

Here and There
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“Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!” (Psalm 100:2)

Right and left.

Black and white.

Here and there.

We are a people well-versed in opposites. But is the difference really the difference it appears to be?

Let me explain.

Take for instance the opposites of “here” and “there.”

Philosophically speaking, I am here. And wherever you are, it is there. We cannot physically occupy the same space.

It is the same way many approach God and their relationship with Him. While I am here, at worship, God is here with me. And when I go from worship, I leave the “house of the LORD”—and His presence is somewhat diminished, a weaker power the farther I go away from the church walls. How troubling (or, for a hardened sinner, how liberating)! One could connect with God, but now, unfortunately, I have left the building.

It is the approach we sometimes take to the Sacraments—*here*, at worship, in the Divine Service, I meet God in a way I meet Him nowhere else on earth, His Word and presence in Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

When wielded as a club, this approach can be effective for a time.

Be here or be square.

No grace for you if you are *there*.

But what about when I *am* “there?” Is God *there*?

Psalm 100:2 might give us the sense of here and there. I was there—where God’s presence is somewhat less, or not at all—“Come into His presence...”

And now I am here, where I can, “serve the LORD with gladness!”

Our LWML friends would be quick to remind us God is not served solely in the church sanctuary proper (or even in the church building as a whole!).

We can serve the LORD with gladness anywhere!

There is the key: Psalm 100:2 is not a verse of opposites - either/or - but both/and.

Everywhere I go—I may serve the LORD with gladness. Everywhere I go, I come into the LORD’s presence—and may I do so with singing and thanksgiving.

And then God's blessed Means of Grace become truly that:

Wherever you go, you go as a baptized child of God. That holy water, united with God's Word, is forever wet upon your brow.

And when you have doubted it, lost sight of God, fallen in light of His holy Law, He graciously offers bread and wine, Body and Blood, to say, "Come, taste and see—and never forget—that the Lord is good!"

Wherever you go, whatever you do: "Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!"