



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are no serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites.

Romans 16:17-18

Why am I Lutheran? I want unity

Here in the middle of our devotions that answer the question: “Why am I a Lutheran?”, it seems like a good idea to look at the question from another angle, asking something like: “What are *not* good reasons for being a Lutheran?”

There are lots of good reasons to be a Lutheran, but at the same time, there are sometimes reasons given for being a Lutheran that have no real merit at all. Let’s take a quick look at some of those.

Bad Reason #1: Style

No matter what stylistic things you might associate with Lutheranism, they’re no reason to stay part of this denomination. There is no style that exists that God did not invent—all of art is his in the same way that all creation is his. If style is what keeps you Lutheran, you’re going to end up disappointed. They used to do it all in German, you know. (On the other side of this reason, of course, is that fact that style is a bad reason to leave Lutheranism. That’s not what God or religion is about.)

Bad Reason #2: Superiority

Maybe, in a Bible study or personal research, you’ve dug into those teachings that make the Lutheran church different from, say, Baptists or Catholics. Maybe, in a sermon or on a blog, you’ve heard the Lutheran approach or the Lutheran teachings referred to as better. Maybe, at some point in your time as a Lutheran, you’ve even heard the Lutheran church referred to as simply better than other Christian denominations. Having doctrine that reflects the Bible is best—no question. But there’s a secret that you need to know. The Lutheran church (and the Bible) teach that we don’t use doctrine to get away from those who are inferior. We use it to teach and unite with anyone who will listen. When we use terms of comparison to talk about other church bodies, we’re putting up dividers where the gospel wants us to be reaching out to unite. Lutherans aren’t superior. God is superior. Lutherans are just following him and trying to get as many people as possible to do the same.

Bad Reason #3: History

2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran church. That’s a big and round number, so it makes sense that folks want to celebrate it. There’s a rich tapestry of historical threads in Lutheranism that can be fascinating to discover and follow. But you shouldn’t be Lutheran because of what Lutherans did years ago. We’re Lutheran because of what Lutherans are doing now. Preaching the gospel, making disciples, promoting Jesus and Jesus alone as the source of hope. We’re Lutheran for the future, not for the past.

Prayer: Lord, keep our eyes fixed on the prize for which you have called us heavenward in Christ Jesus. May our words, actions, and faith be entirely about you and nothing else. Amen.