

God Knows the Heart

by Rev. Steve Scharnell, Associate Pastor
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Oconomowoc Wisconsin

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
12 February, A.D. 2017
Deuteronomy 30.15-20; 1 Corinthians 3.1-9; **Text: Matthew 5.21-37**

Jesus came to fulfill the Law. What is meant by this?

So the Commandments are still in force. When we break one commandment we break them all. Even though we can't keep them, we still try.

The rich young man in Matthew 19:16-30 thought he kept the commandments perfectly. Did he?

We break every commandment every day (James 2:10) because sin comes from the _____.
(Mark 7:20-23)

God is _____ but He is also _____.

God demands perfection. How can we be perfect when we are by nature sinful?

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERIES

You hear it all the time: "We all worship the same god," "All paths lead to god," "All these people can't be wrong," "It's just a matter of interpretation," etc.

We, however, believe in "one God, the Father Almighty... and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God... God of God, Light of Light, very God and very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made...And [we] believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified..."

Eegads! Do we really need to say all those words?

Well... as it turns out: Yes.

The Nicene Creed affirms that God has come into human history in Jesus Christ, that He is fully and eternally God, the final Word, the "Alpha and Omega"; therefore, there cannot be someone else more like God that might appear. He--Christ--is the way, truth, and life.

Indeed, the Creed is not an obscure assortment of words. During Lent 2017 we will show how those words--the confession they make--stand as a necessary, stark contrast to nihilistic secularism, many-god pantheisms, the indifference of the modern coexist movement, the progressive revelation monism of Islam, ancient and modern pharisaic Christianity, potpourristic Mormonism, and big box consumer Christianity.

We will attempt to draw these distinctions in ways that children and adults can understand and use in their witness of Christ.

1. Wed, Mar 8, 2017. Behold, a Mystery! What is a creed and why do we say this? (i.e., "What you say can matter eternally.")
2. Wed, Mar 15, 2017. Glory to God in the Highest: Jesus is God (i.e., "Yes, Arius, this is actually pretty important.")
3. Wed, Mar 22, 2017. Glory be the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: One God in Three Persons. (i.e., "No, Charles, you can't re-write the text to make it fit your presupposition.")
4. Wed, Mar 29, 2017. Watch Out for the Watchtower: The Trinity and the Resurrection of the Body (i.e., "Charles, Arius was wrong 1700 years ago, and he's still wrong.")
5. Wed, Apr 5, 2017. Who Cares about The Cross? The Perils of the Prosperity Gospel (i.e., "Dude, you've got a nice smile, but you're cheating people to make money.")

Divine Services at 12:15 and 6:30 p.m., with 15 minute Lenten hymn-sing beforehand.