

1 **THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN 1520**

Session #8

Misunderstandings, Misuses and Abuses

Paragraphs #70-74

2 **UNIT 3: FACING OUR NEIGHBORS**

- 1  • Second part of Luther's treatise—what the freedom of a Christian implies for our daily life and our life in community.
 - By faith we are freed FROM something, but we are also freed FOR something.
 - Good works are not necessary for our salvation, but they are absolutely needed for the well-being of our neighbors.

3 **THE OUTER PERSON (PARAGRAPHS ##70-71)**

- 1  • "Here we will respond to all those people who are offended by the word of faith and what has been said about it. They say, 'If faith does all things and alone suffices for righteousness, why then are good works commanded? We will therefore be content with faith, take our ease and do no works.' I respond, 'Not so, you wicked people, not so!'"
- 2  • "...the inner person is in the spirit fully and completely justified through faith."
 - "For now, however, this person remains in this mortal life on earth. In this life a person's own body must be ruled and be in relation with other human beings."

4 **WHERE WORKS BEGIN (PARAGRAPH #72)**

- 1  • Here begins the first part of the 2nd major theme on discipline of the flesh and works in general.
 - "Here is not the time for leisure; here care must be taken to train the body by means of fasting, vigils, and other labors and to subdue it be the spirit."
- 2  • "In this way it may obey and be conformed to the inner person and faith, so that it may not rebel against or impede the inner person (as is its nature when not held in check.)"

5 **THE SINGLE CONCERN OF THE INNER PERSON (PARAGRAPH #73)**

- 1  • Romans 7:22-23— "I delight in the law of God according to my inner person, but I see in my members another law fighting against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin."
 - Galatians 5:25— "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

6 **UNDER WHAT SUPPOSITION ARE WORKS TO BE DONE? (PARAGRAPH #74)**

- 1  • Supposition should NOT be that through these good works a person is justified.
 - "Because the soul has been cleansed through faith and made to love God, at the same time it wants all things (in particular the body) to be cleansed, so that all things may love and praise God with it."

7 **SUMMARY...**

- 1  • A common misunderstanding of Luther's teaching is that if we are saved by grace alone, then we can do whatever we want and no longer need to follow the commandments or do good works. Luther disagrees!
 - Good works are absolutely essential to the life of the Christian, who has been set free by faith, but good works do not earn us credit in heaven.
- 2  • Faith always bears abundant fruits of good works. But we have not yet achieved the fullness of our freedom, and we won't until we are on the other side of eternity.

- On this side of eternity, people of faith live in the paradoxical state of being saints and sinners simultaneously.
- Luther himself was not immune to the distorting effects of sin described in his works.

8 ☐ **SUMMARY...**

"Faith is never lazy nor slothful; true faith is dynamic and alive and always bears abundant fruits of love and kindness towards the neighbor."

Jose David Rodriguez, Sr.

Latin American Lutheran theologian

9 ☐ **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. According to Luther, what role do good works play in the life of a Christian? Why does he say that the Christian is saved by faith alone yet also required to do good works?
2. Reflect on a time when you have seen faith bear fruits of abundant love.
3. How can good works be misused? How can the freedom of a Christian be abused?
4. How do you think Luther's own work was distorted by sin?

10 ☐ **HOMEWORK FOR NEXT WEEK...**

- Session #9— "Training the Body for Freedom"
- Read paragraphs 75-77 in "The Freedom of a Christian"