

# PRESENTATION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

Observed June 25, 2017

By Pastor Timothy Appel, Grace Lutheran Church, Smithville, TX

## REPEAT AFTER JESUS

Text: Matthew 10:32

Object: None

Summary: Jesus speaks His Word, which we confess by saying the same thing He says.

Today, I need help from all of you. Please repeat these words after me: ***“For God so loved the world . . . that He gave His only Son . . . that whoever believes in Him . . . should not perish . . . but have eternal life.”*** Great job! Do you recognize those words? Those are words of Good News that Jesus says in John 3:16.

I wanted you to repeat those words after me in order to teach you a word that describes what you've just done. And that word is *confess*. “To confess” means “to say the same thing.” When we say the same thing Jesus says, we “confess.” This is what we do at the beginning of the Divine Service—we confess our sins together. Jesus has told us in His Word that we are sinners, and so in our confession, we say the same thing—that we are indeed sinners in need of a Savior. Then we receive Jesus' forgiveness in the Absolution. In the middle of the Divine Service, we confess the Christian faith together when we say the Apostles' Creed. Jesus has told us in His Word who God is, and so we say the same thing He does. We confess in the Creed that we believe in the triune God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We are talking about confession today because today is the anniversary of a very important confession. On June 25, 1530, more than 480 years ago, seven German princes stood before the Holy Roman Emperor in a place called Augsburg and boldly said the same things that Jesus says in His Word. They confessed the truth that we are saved from sin, death, and the devil by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. We call this confession the Augsburg Confession. In the years since that day, many faithful Christians have been saying the same thing as Jesus by pledging to uphold the Augsburg Confession—this congregation included.

It was dangerous for those seven German princes to confess the truth of the Bible before the Holy Roman Emperor at Augsburg. He could have called them heretics and sentenced them to death. Christians throughout the ages have faced danger for saying the same things

Jesus says. So why would we do the same when we know there are risks? We confess because of Jesus' promise: "Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). We confess what Jesus says because His Word is the truth. We confess what Jesus says because His Word gives us forgiveness and salvation. We confess what Jesus says because His Word gives others forgiveness and salvation. We confess what Jesus says because, no matter what dangers we face, God's Word gives us eternal life. That's why we say the same things Jesus says. That's why we repeat after Jesus. ***Close with prayer.*** Dear Jesus, You have the words of eternal life. Help us to confess Your truth. Amen.

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