

Sampler

COLABORATE LUTHERAN STUDENT BIBLE SAMPLER

New Revised Standard Version

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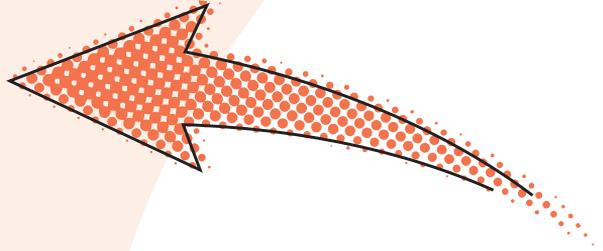
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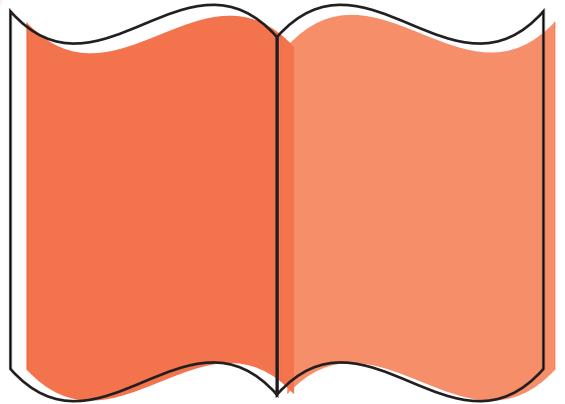
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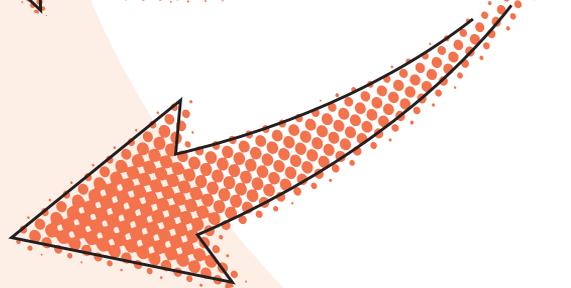
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“There is great comfort and a mighty aid to faith in the knowledge that one has been baptized, not by man, but by the Triune God himself, through a man acting among us in His name.”

Martin Luther,
LW 36

1 Corinthians 1:11-13

“I believe ... in the holy catholic church.” So says the Apostle’s Creed. But what does that even mean? In this instance, catholic means “unified” or “universal” church. That might be hard to swallow considering the hundreds of Christian denominations in our world today. Can Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Pentecostals, and even Catholics find enough to agree on that they could be considered unified?

This problem isn’t new. In fact, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth about this very thing. Apparently there were divisions in the Corinthians church based on which church leader they felt they belonged to. Paul rebukes them by reminding them that they were baptized in the name of Christ—the one who unifies us in all our diversity.



How many denominations
can you think of?
Write them on the small
churches inside the big church.

DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH

10 Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,^a by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹²What I mean is that each of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” ¹³Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God ^c that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

CHRIST THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

18 For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning
I will thwart.”

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom,

^a Gk *brothers* ^b Gk *my brothers* ^c Other ancient authorities read *I am thankful*

and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters:^a not many of you were wise by human standards,^b not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one^c might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in^d the Lord."

PROCLAIMING CHRIST CRUCIFIED

2 When I came to you, brothers and sisters,^e I did not come proclaiming the mystery^e of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom,^f but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

THE TRUE WISDOM OF GOD

6 Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. ⁷But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But, as it is written,

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who
love him"—

¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. ¹³And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.^g

14 Those who are unspiritual^b do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

¹⁶ "For who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.

ON DIVISIONS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

3 And so, brothers and sisters,^c I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ²I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, ³for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? ⁴For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human?

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸The one who plants and

^a Gk *brothers* ^b Gk *according to the flesh* ^c Gk *no flesh* ^d Or *of* ^e Other ancient authorities read *testimony*

^f Other ancient authorities read *the persuasiveness of wisdom*

SALUTATION

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
 To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful^d in Christ Jesus:
 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ just as he chose us in Christ^b before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will,⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ,¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance,^c having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will,¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit;¹⁴ this^d is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

PAUL'S PRAYER

15 I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love^e toward all the saints, and for this reason¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.¹⁷ I

pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him,¹⁸ so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints,¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.²⁰ God^f put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.²² And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

2 You were dead through the trespasses and sins² in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.³ All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ^a—by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast.¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

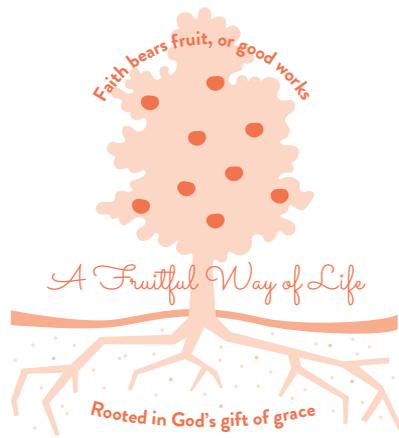
^a Other ancient authorities lack *in Ephesus*, reading *saints who are also faithful* ^b Gk *in him* ^c Or *been made a heritage* ^d Other ancient authorities read *who* ^e Other ancient authorities lack *and your love* ^f Gk *He*

Ephesians 2:8-10

If there was any Bible verse Martin Luther would want you to memorize, it would probably be this one. Lutheran theology hinges on the idea that we are saved through grace—not good works we do to earn our salvation.

The church in Ephesus needed a reminder that salvation wasn't just a future event. Christianity seemed to be mostly about what happens after Jesus returns. This passage reminds the Ephesians—and us—that salvation has been accomplished. There is nothing we can do to either earn or un-earn God's gift to us.

This is good news! Because of God's grace, we are free to live the life we were meant to live—serving others and sharing in the joy of our salvation.



Your life is not about you; you are about life.

Read the passage a few times and then cover it up and see if you can remember it. Don't worry about getting it word for word (there's no quiz!), but see if you can get the gist of it.



"The trees exist before their fruits and the fruits do not make trees either good or bad; so a man must first be good or wicked before he does a good or wicked work..."

Martin Luther,
LW 31

ONE IN CHRIST

11 So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth,^b called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.¹⁵ He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile both groups to God in one body^c through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.^d¹⁷ So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near;¹⁸ for through him both of us

have access in one Spirit to the Father.¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God,²⁰ built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.^e²¹ In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;²² in whom you also are built together spiritually^f into a dwelling place for God.

PAUL'S MINISTRY TO THE GENTILES

3 This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for^g Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you,³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words,⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.⁵ In former generations this mystery^h was not

^a Other ancient authorities read *in Christ* ^b *Gk in the flesh* ^c *Or reconcile both of us in one body for God* ^d *Or in him, or in himself* ^e *Or keystone* ^f *Gk in the Spirit* ^g *Or of* ^h *Gk it*

