

Why are the Lutheran Churches Today walking by Sight, and not by Faith?

It is because they refuse to believe the evidence.

“Show me!” This is the unofficial motto of the state of Missouri. This pithy challenge means that “I will not believe it until I would see it.” That is to say, “I will only admit a fact or an event to be true if I would have witnessed it myself first hand. I will accept no fact or event, believe no promise, or trust no valid testimony, unless I would have witnessed it in person.”

This is an awful admission. Think about it!

Yet this is, unintentionally, a sobering, unavoidable reminder of what the doubtful mind fights for and demands: “I hate the promises of others. I do not trust them. I would have to feel something with mine own sensory perception before I eve will believe it.”

Just the same, our affiliations and commerce are not based on sensory perception, but are dependent upon trust as displayed in agreements and contracts, explicit or implied; from a handshake to a notarized document.

Moreover, this is also the way in which God will deal with sinful men. He will give them a promise to trust so that they will have salvation. This is the only way that they could have salvation. This is God’s way: salvation by promise.

To be sure, the Lord’s mental decision has already been made to declare the whole world to be righteous and able to enter heaven because of the ransom payment in blood by his Son on the cross. This decision could not

be witnessed by men; nor did God consider it necessary. The Lord put his salvation into the form of a promise with the intent that men could thereby obtain salvation from him through that source; that is, so that sinful men could possess salvation simply by the act of faith, in which act God would so power them and so move them wholeheartedly to believe his promise. Thus God’s salvation is by promise, not by sight.

In light of this, the apostle would check the demands and the desires of the sinful flesh of his readers by asserting that we “walk” not by the unofficial state motto of Missouri, but by “faith” (2nd Corinthians 5:7). As a result, the serious practical importance of this is immense.

For example, before his meeting at Worms in 1521, Martin Luther’s detractors had argued with him: “All of these people all of these centuries have been wrong, and you alone are right?” Yet Luther stood by what he had confessed. Soon others admitted that Luther was right; namely, that a huge “falling away” from the gospel had indeed occurred in the church as Scripture had prophesied (2nd Thessalonians 2:3), and that it had continued for centuries.

In light of this, how many Lutherans today would have the same sentiment, and would declare, “I, too, would stand alone”? “I would simply stand on the words of the Bible no matter how strong the peer pressure would be against me.”

Yet experience has taught otherwise. For instance, few Lutherans today will obey Romans 16:17 and leave their unfaithful congregations or synods to go to another which would be faithful to the Bible in doctrine and

practice. Most Lutherans will simply remain where they have their church membership, possessing patriotism for their synod (synoditis), pastor, or congregation, and rationalizing their decision to do so. This is simply another demonstration of the "Show me!" attitude.

Furthermore, how many Lutherans would have to confess: "Whatever my synod has told me to believe, that is what I will believe"? For instance, in regards to the question: "What do you believe about the biblical doctrines of the church and of the ministry?" two doctrines which commonly are not known by the average layman, how many Lutheran respondents would simply turn to that page in their synod's book of beliefs which treats of these doctrines, and reply, "This is what I believe" and would not research first what the Bible has to say, or what the Lutheran *Book of Concord of 1580* confesses? Nevertheless, we are to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2nd Corinthians 5:7).

There is still another example that demonstrates, given the contemporary facts, given the signs of the times, and given the opportunity, that American Lutherans with rare exceptions would rather walk by sight, and not by faith. What would be your own response to the following matter: faith, or sight? If it would be pointed out to you that the same punishment of total devastating war that came upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Nineveh, and Jerusalem, the latter city of whose citizens were scolded by the Almighty for not observing the signs of the times (Matthew 16:1-3), would come upon America, would you walk by faith, or by sight?

Would you look at the signs of the times, that is, would you notice the immoral words and acts of our people, and see that by what they say and do the vast majority of our country rejects repentance of their sins and belief in God's gospel of salvation? Would you come to the biblically demanded conclusion that because of this unspiritual condition in our country, God must punish it as he repeatedly and emphatically has threatened to do in his Bible? In the case of every other nation which had fallen away from the Christian faith after a gospel golden age, God kept his threat to punish it with a devastating war. Should America be so privileged that God would never punish it? Do you consider it possible that God's criteria could never apply to America? Would you believe, that is, would you walk by faith in the current signs of the times, something which the Almighty severely scolded the Sadducees and the Pharisees for not doing (Matthew 16:1-3), that God will certainly keep his threat and devastate this country with a war on its soil as a punishment for falling away into unbelief? What would be your answer?

If someone would suggest that he would need more proof, what would he accept as proof? Think about that!

What is needed for the minds of Lutherans today is not more proof, but more trust in the signs of the times which already are sufficient proof. The almighty Son scolded the Pharisees and the Sadducees for not rightly concluding from the signs of the times which they had in abundance before them (Matthew 16:1-3). Moreover, he did not excuse them for having unregenerate minds. All of the Old Testament prophets with the exception of

three were raised up by the Almighty to scold the kingdoms of Israel and Judah for the same thing. In spite of it, the established churches in both kingdoms refused to believe the evidence that God would ever punish them. Amos even was called a traitor (Amos 7:10). The established churches with their clergy and laity overwhelmingly walked by sight, not by faith.

So it is today. What established church is there in America today that has believed the evidence, much less has had the will to give unpleasant news to its hearers, to scold America at large through its church papers and pulpits, in its seminaries and schools, and to tell them that God will punish this country? As a result, when World War III would break out on American soil, God will start his punishment beginning with the Christian churches. "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1st Peter 4:17).

Thus do not wait for the churches to tell you what to do! They see no war coming. They walk by sight, not by faith. That is, willfully they refuse to see the current sign of the time. Indeed, the exceeding danger about this sort of sign, which is the same kind about which the Almighty has warned (Matthew 16:1-3), is that you must act now to double your efforts to repent, to believe, to pray for deliverance, and to prepare. If you would wait until you could see it ("Show me!"), it will be too late.

Act on your own! Resolve to make the intent to do so with God's help! Homeschool and homechurch! This is a time when your family's lives and eternal souls are in serious jeopardy. You have a duty to protect them.

Walk by faith, not by sight!