



“Holy Scripture also testifies that God, who has called us, is faithful. So when He has begun the good work in us, He will also preserve it to the end and perfect it, if we ourselves do not turn from Him, but firmly hold on to the work begun to the end. He has promised His grace for this very purpose. (See 1 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 3:2: *taken from The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XI, 32*). The writer of *The Formula of Concord* continues by saying, “We should

concern ourselves with this revealed will of God. We should follow and diligently think about it. Through the Word, by which He calls us, the Holy Spirit bestows grace, power, and ability for this purpose,” *Article 33*.)

That God begins the good work of faith within us (Philippians 1:6) is the grace of God given to us through the work of Christ. Faith is pure gift to us (Ephesians 2:8-9) which clings to Christ the Savior. Faith is God’s work given to us. Faith is not a work done on our part, for faith to us is given by grace. The work spoken of is that God has made us His own dear children and strengthens us through Word and Sacrament, that we know salvation through His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We confess in The Divine Service, “I a poor miserable sinner confess unto you all my sins and iniquities...” We are confessing the fact that we have inherited the nature of sin, we are unable to free ourselves from that sin and we stand before God helpless and completely without merit to renew our relationship with Him and we are unable to bring ourselves to saving faith in God. The Absolution (forgiveness of sins) is God’s love given to us through Christ by His suffering and death on the cross. Having confessed our sin and our inability to make ourselves acceptable to God, let alone, do anything to bring ourselves to saving faith or to redeem ourselves before His throne of judgment, we are grateful for God’s forgiveness and assurance of His steadfast love for us in Christ. The mercy of God is beyond our understanding. The mercy of God exceeds any expectation we might have because we know that we are not loveable before God because of sin. Yet, God loves us in Christ and goes beyond what we would ever dare to expect by giving His Son, the innocent One for us in our place to suffer our punishment. This work of salvation is done through Christ, His work of redemption given by God’s love for us in Him (St. John 3:16). Having been shown by the Law of God that we are sinners who are unable to save ourselves, the grace of God is joy to a heart burdened with the sorrow of sin.

The comfort we receive from God through Christ is that even though we have failed in every way and fall short of the glory of God, we are indeed rescued from sin, death, and the devil by pure grace through the work of Christ on His cross. We are saved from certain punishment and eternal death by the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus who overcomes our enemies by His Divine work of redemption to give us forgiveness and eternal life.

The Formula of Concord draws this great comfort from the Scriptures to teach us that God not only has saved us by rescuing us from the hands of Satan and given us a relationship with God, but that He who began that work (Philippians 1:6) will bring it to completion, that is, He who brought us to faith (in Baptism) will keep us in faith bringing it (faith) to completion that we will enter eternal life with our Savior Jesus Christ. The Formula of Concord encourages us to concern ourselves only with the “revealed will of God” (from God’s Word) that comes through the “Word made flesh” Jesus who has done everything necessary for our salvation. Our great comfort is the fact that because of our sin, we deserved nothing but punishment and eternal death to which God says. NO! No death shall come to you! Instead, your punishment will be put on My Son Jesus so that you will live forever! Your sins are laid on Jesus who loves you with a sacrificial love and offers Himself in your place. You shall not die but shall live because Jesus dies!

The GRACE of God in Christ is The Gospel of Jesus Christ that gives forgiveness, life, and salvation! This is the central teaching of Scripture, that Christ has died for you. The difficult parts of Scripture are left in God’s hands who sent His Son to be your Savior!

<b>I leave all things to God’s direction;</b>	<b>He loves me both in joy and woe.</b>
<b>His will is good, sure His affection;</b>	<b>His tender love is true, I know.</b>
<b>My fortress and my rock is He:</b>	<b>What pleases God, that pleases me.</b>
<b>My God desires the soul’s salvation;</b>	<b>My soul He, too, desires to save.</b>
<b>Therefore with Christian resignation</b>	<b>All earthly troubles I will brave.</b>
<b>His will be done eternally:</b>	<b>What pleases God, that pleases me.</b>

LSB 719 “I Leave All Things To God’s Direction” stanzas 1, 3  
(Hymn based on Rom. 8:28; 2 Peter 3:9)