

Luther's Legacy for Laity
Disc 1: Dr. Timothy Wengert
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This study guide will follow the 10 parts of Dr. Wengert's DVD. Each part will include a brief summary, a list of Biblical passages and citations from the Book of Concord (Wengert Edition) when used, and questions for discussion. Key glossary terms will be listed at the end of each section.

Part 4: The Up Religion Trap

Summary:

While most of us admire successful ladder climbers like Mother Teresa and Jimmy Carter, we are secretly pleased that we can identify a host of people who are far below us on the ladder to heaven. We simply can't help judging others, or falling into despair that we ourselves aren't doing better. Thanks be to God that our sinfulness has been exchanged for Christ's righteousness. Using the analogy of Roman Law, Dr. Wengert demonstrates in this part how what is actually ours, namely our sin, becomes the possession of Jesus, and what is actually his, namely his righteousness, holiness, purity, goodness, becomes our possession. We can only claim our sin as our own. Christ's righteousness is pure gift – called grace!

Biblical References Part 4:

none

Confessional References in Part 4:

none

Questions for Discussion:

1. Discuss Dr. Wengert's analogy of batting averages to understand the trap of Up Religion.
2. Why is that we are secretly happy that some people are batting zero?
3. Luther said that Christians are at the same time "sinner" and "saint." How can this be?
4. Roman Law distinguished between "property" and "possession." Dr. Wengert used the analogy of their cars after they were married to describe what the cross does for us. Describe this "happy exchange" to someone in the group.

Glossary:

Proprium – The Latin word for "own" as in property.

Posse – The Latin word for "full use of" as in possession. These two words are not interchangeable as in our English usage.

Happy Exchange – Luther’s adaptation of Roman Law. Luther wrote that by the marriage of faith, my sin becomes Christ’s and Christ’s Righteousness becomes mine. I continue to “own” only my sin, but because of God’s grace, I’m given full use of or possession of Christ’s Righteousness.

Saint & Sinner – Only Lutherans can truly say that we are at the same time sinner and saint. All we can claim as our own is our sin. What we have as a gift is Christ’s righteousness.