

## January 2024

*The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword. Hebrews 4:12*

As it is with each new year, certainly 2024 rolls in carrying with it all sorts of resolutions. It drags in with it all of the resolutions of the past year which were begun with gusto but fizzled out by the middle of February. I'm going to exercise more, eat better, call family more often, regulate how much time I spent in front of a screen, spend less on Amazon. Everyone has their own list with the aim of building ourselves up or making ourselves better in some way. Good. Do it. Discipline yourself and follow through.

As Christians, we should also be considering how to build ourselves up and strengthen our knowledge and wisdom which comes from God's Word. A new year can present that most important resolve as well. I offer to you below a chunk of Luther's Large Catechism (which is part of our church's confessional writings) for encouragement. This part comes from the discussion on the Third Commandment. It's a lengthy chunk, but worth it, in order to propel us forward into the new year.

*Remember, then, that you must be concerned not only about hearing the Word, but also about learning it and retaining it. Do not think that it is up to your discretion or that it is an unimportant matter. It is the commandment of God, who will require of you [Romans 14:12] an accounting of how you have heard, learned, and honored his Word.*

*In the same way those conceited spirits should also be punished who, after they have heard a sermon or two, become sick and tired of it and feel that they know it all and need no more instructors. This is precisely the sin that used to be numbered among the mortal sins and was called acidia - that is, laziness or weariness - a malignant, pernicious plague with which the devil bewitches and deceives many hearts so that he may take us by surprise and stealthily take the Word of God away again [Matthew 13:19].*

*Let me tell you this. Even though you know the Word perfectly and have already mastered everything [Luther is being sarcastic], you are daily under the dominion of the devil [Colossians 1:13-14], and he does not rest day or night in seeking to take you unawares and to kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against these three and all the other commandments. Therefore you must constantly keep God's Word in your heart, on your lips, and in your ears. For where the heart stands idle and the Word is not heard, the devil breaks in and does his damage before we realize it [Matthew 13:24-30]. On the other hand, when we seriously ponder the Word, hear it, and put it to use, such is its power that it never departs without fruit [Isaiah 55:11; Mark 4:20]. It always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devotion, and it constantly creates clean hearts and minds [Philippians 4:8]. For this Word is not idle or dead, but effective and living [Hebrews 4:12]. Even if no other benefit or need drove us to the Word, yet everyone should be motivated by the realization that through the*

*Word the devil is cast out and put to flight [James 4:7], this commandment is fulfilled, and God is more pleased then by any hypocrisy, no matter how brilliant.*

- Large Catechism 1, 98-102 Kolb/Wengert p.400

Let's resolve to take up the living and active Word this new year and find protection, peace, understanding, wisdom, and strength. We daily need this and our Lord will not disappoint.

Happy New Year,  
Pastor Suggitt

#### LIFE QUOTE

Christians are to love their neighbors, including the unborn ... (Proverbs 24:11, 29:8-9) ... This means we can and ought to pray for the unborn, for women who have the choice of preserving or ending the life of their unborn child, for women who have had abortions and who need forgiveness in Christ—freely given through faith, for abortion doctors who are directly responsible for killing these children, and for our governing officials.— *A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)*



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