

Confirmation is All About Love

Lutheran Confirmation is all about love

- Cherished, honored tradition: Luth conf. In this tradition, baptized believers, instructed, stand up before cong, confess faith before receiving HC first time. Not commanded in Bible or something Jesus told us must do. But 1] **“Go and make disciples...and teaching them...”** (Mt 28:19-20); 2] **“Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup”** (1 Cor 11:28); 3] **“Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven”** (Mt 10:32 – NKJV). So for many centuries, Luth church made big deal out of teaching people about Jesus, so can examine and make confession of faith before taking HC. I like to say: pastors & confirmands before cong. What Luth conf is all about.
- Maybe you remember Luth conf. Maybe 8th grader; remember pastor; wearing white robe, flower, pictures; conf verse, gift Bible or hymnal given. Or maybe conf as adult, didn't have robe, flower. Okay: just peripheral additions to the day. Not what conf is all about. Today, Jn 13; all about love.

Christ's love for us

- **Vs. 34.** Conf all about love; first, about Christ's love for us. **“As I have loved you.”** Spoke MT, very night he gave HC to disciples for very first time, right before suffering, dying to take away all their sins. In fact, “maundy” from Latin for command, given here, to love (**vs. 34a**); why called MT. On that night, as Jesus washed feet, gave Communion, began passion which would end in death & res, on that night more than any other night, we really see Christ's love for us. **“As I have loved you.”**
- Conf is all about Christ's love for you, because in all classes leading up to your conf you studied, in great depth, Christ's love for you. Created world; preserves, provides, takes care of you. Fall into sin, God promised Jesus as Savior. True God became true man; conceived, born in humility, lived under law, yet never sinned, but suffered and died for our sins. Rose from dead; means defeated death (not afraid), Satan (no control), hell (won't go there). Ascended; someday will judge. Until then, sends HS to strengthen faith through Word, faith given in baptism, now made stronger in HC. How Jesus forgives sins through absolution spoken by fellow Christian. Taught you to pray to Father in heaven.
- All this you studied in conf class; all this shows Christ's love for you. Whether conf is today or years ago, no more important lesson to learn: Christ loves you. **“As I have loved you.”** One little phrase so packed with power of Gospel because central message of Christian faith. That's why we spend so much time teaching confirmands God's Word. Conf is all about love: Christ's for us.

Our love for Christ

- Conf also about our love for Christ. You know we cannot love Christ unless we believe Christ's love for us. But I know you, members (& confirmands), do love Christ: seen it in your actions, heard from lips. You are disciples of Jesus.
- **Vs. 35a.** You are. Disciples love Jesus. Maybe noticed earlier when listing all ways Christ loves us, really going through 6 parts Catechism: creed, baptism, HC, conf/abs, Lord's Prayer. One left out was 10 Coms – 6th part. When we study 10 Coms, remember how we divide them into two sections or tables of law: our love for God, and our love for one another. Well, today when Jesus says **vs. 35a**, reminds us that discipleship means love for Christ.
- Discipleship means loving God above all things: by never letting anything rise on pedestal in heart above God (1st Com). By never misusing God's name with filthy language and cursing but rather sharing God's name as spread Gospel (2nd). By honoring Sabbath Day – coming to church (3rd).
- Here's a sad fact I feel compelled to share: it's something like half of all youth confirmands that become delinquent in church attendance or actually fall away from faith before become adults. Half! If play that out here among 19 confirmed today, perhaps 9 of you will drop your discipleship in next

5-10 years. Sounds staggering, but we know it's true. If you were confirmed as child years ago, think back to people in class. Did more than 50% of you stay active in church? I hope so, but perhaps not.

- Discipleship, being disciple of Jesus, is not passive status, as though having name on membership roster at a church is all you need to be Christian, get to heaven. Think of disciples in NT: followed Jesus on foot wherever he went; ate/drank with him, stayed with him, studied with him, prayed with him, dedicated lives to him. That's discipleship, love for Christ. That's what Coms 1-3 are all about; what confirmation is all about. Today, whether being confirmed or remembering conf, we hear Jesus say **vs. 35a**. And because we believe Christ's love for us, that makes us want to show our love for Christ in our Christian discipleship.

Our love for one another

- Finally, conf is about our love for one another. **Vs. 34-35**. And in world so full of unbelief, so full of hatred, these words some of most powerful Jesus ever spoke. So simple yet so profound, **“Love one another.”** How will we love one another? Well, what did we learn in Catechism class? Second table of law, second section of 10 Coms. Honor f&m, no matter how old (4th); never murder or harbor hatred for anyone, but help and love them (5th); never engage in sexual activity before married, or with someone not spouse when are married, but honor God's will for marriage and family (6th); never steal from anyone, but help them protect their possessions (7th); never ruin anyone's reputation with false rumors or slanderous gossip, but speak respectfully of everyone (8th); never covet what belongs to someone else (9th & 10th). The more we put Christ's command to love one another into practice in daily lives, in countless opportunities he gives us every day to be more Christ-like, the more we will love one another. That's what we will do.
- And that's we will not do. We won't love one another perfectly; instead we'll hurt one another frequently. In fact, because of sinful nature, a lot better at hurting each other than loving one another. What makes us guilty, puts us in need of a Savior.

Lutheran Confirmation – a treasured tradition of love

- That's also what makes confirmation so important, such a treasured tradition among us in Luth church. Confirmation is all about love. When we study God's Word, we learn and embrace and believe the incredible depth of riches of Christ's love for us, in his life, death, and res to save us. That loves moves us to respond with love for Christ: with dedicated lives of discipleship, and with Christian love for one another.
- **Vs. 35**. Lutheran conf is when pastors stand up and say, “We've taught, we know they love Jesus;” and when confirmands, stand up and say, “We've been taught, and yes, we do love Jesus.” By this everyone will know that we are disciples of Christ: by our love.

John 13:34-35

³⁴“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

*As I have
Loved You,
so you must
love one another*

