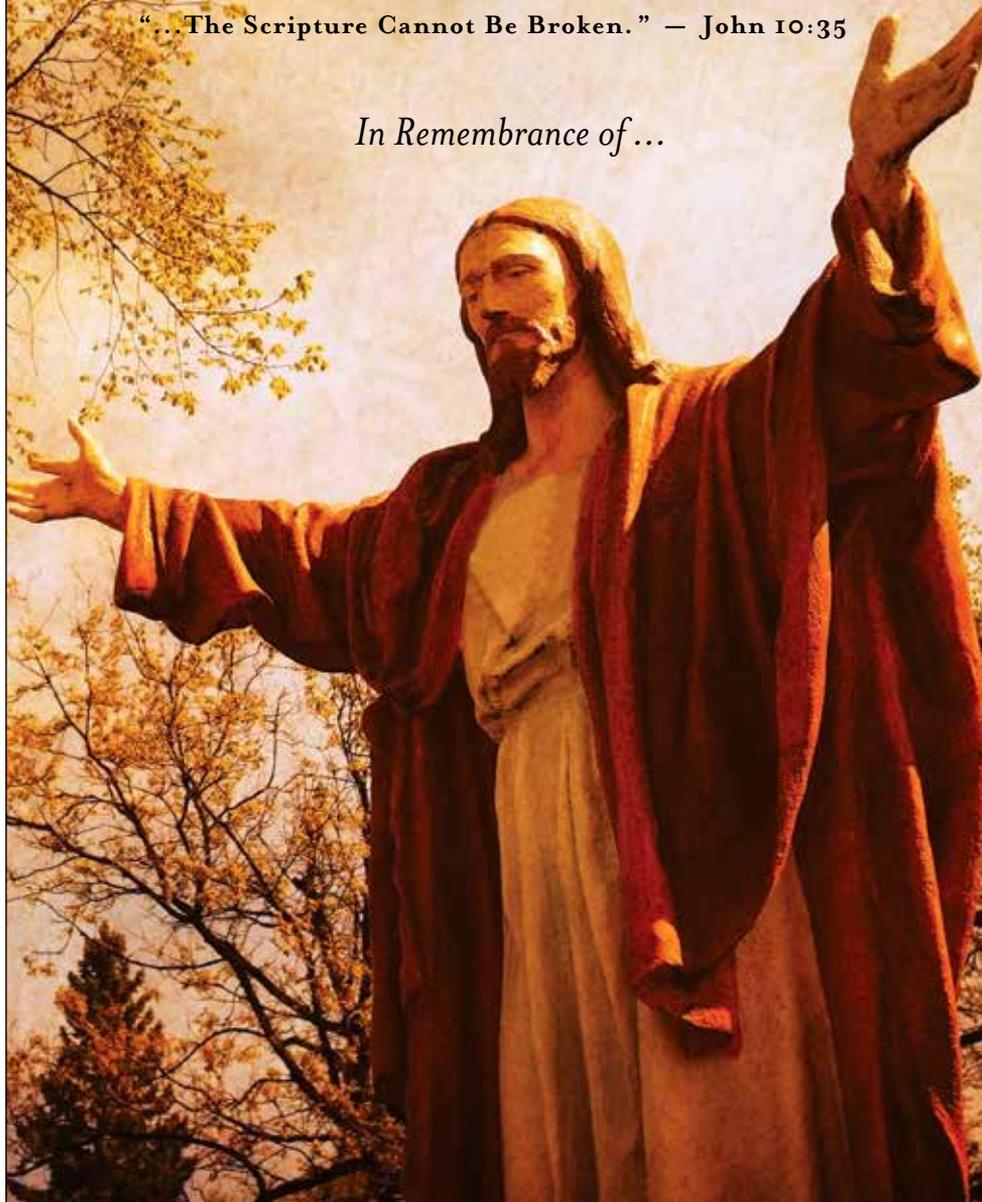


# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

“...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken.” — John 10:35

*In Remembrance of...*



# LOVERS OF PLEASURE... OR LOVERS OF GOD?

CDS Teacher Chad Seybt, Okabena, Minnesota

**A** seductive goddess is ruling in America today. She made large advances in America about a hundred years ago, and since then she has amassed millions of followers from all walks of life. She has brazenly infiltrated every level of society: the workplace, the school, the government, the family—and yes, even churches. Her name is "Amusement." You may also know her by her other name, "Entertainment."

She feeds from a large table—and like Israel of old we too have become infatuated with her offerings and have committed the grievous sin of spiritual adultery.

Consider how often we bow the knee before the idol of Amusement. We do so when work is viewed not as God's blessing but rather as a distraction that gets in the way of play. We do so when we agree

that school must be made "fun," for this goddess has deceived parents and educators into thinking that learning God's Word and about God's world is just too plain boring. We do so when winning the game becomes more important than how the game is played. We do so when government officials keep their power based on the level of protection they provide for Amusement's harlotry. We do so when parents see children not as *"an heritage of the Lord"* (Psalm 127:3) but rather as diversions that get in the way of amusement. We do so when God's call to worship service is less attractive than Amusement's siren call to Sunday's big game.

In his epistle to the young pastor Timothy, the apostle Paul said, *"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come"* (2 Timothy 3:1). He then went on to describe what these perilous (dangerous!) times would be like. Among his many descriptions, he included this: *"For men will be... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"* (2 Timothy 3:2a, 4b).

We certainly do live in dangerous times when we become more excited about the newest movie, television show, video game, or novel rather than the eternal, saving truths contained in God's Word. We flirt with peril when we are connected 24/7 to the goddess of Amusement through our computers, our cell phones, our TVs, and our vehicles. Are we not

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*Continued on Page 23*

# A Remembrance of Sin— a Remembrance of Him!

Pastor Paul Krause • Markesan, Wisconsin

## What comes to mind with the word

*Boston?*

Before the horrific event that occurred two months ago, a person may well have associated that city's name with the Tea Party or the marathon or even the music group popular in the 70s and 80s.

That was until April 15, 2013! Ever since then what people will associate with the city of Boston has drastically changed. That was the date those bombs exploded near the finish line of the Boston marathon, killing a few and seriously injuring many others.

## What comes to mind with the word

*sacrifice?*

The divinely inspired author of the epistle to the Hebrews tells us what the answer would have been among the Jews in the centuries before Christ. In their sacrifices there was a constant reminder of sins (10:3). Year in and year out—even day after day—countless animal sacrifices on the altar at the Temple in Jerusalem screamed out, “Sin! Sin! Sin!” The Biblical books of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy—ed.) are a testimony to this. On page after page God explains to the people what He required as sin offerings for a wide variety of sinful circumstances.

That association between sacrifice and sin continued because, as the writer to the Hebrews says, “*It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins*” (10:4).

Regardless of what sacrifice was made, sin remained! God's holy law with its demands is God's reminder of our sin and the wages it deserves—death!

But now consider what a blessing it is that God has given us another, a much better, association to make with the word sacrifice! “*Christ came as High Priest...Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption*” (Hebrews 9:11-12).

Jesus Himself came as the “propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2). The word propitiation means “atoning sacrifice.” Jesus offered Himself unto God as the once-and-for-all satisfactory sacrifice, thus paying the price demanded to atone for sin.

And because He offered His body and blood on Calvary’s cross, we have a new association to make with the word sacrifice: “Take eat...take drink...this bread is My body... this cup is My blood... do this in remembrance of Me.”

Whenever we partake of the Lord’s Supper, we do so remembering Him.

We remember that in, with, and under the bread and wine we are receiving that very body and blood which Jesus sacrificed on the cross for our sins.

We remember how “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” (John 3:16).

We remember the price Jesus paid. “...By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16).

We remember Him!

Yes, those multitudes of Old Testament sacrifices produced the remembrance of sin. Now, the celebration of the Lord’s Supper produces the remembrance of Him—the One who atoned for all our sin!

*Thy holy body into death was given,  
Life to win for us in heaven.  
No greater love than this to Thee could bind us;  
May this feast thereof remind us!  
O Lord, have mercy!  
(TLH #313:2)*



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unto God as the  
once-and-for-all  
satisfactory sacrifice,  
thus paying the price  
demanded to atone for sin.

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# Reflections on the Trinity in Our Worship Services

Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer • Spokane, Washington

“**In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**”

Our worship services typically begin with our calling upon the name of our God in the “Invocation.”

How many times have you heard your pastor speak the invocation? In a given year, he might speak it as often as sixty times in worship services. But how often have we stopped to think precisely about what we’re doing or what is taking place in connection with the phrase “In the name of” the Triune God?

Let’s consider some of the content and meaning of those words.

## *IN THIS NAME WE GATHER*

The most obvious reason for beginning our worship service in the name of the Triune God is that it is Him whom we are worshiping. God the Father created us. God the Son lived and died to save us. And God the Holy Spirit brought us to faith in Jesus as our Savior.

We are also calling upon this great three-in-one and one-in-three God to be with us in our worship service. We are reminded of Jesus’ words, “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them*” (Matthew 18:20). We want the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be with us, showering His grace and blessings upon us.

## *IN THIS NAME WE ARE FORGIVEN*

Also, we are told that we have been forgiven “in the name of” the Triune God.

In one of our liturgies the pastor announces to repentant sinners, “I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

God the Father “*loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*” (1 John 4:10).

God the Son “*gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed*” (Titus 2:14).

And it is these truths which “*God has revealed...to us through His Spirit*” (1 Corinthians 2:10).

In the name of the Triune God we are forgiven!

### IN THIS NAME WE PRAY

In this holy Name we approach the throne of God’s grace.

Our prayers are typically addressed to God the Father from whom “*every good and every perfect gift*” comes (James 1:17). The Father hears these prayers because through His Son’s sacrificial death on the cross, the barrier of sin that existed between us sinners and the most holy God was removed.

In Jesus we have direct access to the Father. He is our divine Go-Between, our Mediator. “*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*” (1 Timothy 2:5).

God the Holy Spirit is also invoked with our prayers. The Spirit knows our deepest needs, and He speaks to the Father in our behalf! “*For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*” (Romans 8:26).

Thus, the Triune God is very involved in our prayers!

### IN THIS NAME WE ARE BLESSED

Our worship services conclude in much the same way as they began. When the pastor pronounces the benediction, he is doing so because of a command and a promise given by the Triune God.

About 4,000 years ago the LORD told Aaron, the first high priest, “*Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: ‘The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.’ So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them*” (Numbers 6:24-27).

With this blessing, the Triune God is putting His holy name on the worshipers to bless them as they leave His house of worship and return to their life out in the world.

So...what is included in the invocation “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”? Simply put, everything—our life, our worship, and our eternal salvation!

*To the all-ruling Triune God be glory!  
Highest and Greatest, help Thou our endeavor;  
We, too, would praise Thee, giving honor worthy  
Now and forever. Amen.*

(TLH #240:4)

# Thank You, Heavenly Father, for... Father

Pastor Thomas Schuetze • Coloma, Michigan

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*"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights." (JAMES 1:17, NIV)*

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This passage from the New Testament epistle of James describes our heavenly Father as the source of all the good things we enjoy during the time of grace He grants us on Earth.

If we were to draw up an itemized list of God's good and perfect gifts, it would overflow onto many pages. For a starter, just think of the "daily bread" items which Dr. Martin Luther enumerates in his explanation to the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer in the *Small Catechism*, including "Food, drink, clothes, shoes, house, home..." and so forth.

Each year on the third Sunday in June we are reminded of one particular gift which the Father of heavenly lights bestows on us: our fathers!

On this Fathers' Day take time to consider and praise God for the vast array of blessings He has caused to flow down to you from above through your earthly father.

## **Think of...**

- The Christian training your father imparted during the hours he spent teaching you Bible stories and helping you grow in the grace and knowledge of your Savior.
- The loving discipline he administers when you misbehave so you will know the meaning of sin, and why the God of holiness needed to send His Son into our world in order to keep the commandments perfectly in our place and then give up His life on the cross to redeem us.
- The application of God's forgiveness to your repentant heart. The sweet news that, thanks to Jesus, your transgressions have been removed from you as far as the east is from the west.
- The Christian values your father inculcates in you that serve as a guide for your life so that you may glorify your Savior and function as a useful member of society.

• The time your father puts in at a job to earn a paycheck so that you will have food to eat and clothes to wear.

Many more benefits of both body and soul could be mentioned which flow down to children from the Father of heavenly lights through their earthly fathers. As we think on them, we cannot but agree with the Christian man who once said to a friend:

"God has given me one of the greatest gifts ever. I call that gift Dad."

There may be readers of this article whose fathers are absent from their life. If this is true for you, please consider how the God of faithfulness has blessed you in other ways.

Has He provided you with a surrogate father who is offering you guidance, discipline, and support? ...Or with a loving grandfather who is "there for you"? ...Or with an older sibling, uncle, or family friend who is serving as a positive influence in your life?

Even if there is no father figure in your life, you still have reason to lift up your heart in praise to God. For Jesus' sake, He gives you assurances such as the following.

*"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters"*  
(2 Corinthians 6:19).

*"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5).

*"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him"* (Psalm 103:13).

And if you have been blessed by the Lord to be a father yourself, it may seem at times that the task God has given you to raise your children for Him is a daunting one. You may wonder how you can do it successfully in the face of the stiff challenges which Christian parents and children face when living in a godless world.

May you also draw encouragement from the promises of God. Know without a doubt that as you look to His Word for direction and strength, He will equip you for the awesome assignment—and privilege—He has given you as a parent. He will equip you so that you can raise your children for Him, leaving them the rich heritage of faith in Jesus, the Savior of all.

May our heavenly Father guide you and your children dependably along life's path until you arrive safely at the eternal mansions which He, by His Son, has prepared for you!





## CROSS PURPOSES

# “Strong Marriages [are] Key To Social Ills”

Pastor Emeritus Daniel Fleischer · Oakdale, Minnesota

**T**o the statement in our title we might say, “Duh!”  
Is this news?

To some it apparently is. The quote was the headline of an article in a local newspaper a few years ago. The director of a local social organization said, “There is a lot of research and studies that show healthy marriages are an indicator of children doing better.” She also said, “We are not saying *marriage*. We are saying *healthy marriages*.” The group’s concern was the increase in teenage motherhood, the divorce rate, and families living in poverty.

The increase in teenage motherhood (no doubt unmarried teens) is indeed a concern for the Christian, beginning with the fact that sexual activity outside of marriage is sinful. It doesn’t appear that too many are concerned about that any more in our society.

The divorce rate is another concern of Christians, not only because of the social consequences but first of all because breaking a marriage is in principle a rejection of God’s will concerning marriage, established already in the Garden of Eden when God said, “*It is not good that man should be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him*” (Genesis 2:8). From the rib of Adam God made a woman “*and brought her*

unto the man” (2:22). The woman was compatible to Adam in every way—spiritually, emotionally, socially, and sexually. In the Garden God declared—and Jesus reiterated (Matthew 19:4-6)—that marriage is meant to be the lifelong union of one man and one woman so long as both shall live.

The perversion of homosexuality/lesbianism is a rejection of God’s will and order and shall reap its own reward to the detriment of society, as well as eternal judgment for those who die in unrepented sin. We pray that God in His grace will turn such individuals around in repentance, finding Jesus as God’s solution to their needs.

We surely agree that healthy marriages are essential to addressing and alleviating social ills. But healthy marriages are not in themselves the answer to social ills since apparently healthy marriages have also produced unhappy results. We live in a sinful world!

### So what is a healthy marriage?

A healthy marriage is more than a materially successful union. It is more than being highly thought of and being a pillar of society. It is more than just getting along. A healthy marriage is one in which the foundation of the marriage and the home is Christ, and where father, mother, and children have respect for the Word of God.

A healthy marriage revolves around the Lord Jesus Christ as the focus of the family. Members of the family worship at the cross together in confession of their sin, and with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who has taken away the penalties of their sin.

A healthy marriage is one in which husband and wife, and by their example the children, understand their responsibilities within their divinely assigned sphere. It manifests itself in mutual love and concern for one another with the common goal of seeking to glorify the Lord.

Essential to a healthy marriage and then to a functioning Christian family is “submitting to one another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21), and forgiving one another even as God has in Christ forgiven each of them (Ephesians 4:32).

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**A marriage  
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A marriage where there is an understanding of God’s holy law and the gospel and where each is properly applied is one in which children will flourish because husband and wife will share with their children the parameters of right and wrong, as well as the grace of forgiveness that is in Jesus.

Where children see that matters of faith are as important to father and mother as father and mother make them for the children, a bond will grow within the family.

Strong marriages established upon the sure and merciful Word of God are more than a key to social ills—they are essential to the spiritual life and welfare of everyone in the family; and indeed, without spiritual life grounded and rooted in Christ, social ills will continue to grow!

We are always amazed when society arrives at a conclusion which Christ-believers have always known. But then we are not too hopeful that much will change. In regard to every area of Christian sanctification and certainly in regard to marriage, our generation does well to heed the Lord who said through the prophet Jeremiah, *“Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; then the Lord will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you”* (Jeremiah 26:13).

Hear the Word of the Lord: *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night; he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper”* (Psalm 1:1-3).

That is the Heavenly Father’s word to His children. He will bless in every way, including with a “healthy marriage,” those who hear and practice what the Lord says. *“Let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence [respect] her husband”* (Ephesians 5:33).



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**Strong marriages  
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are essential...**

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MEDITATIONS ON JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT:  
MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, CHAPTERS FIVE THROUGH SEVEN

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*

(MATTHEW 6:19-24)

## The Importance of Good Spiritual Eyesight

Pastor Mark Gullerud • Bowdle, South Dakota

**G**ood eyesight is highly valued. It enables a person to gaze upon the world and see things clearly. And oh, what a delight to behold the vast beauties of God's creation and to cast our eyes on those who are near and dear to us!

Of even greater importance than physical eyesight is good spiritual eyesight. Being gifted by the Holy Spirit with such eyesight can mean the difference between beholding God and His wondrous truths through eyes of faith—and blindly stumbling about in darkness, unable to see through the fleeting joys and vain hopes offered by the things of this world.

The sad reality of life is that we are all by nature spiritually blind. And even though the Holy Spirit enlightens us at conversion, we still have to contend with a fleshly nature that, like cataracts, clouds our eyesight so that we don't always see things clearly to judge rightly.

People are often tempted to think that glistening gold, sparkling diamonds, and a sizable bank balance will supply security and happiness. Look at addiction to lotteries, and the millions of dollars

poured into them, with the pipe dream that winning the jackpot will make all the difference in a person's life. The devil, the world, and man's sinful nature sure have a lot of people fooled!

In this portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He bursts the bubble of this kind of thinking when He opens our eyes to the vanity and destructiveness of setting one's heart on and placing one's trust in earthly treasures. What is here today may be gone tomorrow—with moth or rust destroying them or thieves stealing them away.

The happiness which earthly treasures can give is very fleeting. Read Jesus' parable of the farmer who foolishly devoted his life to the things of this world and lost everything, including his soul, when suddenly he died (Luke 12:15-21).

We also know from the Word of God that earthly riches are not evil in and of themselves. The problem comes, however, when one's affections are set on these things (1 Timothy 6:10), and when all of a person's time and energy are devoted to acquiring them.

God blesses us with earthly riches and temporal goods, but He does not do so in order that we live for such things, but rather so that they might be used to serve Him in His Kingdom. Jesus has redeemed us from sin, death, and the devil not for the purpose that we might live for ourselves and the things of this world, but rather that we live for Him here and in the world to come.

The Savior would focus our eyes and hearts on laying up treasures for ourselves in heaven. He would have us devote ourselves to growing in spiritual knowledge and faith so that we do not lose our hold on eternal life and that glorious world to come.

And of course, the spiritual treasures are intended not only for us. That is why Jesus commissions His disciples to share His gospel, so that others too might come to enjoy the treasures of heaven.

Lest we be tempted to think we can live for both God and the things of this world, Jesus declares such divided loyalty impossible: "*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon*" (Matthew 6:24). There is room for only one master in our hearts—either God or earthly riches.

Working through His Word and Sacrament, may the LORD ever bless us with spiritual eyesight so that we behold Jesus in faith as our Savior, devote ourselves to God, and finally behold Him face to face in heaven.



PART THREE OF A SERIES

# “This is most certainly true!”

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

*And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day*

*He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.*

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## 3) God is my Preserver and Provider

Prof. Joseph Lau · Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Have you ever had a “near death” experience? If so, perhaps it involved a motor vehicle, a medication, an allergic reaction, an illness, or a war. And after your life was preserved, didn't you have a sense of gratitude and a renewed appreciation for life?

Gratitude is rightly directed towards our Heavenly Father, the Preserver of all Life.

How does God preserve life? Sometimes it is through obvious miracles. Many examples from Holy Scripture illustrate God's power to preserve life through the extraordinary—the children of Israel at the Red Sea, Daniel in the lions' den, the three men in the fiery furnace, Elijah and the ravens, David and Goliath, Naaman's leprosy healed, and so on.

Does God still perform miracles to preserve life today? Almost anyone who has worked in the medical profession for any amount of time will concur that miracles happen all the time.

### The Five Installments:

- 1) God is my Father Almighty;
- 2) God is Maker of Heaven and Earth;
- 3) God is my Preserver and Provider;**
- 4) God is my Protector;
- 5) God does all this for me by His grace.

You see, unlike deists—who believe in a god that created the world and then left it up to the natural laws of the universe to dictate the future—we believe in a personal God who can and does produce miracles of preservation every day. We believe in a God who intervenes in the affairs of humans to produce results which spiritually benefit His children.

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His children.**

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Even things that we may consider ordinary occurrences are really miracles—that is, events which occur only because of God's causing them. Consider food production and plant growth. Modern science has been able to show how cells divide and seeds grow, but it can't explain *why* they do so. The process in which oxygen is used by the human body to sustain life—with the by-products of carbon dioxide to sustain plant life—is nothing short of miraculous.

From that standpoint, every breath and every heartbeat is God's preservation of life!

Please read Psalm 104. There we have clear testimony to the power of God preserving life as He provides for all creatures. *“He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth”* (v. 14). In another psalm we find the familiar words, *“The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their fruit in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing”* (Psalm 145:15-16).

Have you ever heard of the Malthusians? They were followers of the ideas of Thomas Malthus, an Anglican economist of the late 1700s. He predicted doom and gloom for the growing human population because food production would fail to keep up and people would starve. We know today that the Earth is capable of producing far more food than is necessary to sustain life. Not food production but its distribution is the issue.

Similarly, Christians today need not panic when they hear cataclysmic talk of a depleted ozone layer, climate change, global warming, acid rain, and the like, because we have the sure word of Scripture that guarantees a sustainable Earth with God in charge. *“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease”* (Genesis 8:22).

And King David's words still ring true today, *"I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread"* (Psalm 37:25). Who are the righteous? We believers are those who are righteous; we have been called according to God's purpose, and all things work together for our good (Romans 8:28).

In the Lord's Prayer we pray *"Give us this day our daily bread."* Martin Luther rightly explains that "daily bread" refers to all that we receive for our bodily welfare—including shelter, family and friends, good weather, and the government—a list very similar to that found here in his explanation to the First Article.

The Savior's emphasis on *"this day"* should serve as a regular reminder to not be consumed with worry about how God will preserve us in the future. His grace is sufficient one day at a time. *"Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; and great is your faithfulness"* (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Near-death experiences? We have them every second of every day! Out of love our merciful Father preserves us. Would we expect anything else? *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?"* (Romans 8:32)

This is most certainly true!

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## THE FIRST ARTICLE

*(About Creation)*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

*What does this mean?*

**I believe that God has created me and all creatures. He has given me my body and life, eyes, ears, and all my bodily members, my mind, and all my senses and still keeps them for me. God also preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, animals, and all my property and all I need to support this body and life. He protects me from all danger. He guards and defends me from every evil. God does all this because He is my good and gracious Father in heaven, not because of anything I have done to earn or deserve it. For all of this it is my duty to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him.**

**This is most certainly true.**

*(Martin Luther's SMALL CATECHISM, Sydow edition, 2000)*

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IMMANUEL LUTHERAN COLLEGE, EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN

## *Clinging To and Confessing the Truth*

Professor John Pfeiffer

**W**hat is more important, the salvation of men or the glory of God? Some people set aside the glory of God, claiming that they are very concerned about the salvation of men. However, if you make the salvation of men more important than the glory of God, you will lose both.

### **What is the glory of God?**

It is the totality of all His attributes or characteristics. Everything that makes Him God constitutes His glory. So magnificent is His glory that it generates its own light...a light whose brilliance is far greater than that of the sun.

Men often are glorified by means of a medal or a trophy. But these are passive, just sitting on a shelf or in a trophy case, whereas the glory of God is not passive. For instance, God's love (part of God's glory) is always actively doing things. God's mercy is not a passive disposition in God's heart, but an activity by which He is continually relieving our suffering. — Think of God's glory as His saving activities.

And what about truth? Is truth just an abstract documentation of reality? Jesus says, *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31f). The truth of God is active; it actively sets us free from slavery to sin. The truth of God is able to take the victory of Christ and put it to work in our hearts and lives. Forgiveness, one of God's truths, sets us free. The gospel of forgiveness is the power of God unto salvation in our lives (see Romans 1:16).

*"For the Word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). You students at our school are living testimonies to the reality of this. You are here because you believe in Jesus. You believe in Jesus because the truth touched your hearts, set you free from sin, and

created faith. You are here because the Word of God has convinced you that what we teach is correct. *"...When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe"* (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Every truth uttered by the mouth of God is at work, doing whatever it is that God sent it to do. God said: *"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty-handed, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it"* (Isaiah 55:11).

Now consider the contrary. If truth is powerful, error also is powerful. God tells us, *"A little leaven leavens the whole lump"* (Galatians 5:9). False teaching is like yeast which goes to work as soon as it is put into a lump of dough. Its activity spreads throughout the whole lump.

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer"* (see 2 Tim. 2:15-17). I think we all know how active and deadly cancer can be.

Yes, error, lies, false doctrine are not passive but active and deadly. God says of false teachers that by their smooth words and flattering speech (they) deceive the hearts of the simple (see Romans 16:18).

The truth: active and powerful.

The lies: active and powerful.

Which is more powerful? The truth in the heart of the believer! If truth is permitted to speak, it will overthrow error. This has been going on in your lives from the time you came to faith in Jesus. Jesus told Pontius Pilate, *"For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice"* (John 18:37). At another time He said to His enemies, *"He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God"* (John 8:47).

When the voice of truth is silenced, error gains the upper hand. Truth will be silenced only when it is rejected, when ungodliness and unrighteousness clap their hands over the mouth of truth.

Those who give up the truth, even the slightest bit of truth, reveal an attitude of heart that is willing to set aside the glory of God in favor of something else. They unleash a power that is active and deadly:

the power of error. This power can and will spread and grow until it has suppressed all truth, even the truth of the gospel.

Is it any wonder that the pastors, teachers, and laymen who started our synod (CLC), fought so hard to keep the truth? The truth is our life. It is the power which keeps us in the faith and that creates faith in the next generation of believers. God help this generation, sitting right here in chapel, to have the same attitude toward the truth.

*"You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:17).*

PRAYER:

*Dear God and Father, continue Your gracious work within our hearts, so that we will always glorify You by clinging to and confessing Your truth. Keep sin and all false doctrine forever far from us. Forgive us for all that we have spoken in ignorance and grant that now and always we will walk in the truth to the glory of Your name and the salvation of souls...our own and others'. Hear us for the sake of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*

Amen.

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# Introduction

Missionary David Koenig

In the following examples from Scripture we try to learn ways and attitudes which will better enable us to witness of our Lord to others. These examples are drawn from the four Gospels and from the book of the Acts of the Apostles. These examples are by no means exhaustive. As with the basketball strategy of one-on-one, we are looking at examples of one Christian witnessing to another individual. We are not considering what was said to individuals already in the faith, though that is also applicable. We are not considering what was said to groups, though that also is applicable to a witnessing technique. We are considering these various situations where it was one-on-one, and the one witnessed to was living in unbelief.

Not all those individuals witnessed to were also brought to believe on Jesus as their Savior. But the point we consider is that they were witnessed to. We know God's power and mercy. We know His Word will accomplish what He wills (Isaiah 55). We should not be surprised if some and even many do not believe when witnessed to, for we know man's stubborn and rebellious heart.

We should be disturbed though with ourselves if we do not make every effort to reach out with the Law and especially with the Gospel that the Spirit may work. Our laziness, fears, indifference, and doubt so often interfere. We are unprofitable servants and people of such little faith. Through these examples we seek to build ourselves up in our witnessing desire and ability.

The ultimate goal in all witnessing is to be like John the baptizer and point to Christ, saying that He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. And while we try earnestly to develop our skills in this area, we don't want to forget John's motto, "*He must increase, but I must decrease*" (John 3:30). No matter what gifts we have and how we develop them, we are not looking for glory for ourselves. We are looking to have another soul join with us in glorifying our God.

# Hungering and Thirsting after Righteousness

(First of a Series)

Missionary David Koenig

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*Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.” Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

(LUKE 19:1-10)

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**C**ertainly we all yearn to meet those people who hunger and thirst after righteousness. These are people who have sought answers to life’s big questions in all the wrong places and have found the answers either nonexistent or severely lacking. They have been brought to the point of not looking within themselves for the answers or solution. They have a conscience that yet speaks to them so that they feel guilt and even an emptiness.

Zacchaeus had certainly heard—to his face and in whispers behind his back—what a wicked man he was. Over a period of time this must have had a crushing effect. Though he had power and wealth as a higher echelon tax gatherer, he was not admired. His own people generally despised him and showed this by linking his office with the status of open sinners. How might the supreme Roman authorities view him? Doubtless in no better light. They knew the Jews and how they looked on the tax gatherer as a lackey.

Zacchaeus knew very well how many times he had abused his office and

cheated in the gathering, as he later admits. To this man in this situation the Lord comes. We should not think that this was just an idle stroll of our Lord. Far from it, for our Lord wanted Zacchaeus to know His love, this one who was anything but loved by all around him. In this we should remember for ourselves that it is our Lord who likewise purposefully sends us. He puts us into situations in which we may show His love. He purposely gives us the opportunities along life's way to reach out. Our Lord looks up into the tree with the purpose to reach Zacchaeus.

The Lord centers His attention on Zacchaeus, for every soul is precious to our Lord. Our Lord came into the world to save sinners, and here was one very obvious sinner. The love of God is beyond our human imagination. Aren't we supposed to be kind to those who are [not] kind to us? Or do we just favor those who favor us? The love of God, on the contrary, means to pray for your worst enemy. The love of God means to return good for evil. The love of God means to pay attention to the unloved and despised. There are so many lost, afloat on a dark sea of life with no rudder and no oars. We come to them with the Gospel rudder and oars.

Beyond merely giving His passing attention to Zacchaeus on the road, the Lord would go to his house (and this done with the obvious disapproval of others). Outreach is beyond the comprehension of the hypocritical world. Just where might we find ourselves at times to reach out with the Word?

The immediate reaction of this prospect was that *"He made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully."* By the demonstration of Jesus' loving attention this prospect believed. *"Today salvation has come to this house..."* Zacchaeus shows that he repents and believes, *"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold."* He does better even than the law of restitution [cf. Leviticus 6:5]. Such is the power of the gospel of the living Christ.

Not only was the Lord standing before him, but He was living in the man's heart. Although in this encounter there is not much conversation recorded, yet we see the attitude of love that is a prerequisite for witnessing.

We see also that the Church of our Lord is not just for those who are outwardly upright. How many times haven't we seen some bum or disreputable person and never dreamed of him sitting next to us in worship?

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. When we reach out to the despised of this world, we pray that the attention we center on such as Zacchaeus will raise hope within his heart and that he will listen to our words.



## LOVERS *Continued from Page 2*

losing our connection with the true, Triune God in His Word? We are backsliding when we would rather read the newest post on Facebook® than spend a few minutes with the Book of faith. If Jesus were to ask us, as He did the Pharisees, *"Have you not read...?"* — what could we answer Him?

Let us put down our remotes and pick up our Bibles. Let us turn off and tune out the distractions Amusement would place before our hearts, and let us revel in the still, small voice of God's Word as it speaks to us of peace and forgiveness in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Let us not run to the next new thing to come out of Hollywood, but rather let us be renewed by *"the word of the Lord [which] endures forever"* (1 Peter 1:25).

Be not deceived. Fun is fleeting, while salvation is forever: *"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished"* (Isaiah 51:6).

These truly are dangerous times, for not only are we robbing ourselves of the opportunity to grow closer to our loving Savior, but we are also allowing the gifts He has given us to be snuffed out as we turn into devotees of the goddess Amusement. We are being attacked on two fronts—namely, our God-sponsored Bible faith and our God-given opportunities to share that faith.

God informs us in His Word that He has specifically crafted each of us with unique gifts that He would have us use for the advancement of His kingdom (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12). In this Age of Entertainment, are we utilizing the gifts God has given us? How many precious hours are wasted in the name of Entertainment that could better be used to nurture God's gifts to His people? Do we appreciate the fact that there is really no greater pleasure on this Earth than using our gifts to the glory of God?

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service"* (Romans 12:1).

Can you draw? Draw for the Lord. Can you speak? Speak for the Lord. Can you sing? Sing for the Lord. Can you write? Write for the Lord. Can you build? Build for the Lord. Can you clean? Clean for the Lord. This is why you, dear Christians, are still here on this Earth. God wants to use you and your God-given gifts to build His Church. What activity on this Earth could be more fulfilling than that?

May our eternal Victor, Jesus Christ, rescue us from the flirtations and temptations of the goddess Amusement! May He enable us through His Word to pull down the high places of Entertainment in our lives and hearts! May He strengthen us through His Spirit to put on the whole armor of God and **train with it** that we may be thoroughly equipped to spread His Word from sea to shining sea! Amen!

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Colloquy

A colloquy will be conducted for Douglas Priestap during the CLC General Pastoral Conference in June.

—Pastor Michael Eichstadt, CLC President

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# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

“... THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN.” — JOHN 10 : 35

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