

Study Questions for *Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: A Video Companion Guide*

Dr. David Tiede's Presentation

Why The Study?

What are the three related meanings of the term "Word of God" described by Dr. Tiede? Which do you use most often? How does the threefold meaning affect your understanding of scripture?

What do Lutherans mean when they use the word "evangelical"? How is this different from the way it is commonly used in American society? What is an evangelical hermeneutic?

Dr. Tiede indicates that a certain kind of Bible study is about "how scripture interprets our lives." What does this mean?

The Study Process

What are the 4 D's Dr. Tiede describes? What is important about each one?

What does "letting the Word of God dwell in you" mean to you? Can you recall this kind of experience?

Reading Galatians

How is the biblical understanding of "freedom" different from the common understanding of "freedom"? What is meant by "we only experience freedom together"?

How does beginning with the recognition that we are all forgiven sinners impact the discussion of faith as it relates to sexuality in our lives? What are the risk and the promise of such a discussion?

Dr. Timothy Wengert's Presentation

The Freedom of a Christian, Part 1

What is faith? What does Dr. Wengert mean when he says faith is not a virtue or a decision we make?

What does Luther mean by the "inner" and "outer" person? Why is it important to keep this difference in mind?

What is Law as described here? How do Law and Gospel work in human lives? Why is it important to understand this?

The Freedom of a Christian, Part 2

What are the powers of faith described by Dr. Wengert in Luther's writing?

What is the important distinction between property and possession? How does Luther use the figure of an "exchange" in marriage to explain the Christian's life in Christ? What are the three results of the marriage of faith?

How can understanding "The Freedom of the Christian" help us in our deliberations about sexuality? What are the barriers to this deliberation?

Tiede & Wengert Conversation

Part 1

How can attention to Galatians and "The Freedom of the Christian" give Christians a basis for engaging in conversation on human sexuality?

The presenters express the hope that Christians will experience the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in using the third study on human sexuality. How would this be evident? Where have you seen this happen?

Luther understands scripture as teaching that "you are Christ for your neighbor." What does this mean for a discussion of sexuality? How does this resonate with the freedom to do what is right and good? What does it mean to be Christ to someone whose sexual behavior seems wrong to you or makes you uncomfortable?

The standard of "freedom to love and serve the neighbor" is a freeing principle in one sense and a very conserving principle in another. How so? What is the blessing of such an approach for moral thinking and doing? What are the challenges?

What is the difference between faith and lists of virtues? Why is each important? How is the difference important to the discussion?

Part 2

Describe the insights from Paul and Luther that help this discussion on human sexuality?

What would it mean for the Lutheran tradition to affirm the joy and delight of human sexuality not for self-gratification but as a blessing for this culture and our neighbor?

What is the role of judgment in this discussion? How can it be used to judge matters related to sexuality both constructively or destructively?

What standards do you believe will be required to protect the neighbor in terms of sexuality?

Drs. Tiede and Wengert are encouraged by the prospect of the ELCA's continued discussion of human sexuality through this third study. What gives them a sense of hope and confidence? What do they believe could be the benefits of this discussion for the church? For the world? What do you believe are the positive outcomes that could result?

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