

Lent and Holy Week Series, 2018

"The Theology of the Cross"

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LENTEN AND HOLY WEEK THEME: "THE THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS" ¹

Introduction

On April 25, 1518, an assembly of Augustinians met at Heidelberg, Germany. Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses*, posted six months beforehand, had stirred cries of protest. Pope Leo X asked for the assembly through the established channels of Luther's order, the Augustinians. In preparation for the disputation, Luther wrote 28 theological and 12 philosophical theses. These are commonly known as the "Heidelberg Disputation of 1518". Theses 18-24 contain Luther's "theology of the cross" in explicit contrast to what Luther calls the "theology of glory":

18. It is certain that man must utterly despair of his own ability before he is prepared to receive the grace of Christ.
19. That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened (Romans 1:20).
20. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.
21. A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.
22. That wisdom which sees the invisible things of God in works as perceived by man is completely puffed up, blinded, and hardened.
23. The law brings the wrath of God, kills, reviles, accuses, judges, and condemns everything that is not in Christ (Romans 4:15).
24. Yet that wisdom is not of itself evil, nor is the law to be evaded; but without the theology of the cross, man misuses the best in the worst manner.

Luther summarized his theses in the statement: "The cross puts everything to the test".

Lenten and Holy Week Schedule

February 14, 2018, 5:30 p.m., **Ash Wednesday** - "Seeing God's Face from Behind" (*Exodus 33:12-33*)

February 21, 2018, 5:30 p.m., - "God's Strength in Weakness" (*2 Corinthians 11:24-30; 12:7-10*)

February 28, 2018, 5:30 p.m., - "In the Eyes of the Divine Beholder" (*Luke 1:46-55*)

March 7, 2018, 5:30 p.m. - "God's Future Is Today" (*Jeremiah 32:6-15*)

March 14, 2018, 5:30 p.m. - "The Darkness Where God Is" (*Matthew 25:31-46*)

March 21, 2018, 5:30 p.m. - "Strange Glory" (*John 12:27-36*)

March 25, 2018, 8:30 & 10:30 a.m., **Palm Sunday** - Passion Play (How's your beard coming?)

March 29, 2018, 5:30 p.m., **Maundy Thursday** - "Divine Grace: The Experience of Being Delivered from Experience" (*Psalms 42*)

March 30, 2018, 7:30 p.m., **Good Friday Tenebrae** - "Seven Last Words of Christ"

April 1, 2018, 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., **Easter Sunday** - "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" (*Romans 8:17-25; 31-39*)

¹ Ideas referenced from "Preaching the Theology of the Cross" by Dr. Peter L. Steinke

A BRIEF COMPARISON

Summary

THEOLOGY OF GLORY

THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

“. . . Show me thy glory” (Exodus 33:18)

“. . . You cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live” (Exodus 33:20)

“. . . Show us the Father” (John 14:8)

“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9)

1. knows God from his works
2. knows God directly in his obvious power and glory
3. *notitia* (knowledge)
4. majesty of God
5. deductive
 - comprehends God in thought
 - Moves from the visible to the invisible
 - Good works
 - Power and majesty
 - Proof

1. knows God from his sufferings
2. knows God precisely where he has hidden himself, in his suffering and weakness
3. *fiducia* (trust)
4. grace of God
5. inductive
 - certainty of God’s love only in suffering
 - From darkness to light
 - Suffering
 - Weakness and foolishness
 - hiddenness

“For where man’s strength ends, God’s strength begins . . . For where man’s strength begins, God’s strength ends.” *Martin Luther*

A LONGER COMPARISON

THEOLOGY OF GLORY

THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

1. visible
2. God manifest from God’s works
3. directly
4. God in God’s naked majesty
5. glory
6. God in heaven
7. majesty
8. God found in the bright and the good
9. works
10. the naked God
11. see only wrath and trouble
12. the God of power and justice

1. invisible
2. God hidden in God’s sufferings
3. indirectly
4. God clothed in God’s promise
5. humility
6. God in the man Christ
7. shame
8. God hidden in darkness
9. suffering
10. God crucified and hidden
11. God’s grace hidden under trouble
12. the God of love and suffering

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A LONGER COMPARISON *(Continued)*

THEOLOGY OF GLORY

THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 13. empirically obvious | 13. hidden under its opposite |
| 14. the vagabond God | 14. the identifiable God |
| 15. wisdom | 15. folly |
| 16. sight | 16. faith ("things not seen") |
| 17. mighty victory | 17. ignominious defeat |
| 18. ethical achievement | 18. call to suffering |
| 19. self-confident activism | 19. humility |
| 20. speculation | 20. trust |
| 21. God in God's self | 21. God in relationship to human beings |
| 22. protection | 22. danger |
| 23. what is | 23. what will be |
| 24. light | 24. darkness |
| 25. God apart from God's word | 25. God bound to his word |
| 26. certainty | 26. <i>Anfechtung</i> (spiritual crisis or doubt) |
| 27. all or nothing | 27. doubt as part of faith |
| 28. <i>because</i> of experience | 28. <i>in spite</i> of experience |
| 29. deductive | 29. inductive |
| 30. creation | 30. cross |
| 31. majestic nature | 31. humanity, weakness, foolishness |
| 32. triumph | 32. trial |
| 33. from below to above | 33. God's initiative |
| 34. noble thoughts | 34. crucified Christ |

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