

## A STUDY OF LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM

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**THE THIRD ARTICLE** — *“I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT; THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS; THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY; AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.”*

- **Luther wrote, “But only God’s Spirit is called Holy Spirit, that is the One who made us holy and continues to make us holy. For as the Father is called Creator and the Son is called Redeemer, so also it is because of His work that the Holy Spirit is to be called a Sanctifier, a Holy-maker, one who makes persons holy.” How does the Holy Spirit accomplish this work?**
  - ❖ *“Just as the Son wins His dominion over us by His birth, death, resurrection, etc., so the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work of sanctification through the following means as presented in the Third Article, namely the community of the saints, or the Christian church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.”* - Martin Luther (pg. 72-73)
  
- **Luther makes it clear that the Holy Spirit works through the church, but through what, more specifically, does the Holy Spirit work?**
  - ❖ *“For neither you nor I could ever know anything about Christ or believe in Him and receive Him as our Lord if it were not first offered to us and laid on our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel.”* - Martin Luther (pg. 73)
  
- **As Lutherans, we believe that everything that needs to be done for our salvation has been accomplished, but we still have work to do. How does the Third Article help us to understand that work?**
  - ❖ *“The redemptive work has taken place and is finished, for Christ has purchased and won the treasure for us through His suffering, death, resurrection, etc. But if that saving action stays hidden and no one knows about it, then it would all be for nothing, wasted. In order that this treasure might not remain buried but be taken up and enjoyed, God has let the Word go forth and be proclaimed. In the Word he has given us His Holy Spirit to lay the treasure of redemption on our hearts and make it our very own. Thus to sanctify or make holy is nothing else than to bring us to Christ our Lord to receive this treasure, which we could never have obtained by ourselves.”* - Martin Luther (pg. 73)

- **What does Luther mean when he uses the word, “Church?” What doesn’t he mean with that word?**
  - ❖ “Simple folk, however, do not understand ‘church’ to mean a gathering of people but rather a consecrated building or structure. Yet the building ought to be called a church only because of the group of people that gathers there. Thus the word ‘church’ really means nothing else than an ordinary assembly.” - Martin Luther (pg. 74)
  
- **The Catholic church also prays the Apostles Creed, but instead of saying, “the holy Christian church,” they say, “the holy Catholic church.” Did Luther alter the wording of the Creed?**
  - ❖ Catholic
    - *often capitalized* : of, relating to, or forming the church universal
    - *often capitalized* : of, relating to, or forming the ancient undivided Christian church or a church claiming historical continuity from it
    - comprehensive, universal; *especially* : broad in sympathies, tastes, or interests <a *catholic* taste in music>
  
- **Why do we need to make it clear that the forgiveness of sins can be found only in the Church?**
  - ❖ “*Because outside of the Christian church there is no Gospel, there is no forgiveness there either, and sanctification is therefore an impossibility as well. Therefore those who aim to earn and merit holiness through their own works rather than receiving it through the Gospel and its forgiveness of sins have expelled and separated themselves from the Christian community.*” Martin Luther (pg. 75-76)
  
- **Looking at this article, why is it imperative that we continue to study the Word every day of our lives?**
  - ❖ “*For the present we are only partially pure and holy. The Holy Spirit must continue to do His work in us through His Word, daily applying forgiveness until we reach that life where forgiveness will no more be needed.*” Martin Luther (pg. 76)