

## **The Augsburg Confession** *Talking About Faith with Family and Friends*

Emperor Charles V summoned the Protestant and Catholic theologians to Augsburg in 1530 to settle the divisions between them. The emperor asked for a concise statement of their beliefs.



**Discussion:** Is there a difference between "sin" and "sins"? Are all sins equal or are they different depending on thoughts, actions and motive? Is there a need for God and worship in daily life?

### **Article II: Of Original Sin**

"Also they (our Lutheran churches) teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.

They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ's merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason."

**Importance:** Sin begins the story of an intimate relationship between God and each of us. The Lutheran Church teaches that as a result of sin we do not honor God or have a close relationship with God, or even listen to God. When Luther writes we are "without the fear of God" the meaning is that we do not respect God. Sin is a corrupting disease causing us to turn to other gods (our own strength, science, technology, psychology, human reasoning, etc.).

The critical difference between Luther and other religious leaders is that the sin is in the origin of our nature and not something inherited or passed on to us from Adam, the apple, or the serpent. It is part of our DNA!

It is only when each person recognizes they are trapped (a slave to sin) and call upon Jesus Christ for help (repentance), that they are born again. It is the humility of our confession that leads to forgiveness and a renewed relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior, brother, and personal friend.

Lutherans are strongly opposed to the teaching that individuals can save themselves through good deeds, being nice to others, or living a moral and ethical life. Lutherans teach that the motive behind all good deeds is pride or a sense of our intelligence or wisdom. Lutherans believe that good works and a changed life are the result of faith rather than the cause of faith, which is a divine gift from God through the Holy Spirit.

The likely reason that this is stated upfront as Article 2, is that most people in Luther's time supported the belief that eternal salvation had to be earned or that we needed to satisfy God to express our sincerity for His grace and love. Lutherans maintained that grace and love are freely given without any conditions.