

“Confirming Your Oath”—Psalm 119:105-106

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Confirming Your Oath”, is Psalm 119:105-106 → *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep Your righteous rules.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

The day has finally come and the nervousness heightens. Will I “choke” sitting in front of all those people in church to recite answers to the pastor’s questions? What if my mind goes blank? What if I faint while standing up front in this hot gown? What if I trip on my way up? What kind of thoughts went through your mind on your confirmation day?

While these may seem like trivial concerns for an adolescent once confirmation Sunday has passed, it is interesting what people remember about their confirmation instruction classes and their confirmation Sunday. While they may recall how strict (or strange) the pastor was . . . or . . . how they had to memorize a whole lot of stuff to recite publicly . . . or . . . how frightened they felt in front of the congregation . . . or . . . how they “cashed in” with confirmation gifts and money from friends and relatives . . . or even how terribly they treated their confirmation instructors, few seem to remember what they confirmed in their vows

before the Lord and the congregation that day.

Even though the practice of confirmation has a long history in the church it is a tradition which carries a lot of “spiritual weight” in the life of a congregation. The “vows” to which you assented are very important for your on-going relationship with Christ and your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Our text is the closest verse you will find in all of Scripture to describe what happens on confirmation Sunday: *I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep Your righteous rules.* (verse 106) Please note that we *confirmed* in our vows to Yahweh that we would **keep His righteous rules**—not simply jumping through “religious” and “academic” hoops in a traditional system called confirmation class.

This *confirmed . . . oath* is based upon the principles by which the Reformation is known: You are saved by **grace alone**, through **faith** in Jesus Christ **alone**, on the basis of the promises of **Scripture alone**. As we confess with the psalmist to Yahweh—*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*—we bind ourselves to His Word which reveals His love to us in the Person & Work of Jesus and gives us His Holy Spirit, Who gives us faith to trust in Jesus for eternal life and empowers us to live according to His will. Let’s take a look at these “vows” which you confirmed on your confirmation Sunday as we prepare to reaffirm them here today.

- “Do you this day in the presence of God and of this congregation acknowledge the gifts that God gave you in your Baptism?” God brought you into a proper relationship with Himself through your baptism according to Galatians 3:26-27 → *In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* In your baptism He gave you the gifts of His Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins (cf. Acts 2:38-39) and eternal salvation. (1 Peter 3:21)
- “Do you renounce the devil along with all his works and all his ways?” Spiritual battle marks your life as a Christian since you are constantly under the attack of satan and the sinful worldly ways. They want you to turn away from Christ and doubt His work and your salvation or scorn His ways and Word as you feel secure in your salvation. Thus, Ephesians 6:11-13 tells you to *put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.* We confess that all wrongdoing, evil, rebellion and sin is from the devil and we want nothing to do with it.

- “Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?” You confessed with the 1st Article of the Apostles’ Creed that Yahweh is your Father and Creator of heaven and earth—a very important confession in the midst of a culture where the denial of His existence and creating activity undergirds so many areas of life. Amidst all the uncertainties thrown at you everyday **you know Who created you and continues to sustain and provide for you!**
- “Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord?” You confessed with the 2nd Article of the Apostles’ Creed that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life and Savior of your soul as you spoke of His Person & Work for your salvation. Amidst all the uncertainties thrown at you everyday **you know the certainty of forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation because of the accomplished work of Jesus for you!**
- “Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?” You confessed with the 3rd Article of the Apostles’ Creed that Holy Spirit has also brought you into relationship with other believers in Christ in the Church, which dispenses and receives the forgiveness of sins, and that He keeps you in this faith unto the physical resurrection on the Last Day. Amidst all the uncertainties thrown at you everyday **you know Who is sustaining and empowering your faith and good works!**

- “Do you hold all the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God?” You confessed the sixty-six books in the holy Bible to be God’s very Word and authority for your acting, thinking and speaking in your life, according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 → *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* (cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- “Do you confess the doctrine (i.e. teachings) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, taken from the Word of God, as you have learned to know it from the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true?” You confessed that the teachings of this congregation are in line with and faithful to God’s written Word.
- “Do you intend to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord’s Supper faithfully?” You declared your intent to continue confirming this faith on a regular basis through worship with other believers where God’s Word is read and taught and forgiveness of sins is dispensed and receive in the Lord’s Supper. (cf. Hebrews 10:25) It is the promise to regularly attend worship.
- “Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

even to death?” “Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?” You declared your intent to continue confirming this faith by letting God’s written *word* be *a lamp to your feet and a light to your path* with the desire *to keep His righteous rules* and to remain faithful to the Triune God **at all costs**. (cf. Matthew 10:22; James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)

These “vows” express a continual confirming of your faith in God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—throughout your daily life, not simply having been “confirmed as a Lutheran” at some point in your past. This constant “confirming” by worship around Word and Sacrament is evidence of the Holy Spirit confirming God’s promises to you! Daily His promise of forgiveness of your sins through faith in Christ alone **is yours!** Daily His promise in Philippians 4:19 **is yours!**—*God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus*. Daily you confirm with the words of Romans 8:38-39 → *I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*. You have the privilege of confirming the oath everyday as you continue to *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. *To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.* (cf. 2 Peter

3:18)

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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