

and earth and creature chose to reveal himself, he entered human life in the person of his son, giving one sign that revealed tomorrow, the dying on the cross and the being raised from the dead of Jesus. The sign of Jonah. *→ This is your tomorrow when you die, you will be raised from the dead.*

~~But~~ ^{And so} for people desperate to guarantee tomorrow that has never seemed enough. ~~And so~~ We turn away from Christ as we seek our tomorrow in fortune cookies, and horoscopes, and the law. ~~God's law.~~ We turn away from Christ *even when we seek our security in what God has promised* ~~if we seek our security and our hope in God's law.~~ ~~But~~

That is what happened to the people of Galatia. They had heard of Christ, how his death on the cross was their hope and guarantee for tomorrow. They had believed in him. But then others came armed with scripture. Here it says in scripture that ~~you~~ God's people should be circumcized, and not eat pork, and obey the Sabbath, not working ~~from~~ from Sundown on Friday to sunset on Saturday. Your tomorrows will be more secure if you align your life with God's way they taught the Galatians. *School in Christ, but they took law also.*

~~Yes, you can still believe in Christ but also add these other things, you will be more secure.~~

But when St Paul learned of it he wrote this: I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel - not that there is another gospel, but there are some who want to trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. ~~xxxxxx~~

No where else does Paul use such strong language. Not when the Corinthians are evgaged in immorality, not when the church is broken by divisions and chaos in worship. When God's people begin to find their hope for tomorrow in something or someone other than Christ then all is lost. Let anyone who preaches a gospel different from Christ and ~~his~~ faith in him alone be accursed be damned.

We Lutherans have distilled all that is at issue in the letter to the Galatians into the slogan, we are saved by ~~works~~ faith and not by works.

Simply a slogan.

~~But~~ Let me tell you about my father. All the years of my growing up my father would from time to time talk about his faith. When I ~~we~~ look to God, depend on him, everything falls into place. In my work I find that he provides just the right solution to every problem. I pray, I trust, I obey his commands and God provides the rest.

Then one day my father prayed, and trusted and obeyed and nothing happened. No solution came. He was overwhelmed by despair. Because God's doing depended on my father's believing and trusting and obeying my father had no hope.

I've known people who lived by the signs for which they prayed. Things were meant to be, they said, meaning God was taking special care of them.

But when good fortune disappeared, and every dream was crushed, ~~they felt abandoned by God and Christ also.~~ Christ also.

For a while after Ernst Kasemans daughter was murdered he left the Lutheran church. Not because he had lost faith, but because others within the church were saying things like, it goes to show that she was wrong, not where God wanted her to be, otherwise her life would simply not have been wasted like that.

Ernst Kaseman knew, as Paul knew, as I hope each of us knows that there are no signs, no assurances not promises but the sign of Jonah, Jesus Christ giving himself for our sins, being raised for our justification. Whether I live to be a hundred, or ~~we~~ collapse as I am greeting you following worship, neither tells you anything about my relationship to God. Only Christ and his dying for me tells me about God, only what he has done determines my tomorrow. Tomorrow is not in my hands, but is in the hands of him who endured poverty and hatred and rejection and death for you and me.

When all is going well, and all speak well of you what does it mean? ~~Nothing.~~ ^{Up to you} When a young woman loses her life in a foreign land that may be a far more significant sign from God of his pleasure, for is that not what happened to his Son in this world? *Who knows?*

We are given one sign, the cross. One hope, that the life Christ lives

we shall live also. One promise, that nothing in life nor in death, things present nor things to come shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.