

# KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH



**Galatians 3:24–27**

*Clothed in Christ*

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So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

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One of the key questions that the confirmation students answered last week at their examination was that we *want* to serve God, we don't *have to* serve God. That is an important point for us to keep in mind.

With voice raised loud enough, a parent can compel all sorts of behavior from a child. But the child, all the while carrying out the required action, may be filled with resentment and anger at the parent. The task, when completed, may have been done with the only goal being to get the parent to be quiet. The quality of the job was never a consideration.

That is the very last thing that God ever wants. He does not want actions carried out by people who are afraid that he will yell at them — in the form of troubles and problems in life. He wants hearts that will do what our confirmation students will soon do. He wants us to be able to stand before him (and his church) and confess that we believe in him and that, with his help, we would serve him with our whole lives.

In the section of God's Word before us this morning God speaks to our hearts. He wants to win us with his love, not terrify us with his anger. That love of God that makes us *want* to serve him is worth remembering this morning as we all consider our commitment to Christ.

This text talks about how God yells at us. When God first gave the Ten Commandments — the best example of the law in the Bible — he was yelling. He was yelling so loudly that when he was done speaking the Ten Commandments to the Israelites gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai, their response was to ask Moses to talk to God

about never doing that again. Hearing God's law, spoken by God, wasn't frightening, it was terrifying.

It is human nature to use the law like the Pharisee did in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee went into the Temple and prayed about himself. *"Thank you, God, that I'm not like other people — I'm better than they are! I give more offerings and I obey your rules to the exact letter."* We may not so crude as to say the words that were used in the parable, but the thoughts spook around in our minds. We think that our attendance at church, or work we do at church, or just the fact that we are good, nice people is what God expects of us. And if we've done what he expects, God must be pleased with us.

**So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.** If you ever find that you are patting yourself on your back, read Galatians 3:24. The law was not written so that you could be proud. The law was written so that you could understand the enormity of God's demands and come to grips with the fact that you have come up short.

Our Pharisaic pride is a sin. As we look down on the weaknesses and failures of others, we are almost always ignoring our own sins (that are often the exact same ones, just better disguised). Flowing from the ugliness of pride comes more sins. Our anger often is often a result of others not doing things our way — since our way is always right! Selfishness and indifference toward others flows from the same place in our heart — we think we can ignore those who are inferior to ourselves.

The law's purpose is to show us those failures. But the goal is not to make us feel terrible about ourselves. Guilt and depression are not God's goals. **So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.**

God wants us to see Jesus. He wants us to know that through faith in Jesus our sins are completely removed. We are free from sin before God because of Jesus! Our text says, **You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

The robes that our confirmands wear are a reminder of that outfit that their parents had for them when they were baptized. But as nice as that baptismal gown was, the unseen results of baptism are what really matter. The Scriptures tell us that in Baptism we were connected to Jesus' death and resurrection (Romans 6). What he accomplished on the cross — full payment for all sins — he accomplished for you! In your baptism, God covered you in the perfection of Jesus. In Baptism, God claimed you as his child.

You will stand before God today, not because you *have to*, but because you *want to* confess your faith in Jesus. What better family could you be a part of? What better God could you find? In the Bible, the true God has revealed to you that he is filled with perfect love for you.

As our three new confirmands stand before God today, let all listen to the promises they willingly make and remember that God asks no less of us. As they confess their faith in the Triune God, let us all remember that God would have that same faith live in our hearts.

But let all also remember that these students are here of their own free will. True faith lives in their hearts. They want to be here.

You also can privately renew your promise to Jesus today. You have received no less grace. In Baptism, you too were covered in the perfection of Jesus Christ. Your heart is new also. Serve God with your gifts, not because you have too, but because you want to. God is not interested in the best of works that are not done in willingness and joy. But when the heart is right, God is delighted by what you do. Believe and live and serve because the grace of God has made you a new person. Amen.

Confirmation Sunday  
May 3, 2015

