

Small Catechism

What is Confession?

Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

What is the Office of the Keys?

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (John 20:22-23)

What do you believe according to these words?

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the Evil Foe may have no power over me. **AMEN.**

Book of Concord – Christian Questions and their Answers

Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament [The "Christian Questions with Their Answers," designating Luther as the author, first appeared in an edition of the Small Catechism in 1551, five years after Luther's death].

1. *Do you believe that you are a sinner?*

Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

2. *How do you know this?*

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

3. *Are you sorry for your sins?*

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

4. *What have you deserved from God because of your sins?*

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See Romans 6:21,23.

5. *Do you hope to be saved?*

Yes, that is my hope.

6. *In whom then do you trust?*

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. *Who is Christ?*

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. *How many Gods are there?*

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

9. *What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?*

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. *Did the Father also die for you?*

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed his blood for me.

More Next week...