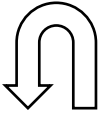


2026 – Studies for Lent

Practicing a Lutheran Spirituality

This Lenten period will be an opportunity to reflect, explore and challenge our beliefs, and grow our understanding of our faith.

Each study will focus on different aspects of Lutheran Spirituality.

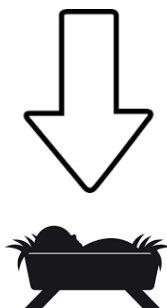
	In Week One – Spirituality – we will ask: what do we mean by “spirituality”? Can we be spiritual, Christian and Lutheran at the same time?
	In Week Two – Our human condition – we will reflect on our place in the world. What are we meant to be? What has gone wrong? What is needed to set things right?
	In Week Three – What's so great about Grace? – we will discover the grace of God, and compare the Theology of Glory with the Theology of the Cross.
	In Week Four – God comes to us – we will learn about the Means of Grace: the Word, Baptism and Holy Communion.
	In Week Five – Saved or Suffering? – we will consider what it means to be ‘saved’. When were we saved? What saves us? Is being saved a guarantee that we will never again have to suffer?
	In Week Six – Living as God's servants – we will consider the concept of ‘vocation’ and spirituality within our ordinary lives. Can we be spiritual and still be part of this world?

We hope you will find these studies valuable during this Lenten period.

Note: Text in *italics* are quotes from the book *The Spirituality of the Cross* by Gene Edward Veith (Jr).

Prayers and Blessings have been sourced from David Schubert, *Days and Seasons*,
Christian Prayer and Devotional Resources, Lutheran Publishing House, 1989

Week 1 - Spirituality



What is spirituality?

All of us here accept that we are spiritual people, and that we are on a spiritual journey. The basic meaning of spirit is to transcend, to stand apart from oneself. When we take time to look beyond ourselves, we may ask if there is a larger meaning to life, to which we can give ourselves. Our spiritual journey is in large part a quest to answer this question.

We Christians understand that God made us as spiritual beings, who look for a greater reality outside ourselves. God is also Spirit who is present within the world, striving to guide us on our journeys. St Augustine wrote: "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee." (Confessions). So, we are searching for God. The trouble is that we look in too many of the wrong places, as we will discover below. Nevertheless, God is never far away. The Good News is that unlike many other religions or forms of spirituality where good favour must be sought and earned, God comes down, seeks us out and desires a relationship with us.

Approaches to Spirituality

Adolf Koeberle notes three kinds of spiritual aspiration: **moralism**, in which the will seeks to achieve perfection of conduct; **speculation**, in which the mind seeks to achieve perfection of understanding; and **mysticism**, in which the soul seeks to achieve perfection by becoming one with God.

1. Moralism

Many people assume that moralism is, in fact, what Christianity is all about. Good people go to heaven, it is thought, while bad people go to hell. Christians are those who live morally upright lives, avoiding "sins" while doing good works. Sometimes this takes the form of rather small lifestyle choices – avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and other pretty pleasures – while sometimes it takes the form of working for high ideals, righting the wrongs of society through political activism and social reform.

Moralism is often accompanied by hypocrisy, a show of external righteousness that masks the true story of what is happening inside.

Q1: What makes someone 'morally upright' ('morally good')?
Consider Matthew 12:33-35; Matthew 15:10-11; or 1 Peter 1:13-25

Q2: What examples can you think of where society's assumption of Christians as 'moralists' has led to the perception of hypocrisy?

2. Speculation

Another approach to the spiritual life is speculation, the assumption that knowledge is the key to spiritual fulfillment. If we only knew the truth, if we could only find the key to understanding the complexities of life, if only we attained the right knowledge, then we would be content.

As with moralism, the way of speculation often becomes simply another occasion for human pride, manifesting itself in an elitism that scorns ordinary people, a private arrogance that shuts out the rest of the world.

Q3: Is knowledge alone the 'key to spiritual fulfillment'?
Consider 1 Corinthians 8:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; or 2 Timothy 3:1-7

Q4: How does pride show itself?
Consider Matthew 7:1-5; 2 Corinthians 10:17-18; Galatians 6:3-5

Q5: We are all individuals with different approaches to learning and development. What role does knowledge-seeking and education play in your faith? Do you need to see the hard facts? Do you take things on face value? Have there been elements of 'accepted' Christian beliefs that have felt like roadblocks to your faith?

3. Mysticism

Though the ways of moralism and speculation are followed by religious and nonreligious people alike, perhaps the most appealing mode of spirituality today is mysticism: attaining the ecstatic experience of becoming one with God.

Its (mysticism's) temptation is to use God for one's own purpose – to achieve an intensely pleasurable experience, to score a "spiritual high," to gain power to make one's life more pleasant.

Q6: How does one 'encounter' God?
Consider Matthew 18:20 or John 17: 21-22

Q7: We have all experienced spiritual 'highs' and 'lows'. Personally, do you feel the presence of God walking with you more during the highs or during the lows? Why?

Lutheran Spirituality

Koeberle says that the three approaches to spirituality are tied to the various faculties of the human mind: moralism exerts the efforts of the will; speculation exerts the efforts of the intellect; mysticism exerts the efforts of the emotions.

Though all of these ways contain elements of wisdom, Lutheran spirituality is totally different from them all. Instead of insisting that human beings attain perfection, Lutheran spirituality begins by facing up to imperfection.

Lutheran spirituality begins with the insight that all human effort to reach God is futile. God is no passive observer, no abstract being far beyond the world and looking down. Rather, God is the one who is active, not ourselves. The issue is not our ascent to God, but God's descent to us.

Lutheran spirituality is all about what God does. To rescue us from our miserable and depraved human condition, He became a human being Himself.

Q8: Discuss this description of 'Lutheran Spirituality'. Do you find it easy to accept?

Q9: How has God demonstrated he is an 'active' God? Consider Romans 5:8.

Q10: Can we be spiritual, Christian and Lutheran at the same time?

Prayers

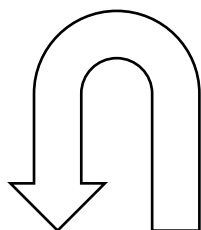
Lord, you awaken us to delight your praise;
Grant that we may know you, call on you, and praise you;
For you have made us for yourself,
And our hearts are restless, till they rest in you.
Amen.

(St Augustine)

Blessing

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.
Amen.

Week 2 – Our human condition



The opening remarks in this series of studies noted that we are on a journey, a journey from life to death. The journey, however, is not straightforward. We may not be sure of the direction that we should take. Often, we find ourselves not living up to our own ideals. There are regrets, pain that we have suffered or caused. As we journey, we see much around us that is wrong: murders, abuse of all kinds, wars, exploitation. The list seems endless. “The signs that human life is not what it might be are so widespread that every religion and philosophy of life offers some explanation for the human predicament.” (Hanson, 22)

If we are to come to terms with ourselves, we must do some searching of our own human condition. Hanson suggests that we ask three questions:

- 1) What are we meant to be?
- 2) What has gone wrong?
- 3) What is needed to set things right?

1) What are we meant to be?

Hanson: “According to a Christian understanding, our fundamental goal in life is to be genuinely free persons whose hearts are devoted to God and caring toward other people and creatures. There are three aspects to this priority:

- 1) You shall have no other gods. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37).
Read Exodus 20: 1-3
- 2) “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).
- 3) We are created to be genuinely free people. As Jesus has freed us from our sinful natures, we are free to devote ourselves to God and to our neighbour.

Q1 What other values might impinge on our devotion to God?

2) What has gone wrong?

The first three chapters of Genesis give an account of how human beings fell out with God. The traditional term for this falling out is “the Fall”. At its heart, were the humans breaking trust with God. Becoming alienated from God, led to self-alienation. They discovered their nakedness. Then their relationship with one another was broken, as they blamed each other, and then the man began to subordinate the woman. Following closely was alienation from nature, God’s creation.

The central word for this complete alienation is *sin*, which is a state more than particular acts of wrongdoing. It is a lack of faith in God, which leads to a world of “self-consciousness and self-centredness, estrangement and exile” (Borg, *The Heart of Christianity*).

Q2: How does this state of “self-consciousness and self-centredness, estrangement and exile” show itself in our lives?

3) What is Needed to Set Things Right?

The root of our human problem is that we have placed our faith in something other than God. So, how do we reorientate ourselves, so that God is once again at the centre of our lives?

Lutheran teaching says that there is nothing we can do, by ourselves, to turn back to God. Humanly, however, we struggle with this understanding. Much Christian teaching, moreover, says that we have to do something to earn our way back to God's favour. And we have to make the decision to turn back to God. Somehow, we have the free will to make a decision for God. Lutheran teaching, however, says that we are not able to turn our lives over to God. Only God can bring about this change in us. It is God's presence that enables us to trust in God. Our trust is a response to God's presence. This loving presence of God is seen most deeply in Jesus. Paul says, 'God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8). It is the grace and love of God that turns us around and brings us into close friendship with God in which we trust, love and enjoy his love.

Q3: Why do you think the view that we must do something on our part to accept God is so widespread?

Prayers

Source of Life, in Christ you have reconciled us to you and given us peace. We thank you for looking upon us with such kindness.
Amen.

Blessing

May the God of peace, who has raised from death our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, provide us with every good thing we need in order to do his will.
Amen.

Week 3 – What's so great about Grace?



We all know and see firsthand the impacts of sin in our lives and the world. It can be tempting to focus on our own efforts to improve ourselves and be 'better Christians'.

But we fall short. We are reminded that God, in his grace, comes to us despite our sin. God comes to us, with a free gift of forgiveness.

Faith, Law and Gospel

Faith for Lutherans is not a "decision to accept Christ," as it is described by later evangelicals. Making salvation a function of the will would be moralism, dependent, again, upon what we do, our effort, willpower, and action, in all of their actual futility. Lutherans consider faith itself to be a gift of God, created in the human heart as His action through the Holy Spirit, working through Word and Sacrament.

Q1: Faith itself is a gift and not a good work that we do. Read Ephesians 2:8–9.

A genuine confrontation with God's Law destroys complacency, security, and every shred of self-righteousness. The Law may well seem negative, depressing, and unpleasant, and indeed it is. But the Law is the prelude to the Gospel. Those broken by the Law are convinced of their need and of their inability to save themselves. Then the message that God does it all comes as an astounding relief, as good news (which is what Gospel means). They are connected to Christ not in a mere mystical sense, as if they ascended into the spiritual realm, but actually, as Christ descends into their lives through Word and Sacrament.

Q2: What does 'The Law' say?

Consider Romans 3:19-20 or Galatians 3:10-12

Q3: What does 'The Gospel' say?

Consider Romans 1:16-17 or Galatians 3:13-14

The Law and the Gospel, the dynamics of repentance and acceptance of Christ, are part of the fabric of Lutheran spirituality, not just a one-time occurrence but a pattern entered into again and again throughout one's life. There are times when the Christian particularly needs to hear the Law, and there are times when the Christian needs to hear the Gospel. People who exhibit pride, wilful sin, and self-righteousness need to hear the Law – otherwise, they will be oblivious to their need for Christ. Those, however, who are hurting, who are plagued by guilt, hopelessness, and despair, need to hear the Gospel.

Q4: What does this pattern of Law and Gospel mean for the way we understand the Christian life?

Consider Romans 7:7-25.

Q5: Have you felt times when you needed to hear the Law, and times when you needed to hear the Gospel? Share with the group if you are comfortable.

The Hiddenness of God

God conceals Himself, often in things that we would least expect - a crucified criminal, a book, water, bread, wine, an ordinary pastor, trials and suffering, human beings working and raising their families. The hiddenness of God is one of the most profound themes in Lutheran spirituality. It is part of what is termed 'the theology of the cross,' which might be better thought of as the spirituality of the cross. It has to do with Christ's work, His presence, and how we draw closer to Him. The theology of the cross also deals with the difficulties and hardships that Christians must live through in an utterly realistic and honest way.

Q6: Have you found God to be 'hidden' in any aspects of your daily life?

The Theology of the Cross compared with The Theology of Glory

The Theology of Glory

Today, one of the most popular Christian trends – proclaimed by TV preachers, many Pentecostal mega-churches, and itinerant evangelists in poverty-stricken countries – is the “prosperity gospel.” This kind of “good news” teaches ways of using God as a means to attain our own health, happiness, and prosperity. Amazon sells Christian diet books, titles on the ‘Management Techniques of Jesus Christ,’ and analyses of Christ as the master salesman. Certainly, the Bible has much to say about how we should live, and its wisdom can shape our family lives and cultural issues in profound ways. But the prosperity preachers and self-help writers create the impression that by following certain steps, family problems will disappear, our bodies will do what we want, our financial problems will evaporate, we will solve our nation’s problems, grow the Church, and live happily ever after.

The best Christian families still experience conflicts, intractable problems, and embarrassing failures. The most devout Christian may go bankrupt or have a mental breakdown or contract a heartbreaking disease and not be healed. Self-help is not much help then, except to accentuate our sense of failure. Even if some step-by-step spiritual principles are valid, given our inability to keep God’s Law, we never consistently follow them. The ideal of the ‘victorious Christian life’ proves impossible to attain, so we have to suppress our failures, keep trying harder (and buying more books), and present a more positive front to the world. Luther called this kind of self-aggrandizing, success-centred, power spirituality ‘the theology of glory’.

Q7: What is ‘the theology of glory’? How is it prevalent today, not only in Christian stores, but among Christians and in Christian churches?

Q8: Does ‘the theology of glory’ affect our ability to have contentment in the Lord?
Consider Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:11-13, 19; 1 Timothy 6:6-8; Hebrews 13:5-6

The Theology of the Cross

I have heard that missionaries sometimes have a hard time explaining Jesus to followers of animistic faiths. “Our god is a great warrior,” they sometimes respond. “He would not let himself be killed like your Jesus.” The theology of the cross cuts against the grain of all natural religion, all of what we expect and want in a spiritual system.

Coming to faith involves being broken by the Law, coming to grips with our moral failure. Legalistic religions, in which we save ourselves by our own efforts, are very specifically theologies of glory, optimistically assuming success and glorifying the powers of the successful, virtuous individual. But when we realize just how lost we are, then we cling to the cross, trusting Christ to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. This is saving faith, the theology of the cross.

Q9: Read Philippians 2:6-8 and Isaiah 53:2-6. How do these passages demonstrate the ‘theology of the cross’?

Q10: How is the ‘theology of the cross’ a great comfort? What might it have to say about the church today (i.e. regarding congregational membership, worship practices, God’s work among His people, God’s work in the world, etc.)?

Prayers

Good Jesus, eternal shepherd, I thank you that with your precious body and blood you graciously come to us in our poverty and exile, and restore us, and with your own lips you invite us to share in this mystery, saying, Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Amen.

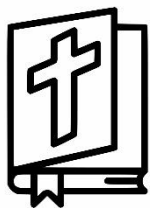
(Thomas à Kempis)

Blessing

Grant, Lord, that I may glory only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
Amen.

(Based on Galatians 6:14)

Week 4 – God comes to us



The Means of Grace

How do we attain a saving, life-changing faith? The answer, in Lutheran spirituality, has to do with the so-called Means of Grace. We are connected to Christ, and the Holy Spirit works both faith and good works in our lives by means of the Word and the Sacraments.

The Means of Grace – the Word and Sacraments – are material things. Mundane acts such as going to church and living in a family and going to work are charged with spiritual significance.

It is a Lutheran truism that God generally works through means. Just as God is not ashamed to inspire the utterances of fallen human beings, to have His truths written in human language with paper and ink, He is not ashamed to have His Word communicated by the halting speech of His followers. The main difference between God's Word and merely human words, is that God – the Holy Spirit – promises to be at work whenever His Word is spoken.

Q1: What examples can you think of where God works through means?

Consider:

- God creates 'the heavens and the earth' by means of the Word [Genesis 1]
- God promises deliverance through 'the seed of the woman' [Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4-5]
- God calls and sends Moses as His spokesman [Exodus 3]
- God 'meets' with His people in a given location [Exodus 25:22; 30:6; 30:36]
- God speaks through the prophets, disciples, apostles [Luke 10:16]
- God's work through Holy Baptism [Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:4 (Luke 3:3); 11:3 (Luke 20:4); Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:11-14 (Genesis 17:11-14); 1 Peter 3:21]
- God's work through the Lord's Supper [Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 22:24; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-29]

The Word and Sacraments

The Bible

That God's Word is written in a book, which anyone can read whenever they want, sounds unspiritual to many people. But Christians believe that God's Word is something tangible, written down in ink and paper, accessible, and objective. It is a Means of Grace. The words of the Bible do not merely convey information, they convey the Holy Spirit.

The point of Bible reading is not merely to learn about God, to see how we should behave, or to gain principles for successful living, though the Bible does communicate such things. The Bible does things to us. To read the Bible as a spiritual venture is to be confronted, in the most personal terms, with God Himself.

Q2: What did Jesus say about the purpose of God's Word? John 17:6-19

Q3: Is the Bible God's Word? How do we know?

Q4: How does the distinction between "Law" and "Gospel" help us understand the Bible's "hard edges"?

Q5: How does one's understanding of Scripture's purpose affect one's understanding of Christ, the Church, and the Christian life? How does one's understanding of Christ affect one's understanding of the Bible?

The Word and Sacraments

Baptism & Holy Communion

The Word of God itself speaks of other tangible Means of Grace, which, by the power of that same Word, also convey Christ and create faith. These are the sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion. Lutheran spirituality is a sacramental spirituality, centred in the conviction that the Holy Spirit actually descends in the waters of Baptism, and that Christ is really present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. These are astounding claims. But they are more examples of the objectivity of God's grace and our justification by faith.

As Luther explains, "To be baptized in God's name is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself". Therefore, although it is performed by human hands, it is still truly God's own work.

Infant Baptism is perhaps the best illustration of justification by faith. To be sure, a baby does not have much knowledge or capacity for choice – but faith is not a matter of intellectual mastery, nor is it a decision. Faith is trust, a relationship of utter dependence on Christ.

Q6: In Matthew 18:2-4, Jesus tells us to become like children. What does this say about our dependence on the love and care of our heavenly Father, compared to our tendency as adults to struggle to save ourselves by our own efforts?

In the sacrament of Holy Communion, all of Lutheran spirituality is crystallized: God acts, objectively, through matter, embodying the Gospel and promising the forgiveness of sins. And, more than that – or rather, making all of these efficacious – is the real presence of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the most significant of God's words that constitute the Sacrament, Luther points out, are "given for you." In the Sacrament, Christ gives Himself to me. All of His promises and everything that He did for my redemption and forgiveness on the cross are made so tangible that I can taste them.

Q7: Veith says Holy Communion "embodies the Gospel". Discuss what he might mean by this.

Q8: What role does Holy Communion play in our church community?
Consider 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 or 1 Corinthians 11:33-34

Prayers

We pray, Lord, that we who have been adopted as your children by grace, being dead to sin may live to righteousness, and being with Christ in his death, may put to death our old self, and destroy our sinful nature. Let us who share in the death of Your Son Jesus Christ share also in his resurrection, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(Book of Common Prayer)

Blessing

May we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory, now and forever!
Amen.

(2 Peter 3:18)

Week 5 – Saved or Suffering?



Objective Justification

When a Lutheran is asked, “When were you saved?” the answer might be something on the order of “about two thousand years ago, when Jesus died on the cross and then rose from the dead.”

Lutheran theologians speak of “objective justification.” Strictly speaking, justification took place outside of ourselves, in the actual historical events of Christ’s death and resurrection.

Those things that we feel so guilty for, Jesus objectively bore in His body; thus, despite any subjective feelings we may have of guilt over what we have done, forgiveness is also objective.

- Q1: What effect does objective justification have on our relationship with God in our daily lives? Consider 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
- Q2: If forgiveness is objective, why do we still feel guilty?

Bearing the cross

“As much as parishioners may want to see the hand of God in nature’s beautiful sunrises, moving stories of conversion, or success in parish programs,” observes Pastor Richard Eyer, “it is in the cross of Christ and in bearing their own crosses that God chooses to reveal his heart to them.”

It is natural for us to want to save ourselves, to cultivate a spiritual independence and self-sufficiency so that we can be in control of our spiritual lives. Being helpless and utterly dependent, however, is precisely our spiritual condition. We are utterly helpless to save ourselves. We are utterly dependent on God. Saving faith involves giving up on our pretensions of being self-sufficient, strong, and in control. Instead, we are to rest in utter dependence on Jesus Christ.

- Q3: How is the theology of the cross illustrated in Paul’s life according to 2 Corinthians 12:7-10?
- Q4: Is being saved a guarantee that we will never again have to suffer?
- Q5: What is God’s purpose in imposing the cross on His people? Consider 2 Corinthians 5:7.

The Hidden Life

Bearing the cross often has to do more with the petty, ordinary obstacles and frustrations of everyday life and with troubles in one’s vocations. Boredom and bad moods can be crosses no less than physical pain and emotional turmoil. Whether the problems are dramatic or mundane, they are all “trials.”

It must be emphasized that the theology of the cross does not offer some pat answer for suffering, some new theodicy that offers a new explanation for why God allows bad things to happen. For Luther, struggling with the “why” is at the essence of trial.

Crying out to God in the depths of our need is an act of faith and an occasion in which the hidden God who answers prayers draws closer.

“The wind blows where it wishes,” says Jesus Himself, “and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). God’s Spirit is at work in the life of every Christian, mysteriously changing the heart, acting through Word and Sacrament, ministering in trials and tribulations, and creating someone who will stand before God in heaven as holy. But this process cannot be evident to the naked eye, nor can it be measured and tracked, nor are Christians necessarily conscious of how far they have come.

- Q6: How is the Christian life itself hidden? See Colossians 3:3–4

Prayers

Lord Jesus Christ,
Who very early in the morning while the sun was
still rising, rose from the dead;
Raise us up in daily newness of life and save us,
For you are our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.

(Lancelot Andrewes)

Blessing

Praise, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, power
and might, belong to our God for ever and ever.
Amen.

Week 6 – Living as God’s servants



Masks of God

God is hidden in Jesus, in the cross, and in the Sacraments; He is also hidden in everyday life. The ordinary routines of making a living, going shopping, being a good citizen, and spending time with one’s family are spheres in which God is at work, through human means. Luther described the various vocations – in the family, the workplace, the church, and the society – as all being “masks of God”.

- Q1: What ‘masks of God’ can you identify in your day-to-day?
Q2: How is God at work behind our work?

Vocation

Lutheran theology speaks of two kingdoms, that God rules both the spiritual and the earthly realm, though in different ways. In the spiritual realm, He works through the Word and the Sacraments. In the earthly realm, He works through vocation.

God, who pours out His generosity on the just and the unjust, believer and unbeliever alike, hides Himself in the ordinary social functions and stations of life, even the most humble. To use another of Luther’s examples, God Himself is milking the cows through the vocation of the milkmaid.

All of the vocations are thus channels of God’s love.

- Q3: How is God’s governance of the spiritual realm and His governance of the earthly realm similar and dissimilar?
Q4: How can you use your vocation to show love to your neighbour?
Q5: How do we know what our vocations are?
Q6: What place does prayer have in vocation?

Good Works

Though justification has nothing to do with good works, vocation does involve good works. The Christian’s relationship to God is based on sheer grace and forgiveness on God’s part; the Christian’s relationship to other people, however, is to be based on love put into action. As Gustaf Wingren summarizes Luther, “God does not need our good works, but our neighbour does.”

- Q7: Identify the references to justification and vocation in Ephesians 2:8-10.
Q8: Consider the quote “God does not need our good works, but our neighbour does.” How is this contrary to our human nature? Why doesn’t God need ‘our’ good works? Why do our neighbours?

Luther goes so far as to say that works done supposedly for God alone and not for the benefit of actual human beings lose their moral value:

“If you find yourself in a work by which you benefit God or his saints or yourself and not your neighbour, know that such a work is not good.”

- Q9: How do you think Luther is defining ‘good work’ here?
Q10: How are these words contrary to the way of the world today?

Good Works

In God's design, we are all loving and serving one another. We are all dependent on one another and, ultimately, on Him. Unfortunately, of course, we do not always live that way. We want to be served rather than serve. We sin in vocation.

And yet, even though we resist God's project of working through us, there is something about vocation itself that makes good things happen to others despite ourselves. There is a great conflict and irony between our generally selfish motivations and the way the masked God works in vocation.

Q11: How does God use even our selfish motivations to accomplish His purposes?

Q12: Do you think 'good works' are best categorised under 'The Law' or 'The Gospel'? Why?

Q13: Can we be spiritual and still be part of this world?

Prayers

O God, the King of righteousness, lead us in all the ways of justice and of peace; inspire us to break down all oppression and wrong, to gain for all people their due reward, and from all people their due service; so that each may live for all, and all may care for each, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

(William Temple)

Blessing

Lord God, the source of hope,
Fill us with all joy and peace by means of our faith in you,
So that our hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

(Based on Romans 15:13)