves it, man has been given stewardship of God’s creation, including the climate, and is to glorify God and seek the welfare of his neighbour, into the future.
 3. False ideas of the climate change movement: 1) “The world will be destroyed by climate change if nothing is done.” In Gen 8:22 the Bible teaches that weather cycles and habitability will continue up to the Last Day. 2) “That man is mightier than God.” God is mightier than man according to the Bible. 3) “Climate change will make for a bleak future.” Christians have a glorious future ahead, that climate change is to be believed without factual proof.
 4. Things Christians should do to counteract the climate change movement. Beware of outright lies, protect your children, including from false teaching at schools, don’t be concerned if unsure in
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earthly matters despite differing of opinions amongst Christians, Christians won't agree with non-Christians, because of the differing worldview. Beware of deception as we are living in the last days, in our daily lives we should be living in repentance, having daily Bible reading and prayer, focusing on the spiritual rather than the earthly and becoming paranoid about the earthly things, In so doing (or not doing) we will not have to worry about our earthly future because God cares for us.

After the Luther League meeting and hymn singing, we then returned to the hosts for the evening. On Sunday morning, there was a Preaching Service with Holy Communion. The confessional address by Pastor Tim was on the Parable of the Good Samaritan, using Luke 10:33–35. The address included how Jesus used this parable in response to the question “who is my neighbour?” how such good works must be flowing from faith in Christ to be pleasing to God, who sees all things, how we should examine ourselves, and how we like Jesus should make a good use of our time on this earth (John 9:4).

The sermon, which was connected to the confessional address, was on the text John 9:4, continuing this theme, referring to the blind man who's sight was restored by Christ and who was persecuted for his confession of faith and how the blind man's misfortune was worked out for good and to the Glory of God, this having application to our misfortunes as well. The sermon included Jesus' reference to night and day in John 9:4, how this symbolised His Work on this earth, being completed by His Death on the Cross. The address also included how we should follow Jesus' example and how we should apply this to ourselves as children, young adults and parents, in marriage, in companionships and in the twilight of life.

After a community lunch, the Bible Study was on the beatitude: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” Matthew 5:7. Like the confessional address earlier in the day, the Bible Study also made reference to the parable of the Good Samaritan and outlined: 1) how mercy is produced in the heart by faith (like in the heart of the Good Samaritan), 2) it didn't matter if no other people were looking as God is present everywhere and desired this, 3) how this involved self-sacrifice, 4) how faith (though put into the heart by God) has to be exercised. Case studies were provided including the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:24–27, who was not like his master as he did not show like compassion on the man owing him money and was severely punished.

Later in the afternoon, there were activities at the Kumbia tennis courts

On Monday morning, we met at River Road Park in Kingaroy for activities.

After a brief devotion and singing of hymn 543, we departed. Thanks go to those who organised and helped to organise this weekend.

