

“For God Leads Down to Hell and Brings Back”:
Theodicy and the Word of Comfort in Luther’s Theology

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October 29, 2008

In the fall of 1995 I came to PLTS to interview for the position in Reformation history and theology. I was teaching in Minnesota at the time and wasn’t sure moving would be in the best interests of our family. My mother chided me, “You can at least go for the interview. After all, you’ve always had a thing for California, and those Minnesota winters stink.” So I came, and PLTS conquered. I fell in love with this community then, and nothing has changed. Thank you for honoring me in these many ways today.

My guide through the interview process that fall was Tim Lull, whom I had known since my days as a parish pastor in New England. You may have noted in your bulletin that the Luther Lecture, among other events here at PLTS, is supported through the fund established in Tim’s memory by his family. Through all the years we worked together he was my mentor, my tireless fan, and my friend. Lucy and I are a small family when we are on the West Coast, but Tim and Mary Carlton and Chris and Peter and Taylor have made us a big family . . . and a fairly funky one too, I might add. Lull rhymes with dull, but it shouldn’t. These bonds of love make this invitation to speak today wonderfully sweet. Thank you.

Now let us turn to the subject of the day. “You know, Professor Strohl, I really admire you. After what you have been through, you’re still a Christian. A lot of people would have just quit believing. Why haven’t you?” It was like taking the SAT’s – teachers advised us that when we weren’t sure of an answer, we should go with the first one that came to mind. Don’t overthink the question; once you start flip-flopping among alternatives, the odds get higher and higher that you will get the answer wrong. So this is what came out of my mouth, “We will never turn our backs on Jesus because he has never turned his back on us.” My student was satisfied with the reply, even grateful, I suppose, that I took the edge off her own doubts. But I was left wondering how to explain my bold proclamation, for in truth, as common as the shipwreck of a marriage is, the pain and fear of my own damn near broke me. My daughter and I have been lamed in ways that may never heal. So why wouldn’t a person think that Jesus had

taken a breather from my affairs and turned his back, whether in anger, indifference or forgetfulness?

In the wake of this experience I realized that much of the pastoral comfort I had previously offered people had been sincere but shallow. Since that season of *Anfechtung*, I have devoted great energy to understanding what it is that I then came to know. Today I want to explore for you the various ways Luther responds to human suffering. What is his view of how God is at work? What are Christians to do when hell closes in?

In 2008 Bart D. Ehrman, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and former Baptist minister, released a book entitled *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question – Why We Suffer* (New York: HarperOne, 2008). The book offers a critical overview of the various biblical approaches to suffering. It also recounts the author's own loss of faith when God's problem became his. If God could live with the horror and injustice of massive suffering in the world, Bart Ehrman could not live with God.

For many people who inhabit this planet, life is a cesspool of misery and suffering. I came to a point where I simply could not believe that there is a good and kindly disposed Ruler who is in charge of it.

The problem of suffering became for me the problem of faith. After many years of grappling with the problem, trying to explain it, thinking through the explanations that others have offered – some of them pat answers charming for their simplicity, others highly sophisticated and nuanced reflections of serious philosophers and theologians – after thinking about the alleged answers and continuing to wrestle with the problem, about nine or ten years ago I finally admitted defeat, came to realize that I could no longer believe in the God of my tradition, and acknowledged that I was an agnostic: I don't "know" if there is a God; but I think that if there is one, he certainly isn't the one proclaimed by the Judeo-Christian tradition, the one who is actively and powerfully involved in this world . . . I started to lose my faith. I now have lost it altogether. I no longer go to church, no longer believe, no longer consider myself a Christian. (pp. 3-4)

Professor Ehrman catalogues biblical understandings of suffering in nine chapters, pointing out the way they sometimes conflict with one another and

the failure of any perspective to account for the tidal wave of suffering that engulfs the human race. Terrible things can happen to godless people, the Bible tells me so – look at Sodom and Gomorrah – but if that were the criterion for the infliction of suffering, why New Orleans and not the Big Apple? Ehrman will have none of it.

When it comes to the idea of suffering as redemptive, he is equally dismissive. One can point to particular examples in Scripture (like Joseph and his assertion, “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good” and of course Jesus himself, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”) where God does bring good out of evil, redemption and new life out of suffering and death, so that many are benefitted thereby. But, Ehrman argues, this is by no means the rule of human experience. The reality, he writes is that *most* suffering is not positive, does not hold a silver lining, is not good for the body or soul, and leads to wretched, not positive, outcomes. One can feel Ehrman bristling with outrage when he concludes that trying to see good in every evil is to deprive evil of its character. If this is what you need to believe in order to remain a believer in the face of suffering, you will become a heartless if pious member of the human family.

Ehrman is equally appalled by the view of suffering as a test of faith imposed by God to strengthen His servant’s loyalty. If one is sifted by the evil one, it is ultimately in the service of God’s purposes. Yet if God did really kill Job’s ten children in order to see if Job would curse Him, well wouldn’t Job have the right to do so? And to suggest that God could make reparations to Job by giving him ten more children is simply obscene in Ehrman’s opinion.

How, then, to deal with suffering? Avoid it as much as possible and alleviate it wherever you can. Face it as an ethical rather than a spiritual dilemma. Having reviewed scriptural explanations of suffering from the punitive to the apocalyptic, Professor Ehrman does finally settle on one biblical view as acceptable:

I have to admit that at the end of the day, I do have a biblical view of suffering. As it turns out, it is the view put forth in the book of Ecclesiastes. There is a lot that we can’t know about this world. A lot of this world doesn’t make sense. Sometimes there is no justice. Things don’t go as planned or as they should. A lot of bad things happen. But life also brings good things. The solution to life is to enjoy it while we can, because it is fleeting. This world, and

everything in it, is temporary, transient, and soon to be over. We won't live forever -- in fact, we won't live long. And so we should enjoy life to the fullest, as much as we can, as long as we can. That's what the author of Ecclesiastes thinks, and I agree. (p. 276)

He dedicates the book to two friends and celebrates the fact that they favor him with their company for long evenings of drinking fine scotch, smoking fine cigars, and talking about life, family, friends, work, love virtues, vices and desires. Professor Ehrman concludes his word of thanks with the question, "Does it get any better than that?"

Using this contemporary analysis of theologies of suffering, how does Luther measure up? Well, for one thing, he would be equally insistent that the proper response to the suffering of our neighbors is to alleviate it. Luther would also affirm the manifold good that life brings and the obligation to receive and revel in it. This was the man who figured that the right response to the impending end of the world was to go out and plant an apple tree, to become immersed in matters of love and marriage and family, to pursue one's vocation with pride and pleasure. This was the man who counseled a seriously depressed gentleman to spend time with friends, drinking wine, listening to music, and checking out pretty girls. One assumes a person needn't be clinically depressed to avail him- or herself of these blessings. The economy may be faltering, but for me a little Texas country music, a glimpse of George Clooney and a glass of Jonesy's home brew with my homies do restore my soul. Be sure to count your blessings in this respect, for, in Luther's view, it is an act of thanksgiving. It is alright to have fun!

However, when it comes to the ways of accounting for suffering that Ehrman finds objectionable, Luther does not fare well. He frequently proclaims the catastrophes striking communities and individuals as the judgment of God upon their sinfulness and unbelief. In other words, there is a direct correlation between conduct and suffering; you get what you deserve. If you don't like it, stop deluding yourself and try repenting. Think of Luther's vile diatribes against the Roman Church, the Jewish people, the sacramentarians and the Anabaptists. He charges them with deliberately trying to undermine the Gospel and denying its truth when they know better. They have become instruments of the devil, something both more and less than human. God rightly abandons them to a miserable fate, and evangelical Christians are no longer required to regard them as their neighbors. And then there are Luther's own feckless, godless Germans:

Nevertheless, so great is the ingratitude for the grace God has offered, so great the contempt for the Word, so frenzied the accumulation of daily sins, of avarice, usury, debauchery, enmity, perfidy, envy, pride, impiety and blasphemies, that it is impossible for Germany finally to be spared and indulged by God. He will either chastise us with the Turk, or he will visit upon us at some point another such internal evil. Indeed, we feel punishments and evils, we grieve and plead, but we laugh at horrible sins over which the Spirit grieves and God is touched inwardly with sorrow. What wonder then if sometime God in turn would laugh at us, as we weep and wail in our ruin, we who continually neither hear nor regard the extended hand of grace, calling, and if it were possible, crying out against us.

My advisor in seminary, Eric Gritsch, pointed out that by making such ultimate judgments, Luther transgressed the tenets of his own theology. The God of the Gospel is one who acts through masks in the world. The theology of the cross says that God is most at work where least expected, in the midst of what is vulnerable and despised, broken and needy. Yet in the case of his opponents, Luther leaves the ambiguous realm of history behind and pronounces a final eschatological judgment. It is a bold move and a dubious one, to say the least. Christ is sent to those who need a physician. What He invariably encounters are sinful, perverse human beings, trapped in arrogance and despair. What He never finds are people predisposed to embrace the life of faith. Freeing our wills from their bondage to love of self is Christ's work alone. Since this is Christ's appointed mission, onslaughts of divine retribution, before the risen Lord has completed His work on earth, would be an unwarranted intrusion. It was simply too early to write anyone off, no matter how godless Luther judged them to be.

We turn next to the category Professor Ehrman identifies as redemptive suffering, that is, the belief that God brings good out of evil, a good that would have been impossible if the evil had not existed. Here Luther is quite at home. He frequently seeks to comfort and encourage sufferers with the assurance that God is at work in their trials, not to destroy but to strengthen them. The following comes from a letter he wrote to a friend caught in the turmoil of *Anfechtung*:

If there were no temptation to exercise the faith of believers, you know what would be the fate of such untroubled, idle, self-indulgent Christians. They would end up in the same state as has the Pope. Since temptations are the rue, myrrh, aloes and antidote against all

worms, pus, rottenness and excrement of this body of sin, it follows that they are not to be despised nor are they to be sought or chosen according to our own will. On the contrary, we are to bear temptations of whatever sort God determines to inflict upon us, since he knows which temptations, of what nature and in what amount will be best suited and most beneficial to us. (WA Br 10, No. 3720, 1-11)

At times Luther compares God to a father who takes a cherished apple away from his child; for the father it is merely play but for the child it is deadly earnest. Her longing to recover what her father had given her draws her back to him and forces her to seek frantically for the gift he had made, which is just what her father intends.

Luther uses biblical figures to help believers understand these strange ways of God. He presents their stories of suffering at God's hands and their persistent endurance as paradigmatic for all Christians. Here, for example, is his praise of the discipleship of the beleaguered Joseph:

But when it comes to practice, when God snatches Joseph from the embrace of his parents, his grandfather, father, and the whole household, and he is hurled into prison in a foreign land on the charge of adultery and remains there in constant expectation of death – will anyone interpret this as the good will of God?

Therefore we should know that God hides Himself under the form of the worst devil. This teaches us that the goodness, mercy, and power of God cannot be grasped by speculation but must be understood on the basis of experience. Just endure and wait for the Lord. Hold fast. Be content with His Word, just as Joseph has the Word of faith. He knows that he is the son of Jacob, who received from God the promise concerning the future Seed and blessing. Yet when all things appeared to be the contrary of the promise that was given, he undoubtedly sobbed and complained about his wretched condition. But the Lord said to him: “Wait . . . Let your heart take courage. Hold fast.” . . . These alternate changes from comfort to distress were observed in Joseph's heart until at length he looked about and said with wonder: “Ah, I could never have hoped for this liberation or understood this power and goodness of God which He has shown in my case!” Then his heart leaps for sheer joy. Then he exults with his whole heart. He congratulates himself on his disgrace, death, and imprisonment. Thus Joseph is an illustrious example when he sobs

and when he exults after the trial has come to an end. (LW 7: 175-176)

What begins as an encounter with the hidden God proves to be the revelation of Joseph's redeemer.

Another important figure for Luther is the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15, who comes to Jesus seeking healing for her daughter. She experiences the hiddenness of God in its most unnerving form. Christ the Savior acts like a jerk, responding to her desperation with the dismissive "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But Luther wastes no ink trying to make excuses for Jesus. The important thing is how the woman faces Him down. Luther describes this as "a deep and difficult teaching about the true battle and the fear of death which faith in God requires" (WA 52, 177, 29-30). This mother models discipleship at its purest. She blows right past the impropriety of a Gentile woman hunting down Jesus the Jew. She makes her claim upon His compassion, even though she is not one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. She talks back to Him. She presses Him to be for her and her ailing daughter the god made known in the good news that has reached her ears. The woman will not be deflected. And she prevails. "Jesus answered her, 'O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed instantly."

The story of Jacob wrestling at the ford of the river Jabbok from Genesis 32 is one of Luther's favorites. At the end of this terrifying episode the patriarch realizes that the same God has both attacked and blessed him: "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." He is given the name Israel because he has striven with God and man and prevailed. Luther interprets the story as another example of redemptive suffering. It is God's purpose to discipline Jacob and test his faith in this intimate way, a sign, says Luther, of "most familiar love." And it works. Jacob responds to his suffering with an extraordinary sense of purpose; he's damned if he won't get the blessing he craves despite his exhaustion and injury. Like the Canaanite woman, to whom Luther explicitly compares him, Jacob refuses to surrender to despair. And it is done for him as he desires.

The story of the sacrifice of Isaac is, next to the passion of Christ, the most harrowing story of trial by faith in the Bible. Once again Luther does not try to second guess God's motives. In response to the question, "Why did God allow Adam and Eve to be tempted?" he responds, ". . . the answer to all such inquiries must be only this: It pleased the Lord that Adam should be

tempted and should test his powers. So it still is today” (LW 1, 145). To try to go beyond this, to seek to make the hidden God god **for me** is blasphemous and dangerous for the believer. In class recently I told my students how when I was in third grade I accepted a dare from my best friend to walk out on the ice of the creek we passed going home from school. I tread carefully and foolishly forward, and suddenly the ice broke and I plunged into the cold, murky water below. This, I think, is a good image for what Luther was warning against. Don’t proceed beyond the territory marked out by the cross of Christ. It is all you need to know for your health and salvation. And if you press beyond this, alas, the ice will give way, and you will plummet down where the stout arms of faith may no longer reach you.

One more aside before we get back to Abraham. You may have noted that most of the biblical figures I have used come from the Pentateuch. Luther insisted that the Old Testament was essential to the Gospel message and did not consider preaching from the New Testament alone adequate or faithful. Nevertheless, my students are regularly disturbed by Luther’s very unscientific exegesis of the Hebrew Bible. Of course, for him there was no Hebrew Bible, just two testaments of the one Christian Scripture. He dealt with it as a canon, not disparate parts. Luther finds Christ everywhere from the creation story on. The gospel promises are proclaimed to the ancestors, in a veiled fashion to be sure, but in an efficacious one beyond doubt. They are not second class citizens in the kingdom of God. Luther even proposes that Eve might have been the first proclaimer of the good news.

He does not, of course, have the definitive word on what a text means. Indeed he sometimes speculates far beyond what the text justifies. (But the results can be so entertaining!) Yet Luther brought the scriptures alive, challenging them to open themselves to the pressing questions of his conscience and his era. He was a scholar in the 16th-century style; he was a student of the apostolic sort, waiting for the Lord to open his eyes and interpret in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. There is as much preaching in Luther’s commentaries as in his sermons. This is not the stuff of contemporary exegetical practice, but I would argue there is an important place for it when we seek to read the Bible as a book of faith. Luther confronted the Scriptures with particular questions; he searched for what had been overlooked, voices that hadn’t been heard, teachings that had been misrepresented. In this quest he has much in common with

contemporary biblical scholars who espouse feminist analysis, queer theory or colonialist critique to unlock what has yet to be heard.

Now back to Father Abraham. For Luther, as for Paul, the history of this patriarch is essential to the case for justification by faith apart from the works of the law. “In hope [Abraham] believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was ‘reckoned to him as righteousness’” (Romans 4:18-22). Abraham’s sufferings are legion from the time he heeds God’s command and with Sarah leaves their home for an unspecified destination. But the sacrifice of Isaac cuts him the way no other trial could.

God has promised Abraham and Sarah not only a land of their own but also descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. Their inability to conceive had been the cause of bitter grief, but now they behold their son Isaac growing in strength and grace before their very eyes. Then comes the command that Abraham sacrifice their only child. He takes the boy (although Luther seems to think he was a young man) and sets forth without hesitation. His grief, says Luther, is twofold – the impending death of Isaac and the apparent breaking of God’s promise. How can there be any descendants for Abraham and Sarah if they lose Isaac? Yet the patriarch finds his way through this conundrum by faith. He will hold to the promise despite the grim circumstances. Even should Isaac be burned to ashes, yet he shall live, concludes Abraham, because God has told me that he shall be the father of children. Thus the patriarch proclaims the doctrine of the resurrection long before Jesus comes on the scene. This promise of life and salvation is the only consolation that can sustain Abraham or any believer in the time of trial. It forms the core of the very being of God. Commenting on Genesis 22:16 (“By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord”), Luther writes:

. . . the fact that God swears by Himself is something great and wonderful. For it is an indication of a heart burning with inexpressible love and with a desire for our salvation, as though God were saying: “I desire so greatly to be believed and long so intensely to have My words trusted that I am not only making a promise but am offering Myself as a pledge. I have nothing greater to give as a

pledge, because as surely as I am God, there is nothing greater than I. If I do not keep My promises, I shall no longer be He who I am.” (LW 4, 143)

While reflecting on Abraham’s discipleship, Luther again confronts his readers with the concept of punitive suffering, but his meditations take a paradoxical, at points ecstatic, turn:

For the devil looks for contradictions; and when he gains nothing by them, he invents fallacies: “God would not be contradicting Himself and have lied, would He? First He commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son; now he forbids it.” But we Christians must think and speak about these matters both with respect and with the fear of God, and we must recognize that it is God’s nature to do contradictory things when things are contradictory. Nevertheless, this wonderful guidance of the saints reminds us pleasantly of many things and abounds in comfort. And indeed the godly – if this were possible without violating the majesty and truthfulness of God – could employ these expressions: “God is pretending, lying, simulating, and deceiving us” For when they have to meet death they can say to God: “It is not death; it is life. Thou art playing with me as a father plays with his son. Thou sayest one thing but hast something else in mind.” This is a salutary lie for us.

And how fortunate we would be if we could learn this art from God! He tempts us and proposes a strange work, the He may be able to do His own. Through our affliction He seeks to get His sport and our salvation. God said to Abraham: “Kill your son.” How? With playing, simulating, and laughing. Surely a happy and delightful sport! (LW 4, 131)

The word of consolation is: “God’s promise is true, hold on to it.” The suffering is salutary, but the courage and strength to persevere are not a given. Luther insists, “Our trust will be perfect when life and death, glory and shame, adversity and good fortune will be alike for us. But we shall not attain this through speculation. It will have to be learned in trial and prayer” (LW 4, 149). You build up to the challenge like some kind of frigging marathon, so that in the face of what is most terrifying, you can call on your baptism with confidence and blunt the fangs of doubt.

Finally, let us examine how Luther himself dealt with crushing despair in his own life. His deeply-loved daughter Magdalena died after a brief and painful illness at the age of 13. He writes to his friend Justas Jonas on September 23, 1542, just three days after her death:

I believe the report has reached you that Magdalena, my dearest daughter, has been reborn into the everlasting kingdom of Christ, and although I and my wife ought to do nothing but joyfully give thanks for such a felicitous passage and blessed end, by which she has escaped the power of the flesh, the world, the Turk and the devil, nevertheless, so great is the force of our love that we are unable to go on without sobs and groanings of heart, indeed without bearing in ourselves a mortal wound. The countenance, the words, the gestures of our daughter, so very obedient and respectful both while she lived and as she died, remain firmly fixed in the old heart so that the death of Christ (in comparison to which what are all other deaths?) is unable to drive out sorrow from our inmost depths as it ought to do. You, therefore, give thanks to God in our stead! (WA Br 10, No. 3794, 20-29)

Over the next few years Luther continued to struggle with grief. Magdalena had died in the Lord, having confessed the faith in her final hours. She dwelt now in a place where the evils of this world could not touch her, beyond the reach of temptation and fall. The world being what it was, and for Luther it surpassed Sodom in corruption, Magdalena was well free of it. But still the father's heart aches. Who is God now **for him** in his suffering? By 1545, when he writes to comfort his friend Andreas Osiander on the loss of his wife, Luther has an answer:

I nevertheless believe very strongly, through the example of our precious daughter, that [your wife's] death causes you great pain. It is astonishing how much the death of my Magdalena torments me, whom I simply cannot forget. But I am completely certain that she is in the place of consolation and eternal life, and that God has thereby given me a great sign of His love, in that He has in my lifetime taken my flesh up into His lap. (WA Br 11, No. 4122, 7-12)

Luther has encountered once again the God who does not break promises. And he is consoled.

The relationship of the believer with God is a most complex one in Luther's experience. He felt crushed by the wrath of God against sin; he felt chastised by God's unrelenting demand for righteousness; he experienced God's love to be both fierce and surpassingly tender, and it would seem that he knew God to be a bit of a trickster as well. If God appeared in majesty, writes Luther, and announced, "You are not worthy of My grace; I will change My plan and not keep My promise to you," the proper response is not, "Oh please, I beg of you; don't do that" but "Too late, I have your promise." Yes, blessed are the meek, but there are certain circumstances in which meekness is simply poor discipleship. What is called for is persistence, a persistence that borders on defiance, an urgency that makes us unrepentantly brash. Think of the Canaanite woman; she holds her ground and issues her challenge: "I know who you are, and I am not going anywhere until you are God **for me.**"

Luther knows God to be dependably gracious, but this is a sovereign graciousness. It runs sharply counter to our desire to domesticate Christ. We are eager to welcome the Savior as boon companion in the courts of our self-concern. But for Luther God never stops being scary – merciful, loving and trustworthy to be sure, but never wholly to be known or understood, and never, never to be taken for granted.

When analyzing the fall story Luther pinpoints the crisis as the moment in which Eve, rather than holding on to the word God has given her, loosens her grip and, at the temptor's urging, begins to reconsider God's meaning. The initial fissure in the relationship quickly becomes a chasm. Eve is no longer able to scramble back onto secure ground, no longer able to live without fear. Luther devoted his life to theology and proclamation, so clearly he recognized the need for debate, even acrimonious vendetta, on behalf of the Word of God. However, he did know that it was no time for argument in the midst of suffering, in the presence of an agonized conscience, or in the face of brutal doubt.

. . . in this situation there is need of the fervent prayer that God may give us His Spirit, in order that the promise may not be wrested from us. I am unable to resolve this contradiction. Our only consolation is that in affliction we take refuge in the promise; for it alone is our staff and rod, and if Satan strikes it out of our hands, we have no place left to stand. (LW 4, 93)

Luther is right – you don't talk your way into such an understanding; you experience it until it is inscribed in the very core of your being. That's why our lives are punctuated by *Anfechtung*, so that we come to find our lives in Christ alone. Two years ago I taught a course on Luther's Spirituality. The students talked about the theology of the cross and what role it had played in their own lives. One woman told an extraordinary story, which, by her permission, I share with you in conclusion. She was diagnosed with a brain tumor and told that, though it was operable, the process of removing it would most likely cost her her sight. When she told her mother, she asked, "What do you want me to pray for?" And our student replied, "Pray that even in the midst of blindness I will still know my Savior." "You see," she told the class, "Jesus Christ is not one good thing among many. He is **the** good thing. And losing my sight wouldn't change that. I didn't want my fear of going blind to make me forget. Paul says that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and that means nothing, including blindness." This remarkable woman did not let the terror of impending loss confuse her; she did not allow the unavoidable question, "Why is God letting this happen?" deflect her. The word placed in the mouth of the sufferer is not finally a cry of dereliction but the sound of rejoicing in God our savior.

When I die I shall see nothing but black darkness, and yet that light, "To you is born this day a Savior," remains in my eyes and fills all heaven and earth. The Savior will help me when all have forsaken me. And when the heavens and the stars and all creatures stare at me with dreadful countenance, I see nothing in heaven and earth but this child. (Timothy Lull, ed. *Luther's Writings*, 229-30)

Thank you.