



March 18, 2017
The Apostles' Creed 2.3

Read Isaiah 43:1-3

“He has done all this in order that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.” (Luther’s meaning to the Apostles’ Creed, *Small Catechism*)

I grew up on a farm, we had any number of dogs over the years. We loved our pets, but they had a tendency to be temporary. A working farm can be a dangerous place. Our dogs ended their lives under the wheels of feed trucks, in battles with badgers and bulls, wandering far and wide after rabbits, and in other ways not fit for the faint of heart. With that experience we tended not to our emotions too heavily in any particular hound.

One day I was working on a tractor out in the field. I stopped for a minute to adjust some equipment. A scraggly collie mix sprinted from the highway ditch into the shade under the tractor. She lay down panting and wouldn’t move. Finally I picked her up, put her on my lap and drove her back to the house. Her hide was filled with buckshot and she hadn’t had any water for a few days.

Dad filled a pan with water and she drank nearly a half-gallon. Then he plucked out as much of the shot as he could with a tweezers and dressed the worst of the wounds. We begged to keep the pathetic pup, but Dad wasn’t convinced. We had already named her “Pupsy,” but Dad resisted. “We can keep her until she heals up,” he growled, “but remember. She’s temporary.”

That dog was rarely out of sight of her rescuer. She attached to Dad like a bug to flypaper. She was the only big dog who ever got to be a house dog. She rested on his feet in the winter to keep them warm. She had a good herding instinct and alerted us on several occasions to livestock that had gotten outside of their pens. She was a friend to strangers but intimidating to anyone who looked threatening. She was devoted to Dad as her savior and master.

Several years later, she died peacefully after a brief illness. Dad laid her in her grave on the farm. As he did, I heard him say through tears, “Just remember, you’re temporary.”

That dog loved our Dad as her savior, her master, her friend and lord. If dogs can be grateful, she was all that and more. In a way, this is how Luther describes our relationship with Jesus. He is our savior, our rescuer, our master, our friend and our Lord. Nothing pleases him more than if we respond to him with grateful love.

Let’s pray. Dear God, send your Holy Spirit into my heart today to create the gift of faith. Fill me with fear, love and trust in You above all things. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Do something: Give a gift of support or do some volunteer work at a local animal shelter.

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