

The Two Kingdoms

The Two Ways God Works (law/gospel)

The left hand kingdom

The arena of what we do

The arena of civil righteousness

Reason (and the sword) are the proper tools to sort out human problems: ethics, politics. We consult, debate, consider consequences. We are totally sinful: "All our righteous deeds are filthy rags" (Isa 64:6); we live and make decisions only as forgiven sinners.

Not by emotion, conscience, feeling

Not by a pope

Not by using the Bible as a law book

Not paralyzed by false ideals of perfection

Absolute power corrupts....

Absolute weakness corrupts....

Two uses of the law

1. To restrain evil

2. To drive us to Christ

(Smalcald III:II:1-5. Note! No 3rd use of the law as a binding pattern for life. SD VI on the 3rd use of the law actually describes the first use of the law. See 21 and 24.)

Use of the Bible: The first Christians used the best reason of their day to solve moral issues. What then do we do? On the one hand, our job is not to mimic their lives and habits. We respect Biblical tradition, but it is not binding. On the other hand, we do as Paul did; we seek the best reason of our day in addressing the moral dilemmas we face.

"Love does no harm; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:10).

We ask: What are the damages?

The right hand kingdom

The arena of what God does to us

The arena of passive righteousness

Cross, folly, stumbling block, revelation. God elects us, chooses us, snatches us, ransoms us, takes our sin on himself and gives us his kingdom. We are totally righteous because we are clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ.

The Holy Spirit creates faith....

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him (Small Catechism, 3rd Article).

The Word works on us – convicting us of sin and convincing us of grace.

Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the preaching of Christ (Romans 10:17).

"God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word....God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil" (Smalcald Articles III:VIII).

No faith verified by experience.

No good works of discipleship supplement or displace the "external" work of God.