



SHEPHERD'S SCRIBE

April 2024

Thomas Cranmer's First and Part of His Second Sermon for the Reformation of England

In the previous article, we looked at the history and some of the theology of Cranmer. This month we will begin looking at four sermons in the Book of Homilies that have been attributed to him. I will be using sermons 1 and 3–5 from the 1547 edition of *The Book of Homilies*, though in this article we will only have space to look at the first sermon. To start, I will first summarize each of the four sermons, though, again, only the first one will be covered this month. Then I intend to examine the distinction made by Cranmer between human works and the means whereby works are or are not pleasing to God as a part of Cranmer's wholistic understanding of the doctrine of salvation which comprises the unity of faith and good works.

If you want to read these homilies yourself, not that there are several editions; some are more readable than others. I use the edition which has somewhat modernized English, that is, it distinguishes between the letters *i* and *j*, *u* and *v*, and restores *n* which was marked with a macron instead, for example, something like *wēt* is in modern English *went*—two very different words to us—or, as you will see below, *imaginaciō* is our *imagination*; the *c* in this word, and numerous other minor differences, are not modernized. As you can see, the older versions of the text have vastly different spelling from modern English words. In this article and the following, you may find it easier to understand the quotes from Cranmer if you read them aloud.

The first sermon is titled, *A Fruitfull Exhortation to the Readyng and Knowledge of Holy Scripture*. Cranmer opens the Book of Homilies with an exhortation to the people of England that they read Scripture. As noted above, he desires that they turn to reading—now possible due to the efforts of Cranmer, Tyndale, and Miles Coverdale¹ in 1534 to publish a translation—and hearing Scripture preached, so that they will be assured of their salvation and will unlearn the popish traditions which were erroneously “devised by mannes imaginacion for our justification.” Cranmer therefore has the dual purpose of teaching the true doctrine of faith, justification, and works, and exposing why the former doctrine embraced by England—even through the end of Henry VIII's reign—is diametrically opposed to salvation.

Cranmer expects the English people to see in the Scriptures how God shows Himself at work in their lives with regard to life and salvation. Reading and hearing the Scripture will work a change in the hearer such that he will be saved. God will judge every man by His Word and, as Cranmer assures the hearer, whoever has the Word inscribed on his heart and “that kepeth the Worde of Christ is promised the love and favor of God.” The new nature of the man will be that which guides him in the faith² and leads him to true good works, that is, the keeping of God's Word, but more on that anon.

¹ Jacobs, *The Lutheran Movement in England*, 115–117. Jacobs reports that Coverdale was under the tutelage of Robert Barnes, and later attended the martyr while he was on trial in 1526. Robert Barnes was among the first martyrs of our Confessions. King Henry VIII had him tried and executed for teaching justification by faith.

² Cranmer appears to express an idea of progressive sanctification in this sermon, i.e., the idea that steadily through the practice of faith a Christian becomes holier in his life on this earth though never in this sinful world to the point of perfection, cf. “And in readyng of Gods Woorde, he moste proffiteth not alwaies that is most ready in turnyng of the boke [book], or in sayyng of it without the boke, but he that is moste turned into it, that is most inspired with the Holy Ghost, moste in his harte and life altered and transformed into that thynge whiche he readeth: he that is daily lesse and lesse proude, lesse irefull, lesse covetous and lesse desirous of

Cranmer continues his argument by turning to the example of an absurdity which would be someone claiming to be a member of a certain profession without the requisite work to be qualified for the claimed position, e.g., a lawyer who does not study the law—or we might say a soldier who never touches a gun. Such is the same as someone claiming to be Christian without studying God’s Word. Cranmer urges the people to listen to Augustine and Chrysostom who also exhort all Christians to attend to this high treasure for the Word is clear to those who “Reade it humbly, with a meke and lowly harte, to thintent [the intent] you maie glorifie God, and not your self . . .” God will teach the hearer or provide a teacher—like Cranmer and the Homilies—just as He provided Philip by the power of the Holy Spirit to “Eunuchus” (Acts 8:26–39), and thereby the eunuch to Queen Candace.

Unfortunately, we do not have enough space for all of the next sermon, *An Homelie of the Salvacion of Mankynd, by Onely Christ Our Savior, from Synne and Death Everlastyng*, so I will limit it to the following. Henry Jacobs, a Lutheran historian of the early 20th Century, argues that this homily was based largely on the argumentation of various of the Lutheran articles and confessions. Also, Jacobs reports, John Wesley purportedly credits this homily with the origin of Methodism—I should point out, however, that if Wesley truly did derive much of his inspiration from this homily, and therefore the Lutheran Confessions if Jacobs is correct, then Wesley greatly misunderstood Cranmer or Cranmer greatly misunderstood the Confessions (Jacobs, *The Lutheran Movement in England*, 334ff). I couldn’t say one way or another regarding Jacobs’ claim about Wesley, though I believe that Jacobs is well founded in his assertion about Cranmer’s use of the Confessions, but you yourselves may judge this and next month.

Immediately Cranmer begins with a negative argument about works. He says (you should read this aloud): “Because all men be synners and offenders against God, and breakers of his law and commaundementes, therefore can no manne by his awne actes, woorkes and deedes – seme thei never so good – be justified and made righteous before God; but every man of necessitie is constrayned to seke for another righteousness, or justificacion, to be received at Gods awne handes, that is to saie, the remission, pardon and forgevenesse of his synnes and trespasses in suche thynges as he hath offended.” Only by faith may any man receive the merits of Christ which He won by the shedding of His blood (Rom 3:19–28; Gal 2:16). This promise extends from infants—to whom baptism belongs—to any who have fallen after baptism into sin but turn in repentance. All men need this ransom paid on their behalf as on behalf of prisoners—if prisoners paid their own debt along with God, how could God giving Christ be called a gift? Through the death of Christ on the cross as the sinner’s ransom, “whiche thyng by us had been impossible to bee doen,” God tempers justice with mercy (cf. AC XX 9–10).³ Christ accomplished His saving work by keeping the law perfectly and taking on Himself the sin of all. Note that Cranmer begins with the ineffectuality of works in order to lead to the necessity of Christ’s work and man’s faith in that work. He will continue with justification next month. -Pr

worldely and vayne pleasures; he that daily, forsakyng his olde vicious life, increaseth in vertue, more and more.” *Certaine Sermons*, 63.

³“ First, that our works cannot reconcile God or merit forgiveness of sins, grace, and justification, but that we obtain this only by faith when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ’s sake, who alone has been set forth the Mediator and Propitiation, 1 Tim. 2:5, in order that the Father may be reconciled through Him. Whoever, therefore, trusts that by works he merits grace, despises the merit and grace of Christ, and seeks a way to God without Christ, by human strength, although Christ has said of Himself: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. John 14:6.”

ELDERS

The Peace of God Which Surpasses All Understanding

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)

What does it mean to have "peace"? Maybe we have peace when we are healthy. That makes sense. When we are healthy, our bodies feel peaceful. Maybe we feel like we have peace when everything is going well at work, or even when we have work. Being out of work, or not having steady work, is stressful. Life definitely feels peaceful when work is going well.

Many of us are retired, the kids have grown and left home and we are getting older by the minute. We find ourselves staying home alone checking our emails or social media pages, watching TV or adjusting our calendars for the next doctor's appointment. Would you describe this as a "peaceful" time? Probably not.

In the passage above Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always ... Do not be anxious about anything. The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Funny thing about the circumstances under which Paul wrote this. When he wrote this, I don't think we would say Paul's life was exactly "peaceful." Paul was sitting in a prison in Rome. On top of this, Paul's health was not great, but that was alright. Paul's health did not bring him peace, Christ did.

Paul's work was not always going well. Paul was constantly dealing with false teachers who threatened to take grace out of the church, but that was alright. Paul's work did not necessarily bring him peace, Christ did. This is why Paul was so bold as to say, "Rejoice always." It didn't matter in what circumstance Paul found himself. Whether well fed, hungry or poor, Paul still had peace, because his peace was one that did not come from this world, his peace came from Christ. The peace Paul had was not dependent upon his good health or his poor health, his peace came from Christ. The peace Paul had was not dependent upon his work going well or poorly, his peace came from Christ.

As we just finished up the Easter season, we see the peace Paul is talking about. As Christians, our peace almost has nothing to do with what is ongoing on in the world around us. Our peace is a lasting, eternal peace because the Son of God offered a perfect sacrifice for us on Good Friday, Jesus suffered for us, died for us, and rose from the dead for us three days later. Because of what Christ has done, He has mended our broken relationship with God the Father that was fractured all the way back in the Fall. We now have peace with God given to us by Jesus.

This is why, like Paul, we may rejoice always. Our peace in Christ does not depend upon what is going on in this world. In fact, I would say our peace in Christ can be even more precious to us especially when this world around us seems to be crumbling. You have a peace in Christ that nothing in this world can ever snatch away from you; that is so important for us to remember, especially now... God's Peace, Gary

You can find our church on the internet in the sites listed below... God's Peace, Gary

<https://www.facebook.com/Lutheran-Church-of-The-Good-Shepherd-LCMS-114008195294825/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCEsFmpDHX1dAfhzkKg_0XQ

or email goodshepherdbiloxi@gmail.com

LWML

This message comes from a Portals of Prayer from 1974. Peace of Mind or Gods Peace? The peace of God is a gift not an achievement. Peace of mind is something one can find-must find- if one is to have it. But you can't find the peace of God. It finds you. The peace of God which passes understanding rests on the forgiveness of sins. Peace of mind disappears at the point where Gods peace steps in. May the peace of God which passes understanding keep our hearts and minds in Christ. John 14:27 Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you.

The LWML has a busy spring. April 13, is our Zone meeting in Pascagoula. April is the District meeting in Alabama on the 26th and 27th. Shirley Thone will be our zone Delegate. We also shout out a special 'Thank you' to Donna Thone who is making the Magnolia Zone Banner. THANK YOU DONNA

Our Sisters in Study is going very well. We invite anyone who can come and join us on the first Tuesday at 10:30 at Ellen Smith's home.

Our next meeting will be May 26. All women welcome.

Love in Christ
Sandy, President

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Men's Bible Study will be held each Monday morning at 8:00 AM in the fellowship hall. All men are invited.

Communion Ware There is a list of volunteers on the bulletin board in the narthex of people to help with communion ware after service. If you are unable to help when scheduled, please contact someone to take your place.

Flower Chart: The Flower Chart is completed and hanging in the narthex. We need volunteers to sign-up and donate flowers for the altar for different occasions. Select a date, write your name, and then write the reason for donating the flowers (such as anniversary, a birthday, or in memory of someone dear, etc.). If you will be providing flowers through Rose's, please pay the \$45.00. The flower arrangement that you have done on your own should not be over 28" high from the bottom of the vase to the top of the flowers. If you pay for the arrangement from Rose's you can take home the flowers with you after the service. The vase and the insert will be recycled each week and used again the next Sunday. If you have any questions, please talk to Patty Thurber or Debbie Harris.

Special Collections: Just as a reminder that we collect for Missions on the first Sunday of the month and for LWML Mites on the fourth Sunday.

Office Hours: Office hours are Monday – Wednesday 8:00 AM to noon and Friday from 8:00 AM to noon.



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CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS

President: Michael Litke
Vice President: Werner Harris
Secretary: Monica Litke
Treasurer: Debbie Harris
Financial Secretary: Sally Manker

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Board of Welfare: Debbie Harris
Board of Evangelism: Vicente Munoz
Board of Education: Monica Litke
Board of Youth Ministry: Vacant
CEF: Vacant
Endowment Fund: Mike Hunt

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Vice President: Ruth Gilbert
Secretary: Dorothy Golnick
Treasurer: Jean Campbell
Altar Guild: Carol Spiering



BIRTHDAY	
Logan Williams	4/5
Robert Rashka	4/8
Jackie Williams	4/12

ANNIVERSARIES	
Scott & Rose Oramous	4/17

April 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Men's Bible Study Breakfast 7:30 AM Study 8:00 AM	Sisters in Study 10:30 AM Ellen Smith's House				
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Missions Collection	Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM Elders Meeting 6:00 PM					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM	Council Meeting 6:00 PM				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Smokeout Brisket Potluck	Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM				Newsletter Articles Due	
28	29	30				
Mites Collection	Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM					

SUNDAY SCHEDULE	
Children's Sunday School	9:00 AM
Adult Sunday School	9:00 AM
Divine Service	10:30 AM

COMMUNION WARE	
Apr 7	Christina & Avabella Thayer
Apr 14	Donna Thone and Vanessa Munoz
Apr 21	Donna Kelley and Dorothy Golnick
Apr 28	Jean Campbell and Sandy Ziegenhagen

Elders: Mike Litke and Gary Thone