



LISTENING FROM WEEK TO WEEK

Every time you hear a sermon, there are two things that you should expect to hear:

- (1) clear proclamation that Jesus Christ and him crucified is Lord and Savior for you and for the world; and
- (2) an engagement / wrestling with the Bible - God's written word.

Questions to guide your listening from week to week:

Did Jesus need to die for the sermon to be preached? Why? Why not?

God's saving action on the cross is the center of the Christian message. Because it is tempting to get too focused on our own lives and actions or the lives and actions of others, this question focuses our ears on the center. Martin Luther (1483-1546) teaches: "The chief article and foundation of the gospel is that before you take Christ as an example, you accept and recognize him as a gift, a present that God has given you and that is your own." Christian living is not unimportant. Christian living, however, should not be confused with the Gospel.

How was the sermon formed and informed by Scripture?

Christian sermons ought to be rooted in and formed by Scripture - the Christian Bible - in particular the text(s) read in the Christian assembly. When someone fills the office of preacher, she/he doesn't have a call to say anything that fancies them... even if it's interesting, entertaining, or spiritual. The Christian sermon needs to be rooted in God's written Word.

How did the sermon impact you as Law/Gospel?

Law is God's "no" to our human tendency to seek wholeness and life in that which cannot give life - idolatry. Gospel is God's "yes" - the open arms of God's mercy and love for sinners that are the arms of Jesus stretched out on the cross.

What did the sermon have to say to someone not already a Christian?

The sermon ought to advertise the Good News of Jesus Christ in ways that open up the sermon to anyone who happens to present - Christian or not.

What did you want to hear more of? Less of?

