

## **Cherished-Chosen-Challenged – July 18, 2010**

### **Perfection!**

**“You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy!”    Leviticus 19:2**

The new President –Elect of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Rev. Matthew Harrison, said in his first address to the Synodical Convention this past week: “you have kept your perfect record of electing sinners as presidents of the Missouri Synod. I guarantee you I will sin and fail. I will fall short.” President-Elect Harrison recognizes the sinfulness of all mankind and admits what the Bible teaches plainly: we are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God. God knows all too well the greatness of our sin. He knows intimately the impossibility of human beings perfectly obeying His law and yet He still commands us to be holy. What are we to do? How can we ever comply?

Many an individual has driven themselves to despair trying to please God and ultimately admitting that they cannot attain perfection. Luther himself despaired in his early years knowing God only as a demanding and angry judge whose righteous commands were beyond accomplishing. Much has been written about how Luther starved and beat himself trying to subdue his sinful flesh and thus please God. He hoped that he could produce as much righteousness and obedience in his life as humanly possible so that he might avoid the worst of the punishment and torture in hell. Ultimately he knows that such perfection under the law was not within his grasp to accomplish. However, in the midst of such despair he found the answer in Scripture he had been looking for. The sweetness of the Gospel became ever so clear in Paul’s epistle to the Romans...a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law! There is the answer to God’s demands. Holiness is not found in the works of sinners, but instead it is found in the works of Christ Jesus, our Lord. Through the obedient life of our Savior and by His sacred suffering and death perfection is accomplished on behalf of all mankind. More than this though, through the Gospel God offers this perfection to man as a free gift in faith. Through faith

in Christ Jesus the blessed exchange is made. Jesus became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Believers are God's holy people! Though we daily sin much and deserve nothing but temporal and eternal punishment, God forgives us for Jesus' sake and declares us righteous and holy because of what Jesus did for us. We are indeed at the very same time saint and sinner. And by the power of Christ's Gospel operating in our lives we have the desire to fulfill God's holy will to His glory and the service of our neighbor. God help us to do His will!

Today we join with all other true Christians in recognizing and admitting our sinfulness. Today we trust alone in the saving work of Christ our Savior and we rejoice in knowing that through Him we are truly God's holy people. Today we pray that God would lead and bless us to live holy lives that he might be glorified as others see in us the blessed work of the Gospel.

- Remember: You are God's holy people. Pray that God would help you to know His will and live holy lives according to it.
- Remember: Sharing the Gospel with others is holy work. Rejoice when you are able to bring the good news of salvation to those in despair.

How blessed we are to be the people of God. He has chosen us to be in this place. He has prepared us for this time. He has equipped us for service to Him. **Don't wait for someone else to do it. If you wait on someone else to do it...it will never get done!** God bless you in the growth of your faith and in service to Him and His people, for your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

Pastor Jacobs

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