



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:

**Matthew 16:13-20** (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:

This Gospel reading (Mt. 16:13-20) is usually divided into two parts: the first part (vs. 13-16) tells what various people and what Peter himself thought about Jesus; the second part (vs. 17-20) records the answer of Jesus to Peter. Just like Mark and Luke, Matthew places this event at the center of his Gospel and the reading is quite clear: he wants his readers, who have known Jesus for some time, to proclaim Christ as the Son of God. Not unlike the people of Jesus' day, we can also today hear opinions about "who" Jesus is - a great teacher, a social activist, an exceptional person, and a visionary who has transformed human society. However, to profess that Jesus is the Messiah is to say that he is the Son of God, the Savior of the world. In the second part of today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells Simon: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. With these words to Simon Peter, Jesus is referring to the faith that is in Peter, which enabled him to make his confession. This faith is the solid foundation of the Church. All those who, like Peter, will profess faith in Jesus as the Son of the living God, are a part of this solid foundation that will never fall. Then, Peter is given the "Keys" to bind and to forgive sins. This power is not limited to Peter, it is the ability of all those who live with faith (Mt. 18:18; John 20:23). The disciples now have authority to forgive sins. Christ said to his disciples, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld" (John 20:23). In Matthew 18:18, Christ speaks to congregations in every place and in every time, entrusting his Church with the power of forgiveness and reconciliation. We have received from the Lord the power to share the gift of forgiveness with one another.



**Matthew 16:13-20** <sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup>And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup>Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

Answer.....  
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Please send your "answers" to Pastor Bob: [Schmalzle@yahoo.com](mailto:Schmalzle@yahoo.com) which he likes to incorporate into the sermon.

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

**A. Quieting 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 post on social media