Bible Basics – Lesson 6

Our Church
and
Others

We are similar

and different!

Introduction

Bethlehem (LCMS)

Other Christian Church Bodies:

- ✓ Orthodox
- ✓ Roman Catholic
- ✓ Lutheran (ELCA; WELS)
- ✓ Methodist
- ✓ Baptist
- ✓ Etc.

Disclaimer

I will share:

- ✓ The teachings of other church bodies—*which can be known*.

- ✓ Not individual beliefs—*which cannot be known*.

Family Tree of Denominations

✓ **Before 1054** – one Christian Church on earth

✓ **1054** – first split:

- <u>Orthodox</u> – East

- <u>Roman Catholic</u> – West

✓ **1517** (1555) – second split:

- <u>Roman Catholic</u> – Faith + Works

- <u>Lutheran</u> – Faith Alone

✓ **After 1517** – many splits

Key LCMS Characteristics

1. **Evangelical** – *forgiveness through faith in Jesus*

2. **Sacramental** – *forgiveness through the sacraments*

3. **Biblical** – *the Bible is the basis of all we believe*

4. **Liturgical** – *using the historic liturgy*

5. **Best of Both** – *among RC and Protestant*

6. **Among the Largest** – *80 m. Lutherans in the world*

For Biblical Support of 1 and 2,

See the Additional Information sheet

Teaching Comparison – Eternal Life

- **Catechism of the Catholic Church:** "[faith, hope, and charity] are infused by God into the souls of the faithful *[when they are baptized]* to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life" (446).

- **The Bible (LCMS):** "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NIV Romans 6:23).

- **How do we get eternal life?**

  1. We earn it by doing good.

  2. We receive it as God's gift through Jesus.

Church History

- **4,000 BC**: Sin committed; Savior promised

- **5 BC**: Jesus born

- **AD 30**: Jesus died

- **AD 313**: Christianity legalized

- **AD 1054**: First division

- **AD 1517**: 95 Theses

- **AD 1555**: Second Division

- **AD 1847**: LCMS began

- **AD 1904**: Bethlehem began

Comparison of Lutheran Denominations

There are over 40 in North America:

- <u>Largest</u>: ELCA – formed from three smaller Lutheran bodies in 1988, about 3.3 m.

- <u>Second Largest and Oldest</u>: LCMS – formed in 1847 by German immigrants, about 1.8 m.

- <u>Third Largest and Second Oldest</u>: WELS – formed in 1850, about 350 k.

Paradox in the LCMS

We believe both extremes; others believe one or the other

- **Law** – Our sins condemn us.

- **Gospel** – God's work saves us.

- **Christ is true God** – Lived without sin; died for all sins.

- **Christ is true Man** – Lived and died in our place.

- **Christians are saints** – God sees us as sinless through Jesus.

- **Christians are sinners** – We cannot completely stop sinning.

Paradox in the LCMS

We believe both extremes; others believe one or the other

- **Salvation by faith** – God gives us faith to trust in Jesus!

- **Salvation by baptism** – God clothes us with Jesus!

- **The Lord's Supper is Body *and* Blood**

- **The Lord's Supper is bread *and* wine**

Teaching Comparison – Salvation

- **LCMS – Single Predestination:** NIV Ephesians 1:4-5 [God the Father] chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love [God the Father] predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ...

- **John Calvin – Double Predestination**: Some to eternal life, others to eternal condemnation. **But** NIV 1 Tim. 2:4 "[God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Teaching Comparison – Salvation

- **LCMS – Grace:** God must ◆choose us, ◆come to us, and ◆give us the gift of faith to trust in Jesus as our Savior. ^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 1:30 "It is because of [God] that you are in Christ Jesus..."

- **Arminians** (Billy Graham) **– Freedom of the Will:** Teach that people have the power to choose, yet the Bible says we are spiritually blind, dead, and enemies.

Comparison Among Protestants

Teaching Comparison

- **<u>LCMS</u>:** The Bible is certain:

    ^{NIV} Psalm 119:160 "All your words are true…"

    ^{NIV} Proverbs 30:5 "Every word of God is flawless…"

    ^{NIV} Isaiah 40:8 "…the word of our God stands forever."

    ^{NIV} John 17:17 "…your word is truth."

- **<u>Feelings</u>:** Can be unreliable.

DVD – Exploring the Ministry of the LCMS

That Concludes Our Church and Others

Thanks for attending!

Interested in becoming a member of Bethlehem – *please let me know!*