



Living Each Day With Christ

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

Weekly Law & Gospel Bible Study



The law & Gospel method of Bible study is the Church's traditional way to study the Bible, which was popularized by Martin Luther. Law & Gospel Bible study makes a distinction between God's two main Biblical themes: law & Gospel. God's law theme identifies our sin, by revealing what God wants us to do that we don't do. God's Gospel theme identifies our need for Jesus the Savior, and reveals how God's love offers us salvation through Christ.

STEP ONE PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REVEAL GOD'S VOICE THROUGH THE TEXT:

"Father, let your law and Gospel voice renew our love, faith, and hope."

STEP TWO READ THE TEXT REPEATEDLY UNTIL YOU CAN TELL IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

Mark 4:26-34 (See the reverse side of the worksheet for the printed Gospel text)

STEP THREE REVIEW A STUDY BIBLE TO DETERMINE THE TEXT'S THEOLOGICAL MEANING:

One of the most striking features of the teaching of Jesus is his use of parables. He told down-to-earth stories that had the ring of real life and made his points in a memorable way. What are the parables? Some points about interpreting parables can be made. First, a parable is not an allegory. An allegory is a story in which every item stands for something else. Second, the parables are not illustrations of a general truth. Such generalized truths are usually trite, and rarely applicable. Third, parables should be placed in the context of Jesus' ministry. Much information is now available on the times in which Jesus lived. This kind of information provides important help in the interpretation of His parables. Fourth, we must be careful with the usual introductory formulas to the parables, which usually go as follows: "The kingdom of God is like..." The temptation is to identify God's kingdom with the first object mentioned in the story. But the comparison may be in the conclusion, or in the contrast between the first item and a later one. Fifth, if we understand the parable in its own context, it will find its own authentic way to speak freshly and forcefully to our situation. Using these principles of interpretation, how would you interpret the main thrust of the first parable in our Gospel? The key to the first parable is the coming of the harvest. "You may only see a few signs of the kingdom." It is as if Jesus says, "But when your eyes are truly opened, you will see that the kingdom is ready and that I will bring in the harvest." The parable encourages us to confidently grasp the sickle and reap the harvest. It is not up to us to sow the seed of the gospel, as if without us it would not be in the world. Our task is to claim for God what he has already prepared. What is the central point of the mustard seed parable, then? It relates to the humble appearance of Jesus and his disciples. Like mustard seeds, they are small. "But don't judge by appearances," it is as if Jesus says. "Rather, judge by results."



Mark 4:26-34 26He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come." 30He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." 33With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

STEP FOUR COMPLETE A LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY TO *Restore Hope in the Savior*

Law Question: How does this text reveal our sin (self-centeredness) and how we do not live as God desires?

Answer.....
.....
.....

Gospel Question: How does this text reveal God's gift of Jesus as the Savior who freely offers us salvation?

Answer.....
.....
.....

Please send your "answers" to Pastor Bob: Schmalzle@yahoo.com which he likes to incorporate into the sermon.

STEP FIVE PRAYERFULLY MEDITATE UPON GOD'S GOSPEL VOICE: *Restoring Our Hope*

A. Quietening Our Inner Sanctuary: We quiet our hearts (souls) by focusing on our breathing. Breathe in slowly to the count of five (J-E-S-U-S)...hold your breath to a count of six (C-H-R-I-S-T)...exhale to a count of seven (T-H-E- L-O-R-D). Repeat this pattern of breathing until you are relaxed.

B. Dwelling within Our Inner Sanctuary: We meet the Lord Jesus in the sanctuary of our hearts (souls), which is a place created within our mind's eye for us to be with the Lord. Using our favorite sights, sounds, smells and feelings, we visualize our inner sanctuary as a place of peace where the Lord Jesus meets us.

C. Listening to God's Voice in Scripture Speak to Us through Jesus: As Jesus meets us in our inner sanctuary, he lovingly shares God's Gospel message of hope from the Scripture text we have just studied. Listening to God's Gospel voice restores our trust and hope that Jesus' death and resurrection freely offers us eternal Salvation. When Jesus speaks to us, our souls are nourished and refreshed.

STEP SIX SHARE THIS LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY WITH A FRIEND:

Forward this via email, give a printed copy, or re-post on social media