



### **Prayer Before Studying Theology:**

O Jesus Christ, Thou eternal and only Prince of Peace, Thou ever-blessed and highest repose of all believing souls, Thou hast said: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28). “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33). How often have I been seeking for rest in this world, and in the transitory things thereof, but have not been able to find it. For an immortal soul can never be satisfied, quieted, or pleased, but with immortal things; that is, in Thee, and with Thee alone.

(Amen.)

--Johann Arndt., “For Tranquility of Mind, or For the Rest of the Soul in Christ” in *The Garden of Paradise* (1995), p. 44

### **Week #6b: Johann Arndt’s *True Christianity***

#### The Likeness of God Created, Fallen and Restored

The soul or inner life of human beings was created in such a way that it conformed to (and was an image of) the goodness of God (=holy love). As such, human will was not self-will but rather an acceptance of the divine will (p. 29)

In the fall this heavenly image was exchanged for an earthly, beastly image, with self-love (pride) replacing the love of God and self-will (disobedience to God) instead of acceptance of the divine will (p. 29). (Cf. Origen on beastly images and vices) At death, this image becomes fixed as a satanic image and fellowship with God is permanently broken.

In salvation our nature is renewed through true repentance and faith in Christ and a heavenly image is restored within us (pp. 38-40). This new birth, which arises from Christ within us, is composed of two aspects—justification and sanctification (p. 37). This is the reality prefigured in baptism: we are baptized in the death of Christ so that we might die with Christ through true repentance and conversion (cf. p. 40).

#### The Necessary Connection Between Faith and Works (Seen as the Fruits of Faith):

- Arndt criticizes “the impenitent life of the ungodly who praise Christ and his word with their mouths and yet lead an unchristian life that is like that of persons in heathendom” (p. 21).
- “As every seed produces fruit of like nature, so the Word of God must produce in us new spiritual fruits. If we are to become new creatures by faith, we must live in accordance with the new birth”

- “Since faith is hidden from human eyes and is invisible, it must be manifested by its fruits, inasmuch as faith creates from Christ all that is good, righteous and holy”
- “If faith is concerned that it not lose the grace of God...then the fear of God is born” (p. 23)
- “True Christianity consists, not in words or external show, but in living faith, from which arise righteous fruits, and all manner of Christian virtues, as from Christ himself” (p. 23)

### Contrition

- To have true repentance,
  - one must understand his or her sins and that the Word of God stands against these sins in the Law
  - one must turn oneself from self-love to spiritual life (p. 42) through
    - repentance
    - sorrow
    - mortification and crucifixion of the flesh.

Repentant sorrow, which extinguishes self-love, is a fruit of the death of Christ. Living in Christ (and he in us) through faith is a fruit of Christ’s resurrection, which Scripture *externally* describes and the Spirit *inwardly* effects (p. 51) by means of “a spark of natural life” preserved in man after the fall (“faith was sowed in man as a seed of God”)

- “true repentance must proceed from the innermost source of the heart” (p. 21)
- “True, divine regret must precede repentance. By it, the heart is broken and the flesh is crucified”
  - sorrow for sin comes through the Law and meditation upon Christ’s suffering (p. 55)
- mortification=“the leaving of works that bring about death” (p. 55)=to “hate oneself, deny oneself and renounce all that one has” (p. 24)
  - mortification (=a decisive break with sin) is a prerequisite to saving faith/justification; a decisive break with sin
    - “how can you belong to Christ since you do not mortify the flesh” (p. 58)
    - “God’s word and sacraments...do not help any unrepentant person who does not have a continually sorrowful, faithful heart. His resurrection is of no use to the person who will not arise with Christ from his sins.”
    - Christ in life vs. Antichrist (p. 62)
    - “To repent properly is to properly follow Christ” (p. 66)
    - “He who does not follow Christ in his life is not truly repentant, is no Christian, and is not the child of God” (p. 64). Apart from repentance and a holy life (in which God’s will is also one’s will), one has only evil will and remains subject to the Devil.
    - “Although we are not able in our present weakness to come to perfection yet we must strive after it. We must weep and

hope in our hearts that Christ and not Satan will live in us and have his reign in us. Insofar as the old man dies, Christ will live in us” (p. 66)

- “The person who does properly understand Christ as a Savior and Sanctifier and an Example of Life must know that he is pure love, meekness, patience and humility. This love and meekness of Christ he must have in himself; indeed he must discover it in his heart and love it” (p. 68)
- mortification is also a lifelong process of sanctification; cf. p. 58: true faith renews man and mortifies the sins in man
  - “Love makes all things easy. He who does not properly love Christ does everything with hesitation and unwillingly and doing good is difficult for him” (p. 74)

### Conversion and True Faith

- “It is therefore high time to repent, to begin another course of life, to turn from the world to Christ” (p. 23)
- See the description of true faith on pp. 60-61, which would seem to run contrary to Luther’s description of redeemed human beings as always remaining “at once righteous and a sinner” as long as they are in this life.
- Compare p. 60: “Where Christ’s life is not, Christ is not. Where true faith is, there Christ and his holy life are”

### Union with Christ as the Basis for Sanctification: Imitation of Christ’s Life

- “We bear the name of Christ, not only because we ought to believe in Christ, but also because we are to live in Christ and he in us” (p. 21)
- “He [sc. the believer] must grow and come to life spiritually in me” (p. 50)
- *Omnia nos Christi vita docere potest* —“The life of Christ is able to teach us all things”—granted that we cannot perfectly imitate Christ, yet still we live in Christ and Christ lives in us and we are to be conformed to him (the life of Christ is the rule of our life)
- “Christ and his life ...are nothing other than pure, simple, clean love for God and man... a continual desire...for the kingdom of God and a ready desire to do his will” (p. 62)

### Affective Piety

- “how the heart and mind and affections must be changed, so that we might be conformed to Christ and his holy Gospel” (p. 21)

### Redefinition of Theology

- “Many think that theology is a mere science, or rhetoric, whereas as it is a living experience and practice” (p. 21) (quest for eminence vs. meekness and sincere humility)