

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

Cross of Jesus,
cross of sorrow, Where
the blood of Christ
was shed, Perfect man
on thee did suffer,
Perfect God on
thee has bled!

HYMN 721 V.1
WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT 2000



“God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 6:14)

“ . . . And Pour Contempt on All My Pride ”

The history of Israel that is recorded in the Old Testament is unlike the history of any other nation in that it does not glorify the nation. Rather it shows Israel as a nation favored and blessed by God, but also a nation that did not appreciate its blessings.

The Israelite people turned away from the Lord and served other gods. They did not listen to the prophets God sent to them. They brought on themselves the defeats and humiliations they suffered at the hands of their enemies. When they were victorious it was due completely to the help that God gave them. Even the heroes—men such as Abraham and David—are shown to be weak when they trusted in themselves.

Bible history is not flattering to Israel, but it is an honest history; it tells

the truth.

The same is true of New Testament history. The apostles are not larger-than-life figures but men with weaknesses and sins. Out of fear Peter denied Jesus three times. James and John tried to exalt themselves above their fellow disciples. Before his conversion Paul persecuted the followers of Christ. When the apostles were strong and heroic, it was because the Holy Spirit strengthened them.

The story told by the passion and death of Christ is likewise one that is not flattering to mankind. Christ endured the death of the cross in order to take upon Himself the sin of mankind. Already in the prophecies of the crucifixion, Isaiah writes that the cause of the death of the Messiah would be the sin of the human race.

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“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities . . . The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Is. 53:5,6).

Christ, Our Sinbearer

The Gospels testify clearly that Jesus was not put to death for anything that He had done, but that He gave His life as a ransom for many.

The apostles also taught that human sin was the cause of the crucifixion and death of Christ. Paul wrote that in the crucifixion God the Father “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21). Peter wrote that Christ “bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24).

During Lent when we hear the passion history read and the cross preached, we hear a message that does nothing for our pride. It not only tells us that we are sinners, but shows us the greatness of our sins, for we see in the sacrifice of Christ the great price that

He paid to redeem us from our sins. We see our Savior, the Sinbearer, suffering the very wrath of God, because He bore our sins. We see that without Jesus we are lost and condemned sinners who could by no means redeem ourselves.

The preaching of the cross is unflattering to human pride. So much so that the world rejects such preaching and treats it as foolishness. Because of our flesh we also find the preaching of the cross hard to hear. But it is the truth. We are lost and condemned by nature. All ideas and thoughts of human merit or worthiness before God are lies. We need to see ourselves as we are, as God sees us.

We can’t boast of ourselves—but that doesn’t mean that we can’t boast of anything. We can boast in the cross of Christ!

We can say with complete confidence that Jesus, God’s Son, suffered and died for us. We can say that all our sins have been washed away by His own precious blood. We can say that through faith in Christ we are righteous and acceptable to God. We can even say that we are God’s own children and heirs who have eternal life.

Of ourselves we have nothing to boast about. In the cross of Christ we have everything to boast about.

—*Pastor John Klatt*

Jesus Conquered Temptation—For You

It was during the last Winter Olympics that some of us learned how a game-ending tie is broken in hockey. Unlike other sports where the outcome is settled in extra innings or in

sudden death overtime, hockey breaks a tie by means of a shootout.

In Olympic hockey, at least, the five best offensive players from each team are each given a free shot at the oppo-

ment's goal. The outcome of the game, therefore, rests in the hands of one player: the goalie. If he can defend against the assault, they win. If not, his whole team loses.

One of the gospel lessons for the first Sunday in Lent features the Temptation of Christ (as recorded in Matt. 4). In some ways this was similar to a shootout in hockey. Here, the arch-enemy of mankind faced off with the long-awaited Messiah.

This was not the first temptation Jesus had faced, nor was it to be the last. Here, the devil had a free shot—a special opportunity to attack with his most powerful weapons. The drama was incredible. The stakes could not have been higher. If Satan were the least bit successful, it meant the eternal destruction of every sinner.

The length of this article does not permit a detailed look at the temptations Jesus faced. But there are several conclusions we can draw.

Jesus was attacked by the same temptations that confront us today. Though these temptations were tailor-made for Him, they are merely variations on the devil's oldest themes: questioning God's goodness; misusing God's Word; presenting sinful choices that seem more appealing and much easier than following God's will.

Nothing new here. These temptations worked well in the Garden; they are just as appealing today.

The Power Of God's Word

Jesus overcame these temptations—not by means of His almighty power, but with the power of God's Word. Jesus cited the Old Testament scriptures. In each case He was thinking not of Himself, but of the people He came

to save.

Do yourself a favor: take the time to look up the passages Jesus quoted in this section and read them in their context. What you'll find is that these were occasions where God's people knuckled before temptation and fell deeply into sin. Then look carefully to see how these very temptations produce the same sinful disobedience in your own life today.

Jesus conquered the temptations in your behalf. He came to be what none of us is, so that each of us can be covered with His perfect righteousness. When the devil condemns you for falling into sin, you can point to Jesus, Who has provided the perfect obedience you lack. When the devil accuses you and haunts your conscience, remember that Jesus fulfilled the Law in your place. He countered every attack and remained true to God. His performance was flawless. Amazingly, this is the righteousness that is now your righteousness by faith.

There's an old saying that runs something like this:

Jesus lived and died — that's history.

Jesus lived and died for the world — that's the gospel.

Jesus lived and died for me — that's salvation.

Keep that in mind this Lenten season. What Jesus did in defeating the devil, He did for you.

—Pastor James Albrecht



“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:1-3)

Fellowship — A Bond Of BLOOD

You have heard it said that blood is thicker than water—that is, family ties are much stronger than friendships.

People will usually stand up before friends and defend their family. That is because the bond of blood that unites a family is a very strong one.

As brothers and sisters in the family of God, God has given us a common bond that is even stronger. For it is not a bond of human blood passed down from father to son, but the blood of Christ shed on the cross. That bond—the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, that cleanses us from all sin and makes us children of our heavenly Father and therefore also brothers and sisters of one another—unites us into a bond which we call Christian fellowship.

This is our KOINONIA—a Greek word meaning to share something in common, to have a part in—a word which is most commonly translated FELLOWSHIP.

What a beautiful thing to treasure—this fellowship! People from all different races and nationalities, people from different social and economic backgrounds, are brought together into one family and bonded together into that family by the blood of Christ.

The apostle John tells us about that bond of fellowship in his first letter. He shows that our relationship with each

other is based on our relationship with God. John writes so that his readers “may have fellowship with us (the apostles): and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Our fellowship is a fellowship with God—with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

The only way this bond of fellowship with God can be established is through faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. That is why John felt compelled to declare to us: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life” (v. 1).

In that verse John is talking about Jesus. Jesus is the One that was from the beginning. Jesus is the One that John and the other apostles have seen with their eyes. Jesus is the Word of Life. More importantly, Jesus is the One who shed His blood in payment for the sins of the world. By faith in Jesus we do have fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Joint Heirs!

We can see what a tremendous blessing that is when we remember the meaning of the word KOINONIA or

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fellowship. It means to have or share something in common. Through Christ we now share many things in common with God. We sinners share in His holiness. We mortals share in His immortality. We humans are children and heirs of the Divine. Our fellowship with God is the heart and purpose of the gospel itself.

Now we—many different people from different walks of life—are united together with the same great blessings in common. We have all been rescued from death and hell. We all have been bought by Christ’s blood and belong to God. We are joint heirs and fellow workers with Christ.

This is the treasured fellowship that we enjoy as members of our congregations and the CLC. We share many great things in common with those

with whom we worship. Even when we go to another church in the CLC and find ourselves among strangers, we still know that we are among family.

It is an even greater blessing to come to know our family more personally and grow together so that we can enjoy this bond even more. How do we do that? Getting to know each other through fellowship meals and activities or working together on a common cause are good ways to grow together.

But the greatest way to really grow in our fellowship and unity is the same thing that brought us into this fellowship with one another—the Word of God. Through the Word of Christ we come to share in this fellowship with God the Father and with Jesus. The more we study that Word together, the more we are going to grow together in true Christian fellowship.

Blood is thicker than water. And the bond made with Christ’s blood is the strongest of all. May we all grow together in our precious Christian fellowship by coming together to study and hear God’s saving Word.

And may God bless us richly in this fellowship and keep us together in fellowship with Him.

—Pastor David Reim

The first of three devotions on . . .

THE BEST WAY TO DIE

Take a look at the cross. It was the best way for Jesus to die.

The method was gruesome, horrible, painful, criminal, torturous, full of anguish. You could easily make a list of over thirty extreme ways that history

has shown by which people were executed. Crucifixion ranks up there among the worst. It was “popular” centuries ago in Europe, Near East, and Far East countries; in Rome, of course, and in Japan, to name another.



If a different method had been used in Jesus' case—hanging, for example—I suppose “cross” hymns would all have become “noose” hymns. And there would be altar nooses and steeple nooses and nooses worn around our necks (as jewelry, I mean!).

But no, it was the cross. It had to be. The Old Testament foretold it (Deuteronomy 21, Numbers 21, Psalm 22, Isaiah 53). Jesus predicted it several times as, for example, in John 12 when He signified by what type of death He would die. It was God's will from eternity. It would be the absolutely best way for Jesus to die for our sins. No debate.

And no subtle change or modifica-

tion. Years ago one writer said that Jesus was not crucified on a gilded, bejeweled cross, in a carpeted sanctuary, with the glow from stained glass windows reflecting softly off His body while the organ played soft lilting music to folks sitting in polished-and-pillowed pews. No, the ugly way was just right—to teach us the terribleness of our sins and the immensity of God's love for us.

The cross of Christ is the perfect depiction of Law and Gospel. It shows the curse, and it shows the curse removed (Galatians 3:10-13). It awakens from spiritual death, removes the fright of temporal death, and gives complete relief from eternal death. At times it seems strange, but then again it is most marvelous and natural for us to sing hymns like “*Drawn to the Cross*” and “*In the Cross of Christ I Glory*” and “*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*.”

The ugly has become totally blissful. “*Lift High the Cross*.”

—Pastor Warren Fanning



THE WORSHIP SERVICE

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”

Psalm 95:6

Second in a Series—

Introduction

(continued)

Worship in Old and New Testament

God has emphasized our need for

worship.

We recognize that, as time went on in the Old Testament, the Lord outlined a definite plan of worship for His people. This was done out of love for

them. We must remember that the promise of redemption in the coming Messiah had to be kept secure—God’s people had to be reminded constantly of who they were and what they had been called to carry out. Therefore, their worship service was designed to protect them from the pagan teachings on every hand invented by mankind and to keep them close to the Lord through the reminder of their sinfulness and God’s forgiving love.

In Christ God’s wonderful promises of salvation for the world came to their fulfillment. Therefore, the worship of the Old Testament which pointed toward the coming Messiah had come to its conclusion, and a new day of fulfillment was ushered in. So the Apostle Paul pointed to the end of Old Testament worship and beginning of a new era when he was inspired to write: “Therefore let no man judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Col. 2:16-17).

God did not define a particular order of service for the New Testament era. Rather, our Lord in a general way has urged: “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24). New Testament believers have, therefore,

established their worship services to center upon the fulfillment of God’s promises of redemption in Jesus Christ. Sunday—“the first day of the week”—was chosen as a special day of worship because our Savior arose from the dead on that day to declare His victory for us over sin, death, and the power of Satan.

Worship In Our Fight Of Faith

God’s people recognize the importance of worship because they are aware of their spiritual enemies which war against their life with God.

Though the devil has been overcome by the Christ, he never tires in his deceptive schemes to lead the Christian astray from the life with God.

The world also is filled with the ways and works of those who care nothing for God and His Word, and so are governed by Satan and his evil ways.

There is also the enemy within us—our sinful desires, our sinful flesh. Though we are spiritually one with God and are at peace in our blessed relationship with Him through our Savior Jesus Christ, our sinful flesh relates very well to the ways of the devil and the unbelieving world. As the Apostle puts it: “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust

Point To Ponder

The word *Liturgy* means *service*. In a very real sense, our whole life as Christians is to be our liturgy, our service. In the Sunday service, however, the larger liturgy of our whole Christian life comes to a joyful focus—we who have been baptized into one body in Christ gather together for an intimate communion with our Lord. He comes to us, speaks to us, and blesses us through His Word and Sacrament. We come to Him and speak to Him in prayer and praise and thanksgiving. Worship services should be recurring moments of spiritual splendor in our earthly lives.

of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish” (Gal. 5:16-17).

So, you see, we need to stay close to our Lord and His Word, which is “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). In this way alone we will be strengthened and preserved in the faith.

Together with the private worship which each of us carries on daily—through prayer, Scripture reading, devotions, etc.—what a wondrous blessing it is to be able to come to worship each week with fellow believers at a designated place. There in God’s house we can shut out the unbelieving world and meditate with heart and soul upon our relationship with God—publicly, but yet individually.

How Meaningful Is Our Worship?

The question begging to be asked is: “How meaningful are our worship ser-

vices?” On Sunday morning are we moved to say with the Psalmist: “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the LORD’” (Ps. 122:1)?

If we don’t feel that way, we need to ask questions such as: Why don’t I feel the need to regularly take advantage of this wonderful privilege? Are our worship services spiritually edifying, relevant, strengthening, challenging, gospel-oriented, and uplifting? Or does our flesh find these services boring, irrelevant, depressing, pointless, and law-oriented? What can I do to make my worship more meaningful? What can those conducting the service do to magnify the blessing of this weekly spiritual experience?

With all of these questions, and more, in mind, we will try to examine our worship services together in this continuing series. We plan to do this by addressing the subject of our conventional “ORDER OF WORSHIP SERVICE.”

(to be continued)

A Christian’s Scriptural Response to the World of 2000—

FACING HOMOSEXUALITY

(Part 2 of 4)

In the first installment of this series we considered the Christian’s overall response to the world of sin in which he lives. The Christian’s approach toward someone caught in any sin will be one of deep concern. In part two we take a closer look at the sin of homosexuality.

Identification: Sin

God leaves no uncertainty in His evaluation of homosexuality. Plain and simple, it is a sin. God says:

- “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination” (Leviticus 18:22).
- “...God gave them up to vile pas-

sions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful..." (Romans 1:26f).

- "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 5:9-10).

The sinful world seeks to remove all talk about "sin" from the discussion of homosexuality. A God-pleasing response to homosexuality will never lose sight of God's condemnation of the sin. However, it must also be said that a proper Christian response also views each of our own pet sins with

equal disgust and outrage. The sins of gossip, lying, cheating, dishonesty and the like are no less damnable than are the sins of homosexuality. Likewise, the sin of homosexuality is no less atoned for by the death and resurrection of our Savior than are all the sins every Christian commits on a daily basis.

Psychology not Biology (but still a sin)

In recent years, research and studies have been conducted in an attempt to find a biological cause for homosexuality. This effort grows largely from the desire to "prove" that there is a flaw in the body that leads to homosexuality and thereby excuses it as biological, unavoidable, and certainly not a sin.

While there have been numerous statements claiming to have found a "gay gene" and other biological evidence for homosexuality, there are no such conclusions that are scientifically sound.

Although there is no biological



Dr. David Menton addresses a group of teenagers at the CLC Youth Conference, August 4-8, 2000 in Grand Lake, Colorado

connection for homosexuality, there are psychological reasons for it. The psychological connections to homosexuality do not change the fact that it is a sin, nor do they excuse the sin. Rather, the psychological aspects of homosexuality show how sin has influenced and corrupted every part of our natures and this world. They also demonstrate how Satan will attempt to use every human weakness to his advantage.

When God created mankind, He did so with two distinct genders: "...male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). When God established marriage, He did so with one man and one woman: "A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 1:24). God also blesses marriages with children and establishes mothers and fathers as His representatives to oversee the training, instruction, and correction of the children: "Honor your father and mother" (Exodus 20:12).

God's design is that men and women be distinct according to the way in which He has created them, and that a home have both father and mother who will each use their distinct characteristics for the training of the children. God speaks much of this in his Word.

The scientific community has recently come to realize what God has been saying all along. So in recent years we have heard how the types of interaction between children and their parents are different in the child-to-mother vs. child-to-father relationships. Similarly, the world has recently begun to see the importance of a father (or father figure) in the lives of chil-

dren, both for sons and daughters.

A son's view of his father and their relationship provides his understanding of "maleness" and will take part in shaping the son's adult role as husband and father. The same is true for daughters in their relationship with their mothers. The inverse is also true. A child's relationship with the opposite-sex parent helps to shape the child's attitude toward the opposite sex.

These observations (and others like them) have led to the understanding that a solid, scriptural home is important to the health of all its family members (again, this is something God's Word has always said). What the psychological community is discovering is that God's design of families and His intent for the role of both men and women in family life are indeed the best plan for success. When sin disrupts God's intention for the family, the resultant family condition may become a fertile field for the temptation of homosexuality.

No psychological explanation of homosexuality should ever be used to dismiss sin. Nor can there be any true help for those caught in homosexuality, if that help involves only psychology and not Scripture. It is, however, helpful to make use of what the medical community is finding (especially the Christian medical community) to better understand how the condition of our present-day society may become an effective tool for Satan's plans.

With that awareness and the greater enlightenment of God's Word, we will be better equipped to shore up our own weaknesses as well as respond to what we encounter in the world.

(to be continued)

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt

LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

First Kings, Chapters Five through Eight

The Building of the Temple and Solomon’s Later Years

It might come as quite a surprise to read what is written in 1 Kings 11:4: "When Solomon was old . . . his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David." One would never have guessed that could happen, especially in view of what we read concerning Solomon's earlier years on the throne.

As a young man Solomon was bent on serving the Lord. That desire came through very clearly as he asked the Lord for "an understanding heart to judge this great people" (3:9)--when he could have asked for anything else, like riches or a long life. In this four-chapter section we see him giving years of service to the Lord in building Him a temple in Jerusalem.

The amount of money, time, materials, and labor that was put into this great edifice boggles the mind. Tens of thousands of workers both in Israel and in Lebanon worked to supply cedar for the building. Large and costly stones were quarried for the foundation (but not even so much as a hammer hitting a chisel was heard on the Temple Mount--all was to be quiet in the presence of the Lord). Solomon had the inside of the stone walls lined with cedar panels, engraved with ornamental buds and open flowers. And as if that wasn't enough, all of that was overlaid with pure gold: "The whole temple he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the temple."

The altar too, and the cherubim

guarding the Ark of the Covenant, the floor, the doors--everything was gold. Also many other furnishings were gold--the table for showbread, the lampstands, the censers, right down to the hinges on the doors! On top of that were many items formed out of cast bronze. There was a Sea--a very ornate and very large water basin--about fifteen feet in diameter, holding perhaps 18,000 gallons of water; it was set atop twelve bronze bulls, three facing in each direction. Several carts, lavers, shovels, and bowls were also made of bronze; all were sanctified for use in the Temple.

The modern equivalent of the cost would run into billions of dollars!

But nowhere during this whole seven-year process do we find that such wealth swayed Solomon from serving the Lord. When he spoke at the Temple dedication ceremony, all we hear are humble words of thanks, praise, and supplication to God--not one word of selfish pride! "The Lord said to my father David, Your son shall build the house of My name. So the Lord has fulfilled His word which He

spoke. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. O Lord my God, may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel. When they pray toward this place, then hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive" (8:18, 20, 27, 28, 30).

Where Is The Full Life??

What turned Solomon away from the Lord was his love for women! "But Solomon loved many foreign women. . . He had 700 wives . . . and 300 concubines; and his wives turned away his heart after other gods" (11:1-4). As these thousand women entered his city and his palace, they brought with them their heathen worship--and Solomon did not say no. Instead, he approvingly joined them in their worship of the false gods Ashtoreth and Milcom, Chemosh and Molech.

It probably wasn't an overnight change. Perhaps the number of sacrifices to the true God lessened gradually over the years. Maybe Solomon missed a service now and then at the

"What becomes painfully clear is that there is no one--not Solomon, not clergy, not laymen, not anyone--who is exempt from the temptation not to put God first, but to give in to the multitudinous distractions that surround us on all sides. . . ."

beginning. After all, there was family in town, you know, and he was needed elsewhere. And then there were all the weekend jaunts with visiting dignitaries, not to mention all the things to do at home. . . .

Needless to say, the Lord did not approve. "The Lord became angry with Solomon. . . He had commanded him not to go after other gods. . . . Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, Because you have done this, . . . I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant" (1:9-11).

What becomes painfully clear is that there is no one--not Solomon, not clergy, not laymen, not anyone--who is exempt from the temptation not to put



Youth Conference participants Jackie Zumach (Phoenix, Ariz.), Marie Meyer (Red Wing, Minn.), & Becky Steinhorst (Morris, Minn.) basking in the beauty of the Colorado Rockies.

God first, but to give in to the multitudinous distractions that surround us on all sides. It takes constant vigilance on the part of our Spirit-motivated new man to be on guard against those things which would take over the place of prominence which God should have in our lives!

It was a chastened, humbled, and repentant elderly Solomon who later on was brought to see the wicked folly of his ways: "I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem," he wrote. "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. . . . My heart rejoiced in all my labor. . . . Then I looked on all

the works that my hands had done . . . and indeed all is vanity and grasping for the wind. . . . It is God who gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight" (Eccl. 2:9-11, 26).

--And that from a man who "had it all"! Solomon came to the realization that life without a relationship with his Savior God was empty and worthless.

How true! It is only in Jesus Christ that both Solomon's and our own lives are given meaning and value. Only in Jesus Christ do we have that which is truly of priceless value--the solution to sin and the key to the doors of eternity in heaven!

—Pastor Paul Krause



Parables Of The Master

Luke 18:1-8

KEEP ON PRAYING

We've all seen this familiar parable 'scenario' played out in our own lives. As children we at times played the role of the persistent widow in relentlessly pestering until we got what we wanted; as parents we may have assumed the judge's role in ultimately being worn down by the persistent pleas of our children. In weariness we may have given in against our own better judgment.

Don't Give Up

As Jesus applies this parable to us, we find considerable divine encouragement for a relentless prayer life—one that "always prays and does not give up" (v. 1).

There is much that happens that can discourage a persistent prayer life: seemingly delayed or unanswered prayer responses, physical and spiritual trials, perceived divine apathy or injustice toward evil, our own sometimes self-centered view of prayer. All of these only increase Satan's whisperings in our ears: "Where is your God when you really need Him!? If He really cared about you, wouldn't He answer your prayer—NOW!?"

Because of her just cause, this poor widow would not be deterred. Neither Satan nor life circumstances should ever deter God's children from praying. God asks us to pray in faith and

promises to hear and respond—even “quickly” (according to His timetable, never too late).

Whether it be the long-awaited coming of His Son in the “fullness of time” or His promised return on the Last Day or an answer to the prayers of His children—our Lord’s timing is always right and proper.

Worn down, this unjust judge, who neither feared God or cared about people, finally gave this widow justice.

Our God is not subject to the human frailties and failings so evident in this human judge. All the more reason for our confidence in prayer. Our righteous Judge and loving Savior knows us and loves us and will always answer our prayers in keeping with His gracious will and our spiritual needs.

Prayer Examples

Scripture abounds with persistent prayer examples. Jacob wrestled all night with the Lord and would not “let go” until he received the blessing. For Lot’s sake Abraham prayer-bargained many times with the Lord on behalf of Sodom. The Syrophenician woman’s

faith would not be denied, even though Jesus gave no immediate response to her request for healing for her daughter.

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (Jms. 5:16). God’s children have always prayed and, in faith, awaited God’s answer—and deliverance has always come!

Undergirding our faith and prayer life is the absolute certainty that we are God’s elect, His chosen ones.

Chosen by God’s grace in eternity, redeemed by the death and resurrection of His Son, gifted and preserved in faith throughout our lives, prepared for life forever with the Lord in Paradise—one theme prevails. We are His own. Unto Him we “commit our way.” He will lead us safely through the maze and muck of this sinful world to the blissful glory of our eternal home.

Even a seemingly delayed or negative response to our prayers does not change these truths or our wonderful relationship with our Heavenly Father.

—Pastor David Schierenbeck



THE LORD’S PRAYER—A Series

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

1st Petition “Hallowed be Thy name”

The child of God in Christ Jesus can come boldly to the throne of the Heavenly Father in prayer. While Christians pray for one

another, they do not pray through one another. We already have an advocate, an intercessor, and an intermediary in the person of Jesus Christ.

Further, a prayer of faith in the name of Jesus is just as meaningful and effective spoken by the person in the pew as it is spoken by a pastor or a priest. It is not repetitious words or flowery speech that makes a prayer acceptable to the Father. The Spirit of God interprets even our groans before the Father. It is the prayer of faith which the Father hears. “Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name,

He will give it you” are Jesus’ words recorded in Matthew 21.

In the Lord’s Prayer the child of God first petitions the Father, “Hallowed be Thy name.”

To hallow means to consecrate, hold as sacred, to keep as holy. Martin Luther captured the essence of this prayer when he wrote: “God’s name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be holy among us also.” In other words, we are praying that God’s name—holy in itself—will remain so among us. How? Luther continued: “God’s name is hallowed

THE FIRST PETITION

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean? God’s name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be holy among us also.

How is this done? When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it. This grant us, dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God’s Word teaches, profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father.

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER’S *Small Catechism*
Concordia Publishing House, 1943

The First Petition

“Hallowed be Thy name.”

What does this mean?

God’s name is certainly holy all by itself, but we pray in this petition that we also keep it holy.

How is God’s name kept holy?

God’s name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as children of God also live a holy life according to it. Help us do this, dear heavenly Father. But whoever teaches and lives contrary to the Word of God dishonors God’s name among us. Keep us from doing this, heavenly Father.

—MARTIN LUTHER’S *SMALL CATECHISM*
by Pastor Mike Sydow, 1988

A print-out comparison of two currently used versions—



when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it. . . . But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches, profanes (makes unholy) the name of God among us."

Sinful man cannot diminish the glory of the holy God. God is who He is and He is what He is. But sinful man can rob himself of the blessings of the holy God by speaking for doctrines the meanderings of his own heart. False teaching is anything that is contrary to God's Word. Hardly does it consecrate the name of God among us to make God a liar or to twist His Word, which is the means by which He makes Himself known to us.

But to speak the Word of God faithfully and then to live a life contrary to what one professes is also disrespectful of the holiness of God and shows a

lack of appreciation for the blessings which He gives. It is quite simple to say "I love God." But Scripture itself defines meaningful love of God. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). We hallow the name of God when we walk in His way.

The practical application finds its significance in these words: "Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that hears these sayings of mine, and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27). Blessings flow to those who hallow the name of God.

Children of the Father through faith in Jesus still have their flesh in this life. Therefore a child of God will pray daily for forgiveness on the one hand, and for strength to confess the Word and build on it on the other. We will still pray from the heart: "Hallowed be Thy name."

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer

SMORGASBORD

The comments below were first given by a pastor to his congregation in the Sunday worship service bulletin.

• AN AXHEAD FLOATS (AND MORE)

A few weeks ago reference was

made in the sermon to the miracle of an axhead floating. The next week one of the confirmation class children asked pastor where that was found in the Bible. Here it is:

"The company of the prophets said

to Elisha, Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to live. And he said, Go.

Then one of them said, Won't you please come with your servants? I will, Elisha replied. And he went with them. They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. Oh, my lord, he cried out, it was borrowed!

The man of God asked, Where did it fall? When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. Lift it out, he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it." (2 Kings 6:1-7)

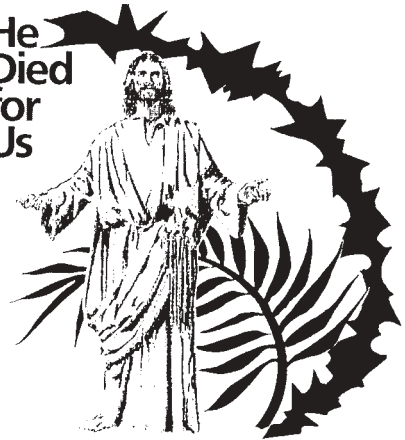
Besides the miracle itself, there is something else noteworthy about this. Evolutionists and other Bible skeptics would have us believe that people who lived back before "recorded history" were mostly brute beasts and weren't advanced enough to make—not to mention use—functional and efficient tools.

However, if you look even farther back in the Bible (see Genesis chapter four), we find this told us about the sons of Cain:

"Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Zillah who had a son Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron . . ." (Genesis 4:20-22).

Yes, for those of us who take the Bible as God's Word there is no question that "pre-historic" man was as "advanced" as modern man, able to carry on ranching, to create and use

He
Died
for
Us



musical instruments, to forge metal tools and weapons! Think also of how the Old Testament people constructed the tower of Babel (Genesis 11); think of ancient engineering wonders like the Egyptian pyramids.

It's true, of course, that man today has been allowed to discover, invent, construct, and manufacture many other things as God allows him to "*fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground*" (Genesis 1:28ff).

And with all this we would yet mention that there is one other thing that man today has in common with his ancient ancestors: both alike are described in these words which tell the spiritual condition before Noah's flood: "*The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time*" (Gen. 6:5).

In other words 21st century man has nothing to boast about compared with the ancient peoples. All alike are children of Adam and Eve who fell into sin, and with that Fall placed all their descendants—including you and me—

CLC EXPLORATORY SERVICES

(Up-dated, February 2001)

This is a list of “start-up” congregations who are being served by an off-site pastor. Some meet in homes, others in rented facilities. Also included is our CLC exploratory mission in Detroit, Mich. Visitors are warmly welcomed. Those who are considering a move or are just traveling through the area are encouraged to contact these groups and worship with them.

LOCATION	PASTOR IN CHARGE	LAY PERSON TO CONTACT
Alaska, Juneau	David Fuerstenau 907-225-2842	
Arizona, Gold Canyon	Delwyn Maas 602-866-2341	
California, Stockton	Rollin Reim 650-364-2200	
Colorado, Colorado Springs	Peter Reim 970-663-3549	Chuck Seelye 719-685-5848
Florida, Orlando	John Schierenbeck 941-299-4084	Paul Kuehne 407-277-2183
Florida, Coral Springs (North Ft. Lauderdale)	Paul Larsen 941-423-1822	Bob Doriot 954-429-0063
Michigan, Cadillac	Mark Bernthal 517-792-9390	Bob Remus 231-832-2687
Michigan, Detroit	Walter Schaller 248-307-0461	
Minnesota, Kimball (St. Cloud area)	John Ude 763-784-8784	Reuben Streich 320-453-7562
Missouri, Kansas City	Todd Ohlmann 314-225-3458	Jim Priebe 816-781-4702
New Mexico, Albuquerque	Norbert Reim 602-974-8911	Robin Vogsland 505-892-6934
North Dakota, Fargo	Theodore Barthels 218-847-2080	Gary Pansch 701-277-1727
Ohio, Columbus/Cleveland	Mark Bernthal 517-792-9390	
Tennessee, Nashville area	David Baker 630-629-2688	Wayne Everhart 270-618-4387
Texas, Amarillo	Peter Reim 970-663-3549	Local Contact 806-358-3717
Texas, Killeen	Thomas Schuetze 972-733-4535	Eric Rachut 254-853-2867
Washington, Withrow	Terrel Kesterson 509-327-4203	Ray Lillquist 509-683-1192
Wisconsin, Appleton	David Naumann 920-922-3318	
Wisconsin, Wausau	Mark Gullerud 715-838-9569	

under the curse of sin and its wages.

And where is the escape from sin and death? Where but in the Woman's Seed, Jesus Christ (promised in Genesis 3:15), who would crush the devil's head with His innocent suffering and death on the cross for our sins. "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

(Bulletin of Grace Lutheran Church, Sleepy Eye, Minn. Pastor Paul Fleischer)



CLC YOUTH CONFERENCE:

Last August 4-8 about 50 CLC youth came together in the grand outdoors near Grand Lake, Colorado. Kneeling above, Pastors Del Maas (Phoenix, Ariz.) and Paul Nolting (Mankato, Minn.) were among the spiritual advisors. Wrote Pastor Maas: "It was a fantastic experience, and, I believe, truly edifying for the young people who were able to attend." For more pictures, see pages 10 & 13.

Plans are underway for another conference, grades 8 through 2nd year of college, August 7-11, 2001 at the same location. For more information contact one of the Mankato pastors or e-mail pdnolting@prodigy.net or wcechst@mctcnet.net.

Announcements

Dedication Invitation

Pastor James Sandeen writes:

St. Paul Ev. Lutheran congregation of Lakewood (Denver), Colo. invites our sister congregations of the CLC to rejoice with us at the dedication of our new church on Sunday, February 18, in a 3:00 p.m. dedicatory service. The new church is located at 2470 Wadsworth Blvd. in Lakewood. A joint choir of CLC members in attendance will praise our Lord in the traditional anthem "Christ is Our Cornerstone." A fellowship meal will follow. If you cannot be present in person, your personal prayers of thanksgiving are appreciated.

You are cordially invited to join us in our regular 9:30 a.m. worship any Sunday you may be in the Denver area.

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, Mark Gurath, who was called by Berea Ev. Lutheran congregation, Sioux Falls, S.Dak. to be its pastor, was installed on January 7, 2001.

—Pastor James Albrecht

Cover: Matt Schaser