

## Advent I

2 December 2007

*Concordia Lutheran Mission*

Terrebonne, Oregon

# “The Liturgy is the Cords and Bands of God’s Love that Attach us to God Forever.”

“Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”

Psalm 2:3

## Introduction

What are these bands and cords of God that the nations desire to break asunder and cast away? These bands and cords are God’s love for men.

To understand this we must first know what it is that connects us to God. God connects with us by the liturgy. The liturgy is God’s loving embrace and the arms with which He holds us.<sup>1</sup>

God embraces us in the liturgy because the liturgy is God’s Word and Sacraments, the Ministry of the Gospel<sup>2</sup>, through which God brings His Reconciliation and gives His Reconciliation in Christ-Crucified to men thereby restores His relationship with men.

---

<sup>1</sup>Hence, God in Isaiah 11:10, 11 calls the liturgy His extending *His Hand* a second time. “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people ....” **Isaiah 11:10, 11.**

Jesus, therefore, also says of the liturgy, which is His Voice, that the liturgy is the Hand of God: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand.” **St. John 10:27-29.**

<sup>2</sup>“But let us speak of the word *liturgy*. This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, I Cor. 4, 1: *Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries*

Through the liturgy God comes and connects with us through absolution and faith, the Ministry of Reconciliation, and sets up His abode with us.<sup>3</sup> God, therefore, connects with us and embraces us with the bands and cords of the liturgy, i.e. the Gospel, namely the Word and the Sacraments and faith, which is His love<sup>4</sup>.

But why would the nations desire to cast off these bands and cords of God's love? The nations desire to cast off these cords and bands because they are God's love of the Cross. The Cross reveals their sin and its gravity.<sup>5</sup> This revelation the world cannot abide because the world

---

*of God, i.e., of the Gospel and the Sacraments. And 2 Cor. 5, 20: We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God. Thus the term [liturgy] agrees aptly with the ministry." The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV. (XII.).80, 81*

<sup>3</sup>"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." **St. John 14:23**. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." **St. Matthew 18:20**. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." **Galatians 3:26, 27**

<sup>4</sup>"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **St. John 3:16**. Herein the Lord establishes the Office of the Gospel to comfort and embrace men with His love in Christ. Luther: "All this can be summarized as follows. When you become sad or feel divine wrath, do not look for any other medicine or accept any other solace than the Word, whether it is spoken by a brother who is present or comes from the spirit remembering a word you had heard earlier—like the passages: 'I do not want the death of the sinner, but that he turn from his way and live' (Ezek. 33:11); 'Life is in His will' (Ps. 30:5); 'God is God of the living' (Matt. 22:32); 'God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16). These and similar passages bring the hearing of gladness, whether they come from the mouth of another or from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This, too, is hidden truth and wisdom, which inexperienced men cannot grasp. Therefore the pope's teachers bring vastly different ways by which they want to heal troubled minds." *Luther's Works*, Vol. 12, p. 369

<sup>5</sup>St. Peter says, "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." **Acts 3:14, 15**. "*Yea, what more forcible, more terrible declaration and preaching of God's wrath against sin is there than just the suffering and death of Christ, His Son? But as long as this preaches God's wrath and terrifies men, it is not yet the preaching of the Gospel nor Christ's own preaching, but that of Moses and the Law against the impenitent. For the Gospel and Christ were never ordained and*

seeks to justify itself before God by its own righteousness. The world, therefore, detests God's embrace and seeks to disentangle itself from God's cords and bands of love in Christ-Crucified through the liturgy.

But the Cross of Christ and the Gospel were never ordained by God to enrage men or strike fear into their hearts<sup>6</sup>, but to comfort them with the forgiveness of sins, saving faith, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting in God's loving arms.

## **I. Because Cords and Bands of God is the Liturgy, which Liturgy Reveals the Cross of Christ, the Nations Desire to Cast off and Break Asunder God's Bands and Cords of His Love in Christ-Crucified.**

### **A. Psalm 2 is a Messianic Psalm, i.e. it is Psalm about the Person and Work of the Messiah to save men from their sin.**

During this year's Advent Vespers Services, we will meditate on Psalm 2. A psalm is a hymn written by God Himself.<sup>7</sup> A hymn is praise of God set to music.<sup>8</sup> Among the various kinds of Psalms<sup>9</sup> the most important are the Messianic Psalms. Messianic Psalms speak of the Person and Work of Christ for sinners.<sup>10</sup> Psalm 2 is a *Messianic Psalm*.

---

*given for the purpose of terrifying and condemning, but of comforting and cheering those who are terrified and timid." The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Article V.12, 13, Triglotta, pp. 955, 957*

<sup>6</sup>*"But as long as this preaches God's wrath and terrifies men, it is not yet the preaching of the Gospel nor Christ's own preaching, but that of Moses and the Law against the impenitent. For the Gospel and Christ were never ordained and given for the purpose of terrifying and condemning, but of comforting and cheering those who are terrified and timid." The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Article V.12, 13, Triglotta, pp. 957*

<sup>7</sup>"The Book of Psalms, or Psalter, is the great prayer-book of the Church of all times, the collection of divinely inspired odes or songs whose singing was of old accompanied by instruments of music. Under the guidance of God the Psalms as we now know them were various times collected, five section, or books,...." P.E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible: The Old Testament: The Poetical and the Prophetical Books, Vol. II*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, p. 59

<sup>8</sup>"A hymn is an "...ode, in praise of gods or heroes..." *A Greek-English Lexicon, With Supplement 1968*, Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie eds., Ninth Edition (1940), rpr. 1982, Oxford; Clarendon Press, p. 1849. Christian hymnody therefore has at its focus the Person and Work of its Hero (Hebrews 12:2) and God.

<sup>9</sup>Of the general contents of the psalter, Luther writes: "It should be noted that the entire Psalter deals with five subjects; therefore we divide it into five parts. In the first place, some psalms prophesy of Christ and of the Church, or the saints, what would happen to them, etc.; and to this

Jesus is identified in Psalm 2 as the Messiah. David writes:

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his *anointed*, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.<sup>11</sup>

Following Scripture, Jesus identifies Himself as the Messiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath *anointed* Me to preach the Gospel to the poor ....<sup>12</sup>

Here Jesus cites this passage from Isaiah that speaks of Him as the Messiah. Isaiah writes:

THE Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon me; because the LORD hath *anointed* me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the

---

class belong all the psalms in which there are promises given to the pious and threats to the ungodly. In the second place, there is a number of doctrinal psalms, which teach us what we should do and what omit according to the Law of God; and to this class belong all the psalms which condemn the doctrine of men and extol the Word of God. In the third place, there are several psalms of consolation, which comfort the sorrowing and suffering saints, and, on the other hand, condemn and terrify the tyrants....In the fourth place, there are a few psalms of prayer, in which we pray to God and cry in all distress; and to this class belong all psalms which laments and mourn and cry over the enemies. In the fifth place, we have psalms of thanksgiving, in which we laud and praise God for His various benefits and His assistance; and to this class belong all psalms which praise God in His works, these being the finest and principle psalms....But we must know that the psalms cannot be just exactly and even divided into such part and verses, for sometimes two, three, and even all five divisions, as noted above, are found in one psalm, so that prophecy, doctrine, consolation, prayer, and thanksgiving are found together. But this division serves for the better understanding of the psalms and that we may the more easily learn and remember them." Kretzmann, pp. 59-60.

<sup>1</sup>"Of special interest to us are the Messianic psalms, including Ps. 2, 8, 16, 22, 24, 40, 45, 47, 68, 72, 89, 93, 97, 110, 118; they refer to the Messiah, the promised Redeemer of the world, portraying more or less vividly and completely His person and work His birth, betrayal, agony, and death, His triumph over death, His ascension into heaven and enthronement at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." *ibid.* p. 59.

**11Psalm 2:1, 2.**

**12St. Luke 4:18a**, emphasis added.

broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound* ....<sup>13</sup>

Messiah means "anointed" and comes from the Hebrew word *meshiach*. God anointed Jesus to carry out the Office of the Gospel, namely the salvation of sinners. For this Blessed Office Christ possessed the Holy Spirit. In the *Catechism* we read:

He is called Christ, or the Messiah (as foretold in Old Testament prophecy), that is, the Anointed, because He has been *anointed with the Holy Ghost* without measure to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.<sup>14</sup>

Christ possesses the Holy Spirit without measure (in unlimited supply<sup>15</sup>) because Christ is God. Only God is big enough to possess God's Spirit because God's Spirit is God and, therefore, infinite and eternal. St. Paul therefore writes of Christ:

---

13**Isaiah 61:1**, emphasis added.

<sup>14</sup>*A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, Edited by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States with Additional Notes For Students, Teachers, and Pastors by Edward W.A. Koehler D.D., Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Ill., Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1981, pp. 135-136.*

"'God, Thy God, hath *anointed Thee* with the Oil of Gladness above Thy fellows.' Ps. 45:7. ... "'God *anointed Jesus of Nazareth* with the *Holy Ghost* and with power.' Acts 10:38. ... 'God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him [Christ]. John 3:34'" *ibid.* p. 136.

Dr. Koehler writes further about what Anointed (Messiah) means: "Christ" is the official name of the Savior. Christ (Greek), Messiah (Hebrew), Gesalbter (German), Anointed (English). To be anointed signified that one had received an office and for this office the gift of the Holy Ghost (I Sam. 16:13). That [Ps. 45:7] refers to Jesus we see from Heb. 1:8,9. The "oil of gladness" is, as we see from [Acts 10:38], the Holy Ghost. Jesus did not become the Christ first at His Baptism, but was the Savior from His conception and birth (Luke 1:35; 2:11). "Thy fellows" are those holding the same office, as the priests, prophets, and kings of the Old Testament, who were also anointed. "Above Thy fellows" shows that Jesus received a greater, yea, the full measure of the Holy Ghost [John 3:34], and hence He is the Prophet, the Priest, the King above all others. (*ibid.* p. 136, amplification added)

15**St. John 3:34**

For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.<sup>16</sup>

This Blessed Fullness means that God's Full Divine Power comes to the aid of sinful men. Christ deployed this Fullness of Divine Power to fulfill the Law for us.<sup>17</sup> Christ as our Substitute<sup>18</sup> loved God and our neighbor *for\_us*<sup>19</sup>. Christ's Anointing, therefore, reveals how fully and completely we have loved God. This Work we call Christ's *active obedience* for us.<sup>20</sup> Thus the Messiah comforts our consciences<sup>21</sup> made anxious by our sins and failure to love God and neighbor.

---

**16Colossians 2:9.**

**17Galatians 4:4-5.**

<sup>1</sup> This Work is frequently called the Vicarious Atonement. In the catechism we read: "As my *Substitute* Christ has *atoned*, or made satisfaction, for my sins by *paying the penalty* of my guilt. (Vicarious Atonement)... [II Corinthians 5:21, Isaiah 53:4,5] ... In both His active and passive obedience Christ acted as our Substitute, in our place He did and suffered what we should have done and suffered. This is called Vicarious Atonement. To 'atone' means to make amends for shortcomings and transgressions, which separated us from God, so that man and God are again "at one", that nothing stands between them. 'Vicarious' means that not we ourselves, but a vicar, a substitute, even Christ, made this atonement, and what our Substitute has done for us is credited or imputed to us. Our sins were charged to Christ, and His righteousness is imputed to us [II Corinthians 5:21]; because He was wounded for our transgressions, we are now healed with His stripes [Isaiah 53:4,5]" *ibid.* p. 161.

**19St. Matthew 22:37-40.**

<sup>1</sup> "...Christ *fulfilled the Law* in my stead perfectly (active obedience)...." *ibid.* p. 108.

21St. Peter, therefore, writes of Holy Baptism that it gives a clear conscience toward God: "... baptism do also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ...." **I Peter 3:21.**

St. John writes of Christ:

No man hath seen God at any time; the Only-Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.<sup>22</sup>

One cannot get any closer to God than the Bosom of the Father. This again shows us how well we have loved God in Christ, since Christ was in the Bosom of the Father *in the flesh loving God for us* as our Substitute.

Jesus was also crucified, dead, and buried.<sup>23</sup> The image of the dead Messiah in the Bosom of the Father reminds us that Christ is also our Substitute in death in the Bosom of the Father. Christ suffered God's wrath and everlasting punishment *for us*. This Work for us is called Christ's *passive obedience*.<sup>24</sup> The prophet Daniel writes of the Messiah's suffering death (His passive obedience) for our sins:

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, *but not for Himself...*<sup>25</sup>

The Messiah is cut-off, killed, but, Daniel points out, *not for Himself*. If the Messiah was not cut-off for Himself, than for whom was He cut-off? The Messiah was cut-off for the *people*<sup>26</sup>, for us who are sinners.

---

**22St. John 1:18.**

<sup>1</sup>"...Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried...." **The Apostles' Creed**, "The Order of Morning Service without Holy Communion", *The Lutheran Hymnal*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941, p. 6.

<sup>1</sup>"...sacrificed Himself for me (passive obedience)...." *ibid.* p. 108.

**25Daniel 9:26a**, emphasis added.

**26Daniel 9:26.**

Christ's Substitutionary fulfilling of the Law makes plain why Christ preaches the Gospel, that is to say the Good News. Now sinners formerly alienated from God are now acceptable to God and reunited and connected to Him forever. Jesus says:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,...<sup>27</sup>

**B. God's cords and bands are His loving arms and embrace of the Liturgy.**

Jesus says distinctly that the Spirit is upon Him to *preach good tidings* unto the people. Clearly, the blessings of His work comes through the Word. Thus God's warm embrace of men comes through the Word of God.

And we find that the Word of God is the Liturgy of the Church. The Lutheran Church states regarding the liturgy:

But let us speak of the word *liturgy*. This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, I Cor. 4, 1: *Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, i.e. of the Gospel and the Sacraments.* And 2 Cor. 5, 20: *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God.* Thus the term [liturgy] agrees aptly with the ministry.<sup>28</sup>

Again, our Lutheran Church states:

For when we are baptized, when we eat the Lord's body, when we are

---

<sup>27</sup>Isaiah 61:1-2a.

<sup>28</sup>The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV. (XII).39, Triglotta, p. 411.



absolved, our hearts must be firmly assured that God truly forgives us for Christ's sake. And God, at the same time, by the Word and by the rite, moves hearts to believe and conceive faith, just as Paul says, Rom. 10, 17: *Faith cometh by hearing*. But just as the Word enters the ear in order to strike our heart, so the rite itself strikes the eye, in order to move the heart. The effect of the Word and of the rite is the same, as it has been well said by Augustine that a Sacrament is a *visible word*, because the rite is received by the eyes, and is, as it were, a picture of the Word, signifying the same thing as the Word. Therefore the effect of both is the same.<sup>29</sup>

The Lord, therefore, speaks of the liturgy as His embrace. In Isaiah we read:

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the Lord shall *set his hand* again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.<sup>30</sup>

Jesus says:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.<sup>31</sup>

Jesus says His she hear his "voice", that is to say the preaching of the Word. And this Voice places us in His and His Father's Hand or embrace. Likewise in Isaiah the Lord extends His Hand a second time through the ensign, i.e. the Word which exhibits His love for us in Christ, and thereby embraces us.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup>*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIII. (VIII).4, 5, Triglotta, p. 309.*

<sup>30</sup>**Isaiah 11:10-11**, emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup>**St. John 10:27-29.**

<sup>32</sup>*"Of the use of the Sacraments* they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward

God's cords and bands of love, therefore, is the Liturgy through which He embraces us in the love of Christ and Him Crucified.

**C. Men desire to cast off God's cords and band of love because they reveal their righteousness is no righteousness at all but an offense.**

But why would anyone want to cast away these gracious cords and bands of God's loving embrace? Men hate God's loving embrace in the Liturgy because it also reveals to them the gravity of their sin. For the Liturgy reveals Christ Crucified. And Christ-Crucified means God died for our sins. What greater testimony against the gaping deficiencies of our righteousness and also gravity of our sin is there than just the death of God's Son for us? The Lutheran Church states:

*Yea, what more forcible, more terrible declaration and preaching of God's wrath against sin is there than just the suffering and death of Christ, His Son? But as long as this preaches God's wrath and terrifies men, it is not yet the preaching of the Gospel nor Christ's own preaching, but that of Moses and the Law against the impenitent. For the Gospel and Christ were never ordained and given for the purpose of terrifying and condemning, but of comforting and cheering those who are terrified and timid.*<sup>33</sup>

The reason, then, the nations rage against the cords of God's love and the bands of His embrace is because the Liturgy reveals our salvation and also at the same time reveals the reason we need this salvation: our sin and unrighteousness. Luther writes:

Here the Holy Spirit explains the cause of the raging, what kind of counsels they take, and what the kings and rulers discuss among themselves, namely, how with all their powers and efforts they may break the chains of Christ and of the Father. For Satan does this not only to humble us, not only to slay us who teach and believe, but to exterminate and destroy the Word, the name of Christ, Baptism, and whatever our religion contains. As a result, since we teach Christ with the greatest confidence, he begins to rage, he lays hold of

---

us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them." *The Augsburg Confession, Article V.1, 2, Triglotta*, p. 49. "For these are [seals and] signs of [the covenant and grace in] the New Testament, *i.e.*, signs of [propitiation and] the remission of sins. They offer, therefore, the remission of sins, as the words of the Lord's clearly testify ...." *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII. (V.)42, Triglotta*, p. 261.

<sup>33</sup>*The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Article V.12, 13, Triglotta*, pp. 955, 957.

the wills of the princes, of kings, of the wise, the powerful, finally of the multitude. Here by common counsel all apply themselves to breaking these bonds, that is, to extinguishing the Word and protecting idolatry.<sup>1</sup>

## II. The Liturgy is God's Embracing Cords and Bands of Love.

### A. Christ is sent to save not to enrage.

But Christ was never sent to stir people into a rage, but rather to save. Our *Lutheran Confessions* state:

*Yea, what more forcible, more terrible declaration and preaching of God's wrath against sin is there than just the suffering and death of Christ, His Son? But as long as this preaches God's wrath and terrifies men, it is not yet the preaching of the Gospel nor Christ's own preaching, but that of Moses and the Law against the impenitent. For the Gospel and Christ were never ordained and given for the purpose of terrifying and condemning, but of comforting and cheering those who are terrified and timid.*<sup>34</sup>

Those who rage against Christ simply cannot get passed the scandal of their own sin. Because they see that their sins causes death, yes, even the death of God, in the Cross of Christ, then they cannot stand this love.

But if we move past the scandal of our own sin and see the purpose of Christ's dying, then there is no rage. Christ died for our sins so they we would not have to die for our sins. And Christ is fully able to accomplish this because He is the Almighty God in the flesh.<sup>35</sup> And He is fully willing to do so for no greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends.<sup>36</sup>

Clearly, this is love supernal. For those who seek to justify themselves by their own

---

<sup>34</sup>*The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Article V.12, 13, Triglotta, pp. 955, 957.*

<sup>35</sup>“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The mighty God*, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” **Isaiah 9:6**, emphasis added.

<sup>36</sup>“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” **St. John 15:13.**

words, thoughts, and deeds, it is a scandal. But for those who are terrified by their sins and their consequences, it is pure comfort and the warm embrace of God.

**B. The Liturgy is the cords and bands of God's love because they give to us His love in Christ-Crucified.**

And God's embrace in Christ is the Liturgy of the Church. Again, our *Lutheran Confessions* state:

But let us speak of the word *liturgy*. This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, I Cor. 4, 1: *Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, i.e. of the Gospel and the Sacraments.* And 2 Cor. 5, 20: *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God.* Thus the term [liturgy] agrees aptly with the ministry.<sup>37</sup>

The Liturgy of the Church is nothing but Christ's Public Ministry, the Word and the Sacraments. Not surprisingly, then, we find God's warm embrace of us in the Liturgy of The Church. Listen, for example, of how warmly St. Paul describes the blessings of God's Baptism and His loving attachment to us therein:

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.<sup>38</sup>

**Conclusion.**

What then are the cords and bands of God? They are the Liturgy of the Church. For in the Liturgy of the Church God Himself comes to us and embraces us with His love in

---

<sup>37</sup>*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV. (XII).*<sup>39</sup>, Triglotta, p. 411.

<sup>38</sup>**Titus 3:4-7.**

Christ and Him Crucified for sinners.

Why then do the nations rage against this and desire to cast off these cords and bands? The nations desire to cast off the Liturgy because it reveals Christ-Crucified. While Christ-Crucified is God's love par excellence, it also reveals that gravity of man's sin. This the world cannot stand because the Cross of Christ explodes their own righteousness and works by which they construct their idols in their own images.

But the Cross of Christ was never ordained to enrage people, but to comfort them with the blessings of the remission of sins in the Liturgy, and thereby the life everlasting and the resurrection of the body.

**Amen.**

---