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Lutheran Church of Our Savior

Volume 57 – Number 8

August 2019

FROM THE PASTOR...

I hope you had a nice 4th of July holiday: maybe a BBQ and some fireworks. I hope you took some time to appreciate the freedom we have in this country. I saw a commercial for Jeep a couple of days ago. It said: when you get right down to it freedom means going where you want to go and doing what you want to do. It showed images of happy people in beautiful places getting out of their Jeeps. I guess the idea is you can only have real freedom if you own a Jeep. But freedom is a funny thing; not funny as in ha, ha, but funny as in elusive and hard to define. What does it mean to be free: going where you want to go and doing what you want to do? You can live in a place where you are legally free, but still live in chains. There are all kinds of prisons.

St. Paul has a unique, spiritual take on what it means to be free. When he wrote to the Galatian Christians he said: *(Gal 6:14 NIV) May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.* That's real freedom! Nothing in this world had a hold on Paul. If he lost everything he had, he knew he really lost nothing. That was because he had already given everything to Jesus. He knew even his life belonged to Jesus: *"The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."* You can live in the finest home in the city and still be a prisoner—inside—in your heart, your mind, your soul. There are all kinds of prisons. The nature of sin is it makes us prisoners and our human nature is so eager to cooperate. What does your prison look like? What are the things of life that put you in chains?

It seems to me the whole idea of spiritual freedom is intimately wrapped up in the question, "What am I worth?" How we answer that question impacts on whether we can live a spiritually free life. Where I think my worth as a person comes from and what makes my life valuable will affect how free I feel to live. I think there are only three ways you can answer the question, "What am I worth?" Two of those ways put us in spiritual prisons; the third leads to real spiritual freedom.

The first way to answer is: I am what I own. My stuff gives me value, meaning, and freedom. The clothes make the man. Fancy car, big house, world travel, big bank account. The one who dies with the most toys wins. What I possess makes me important. Buy a Jeep. In the late George Carlin's book *Braindroppings*, he wrote about how we become slaves to our possessions and how if we're not careful we wind up imprisoned by all our stuff. Here is some of what he wrote: You got your stuff with you? I'll bet you do. Guys have stuff in their pockets;

women have stuff in their purses... Stuff is important. You gotta take care of your stuff. You gotta have a place for your stuff... That's what life is all about, tryin' to find a place for your stuff! That's all a house is, a place to keep your stuff. If you didn't have so much stuff, you wouldn't need a house. You could just walk around all the time. A house is just a pile of stuff with a cover on it.

You can see that when you're taking off in an airplane. You look down and see all the little piles of stuff. Everybody's got his own little pile of stuff. And they lock it up! That's right! When you leave your house, you gotta lock it up. Wouldn't want somebody to come and take some of your stuff. 'Cause they always take the good stuff! So when you get right down to it, your house is nothing more than a place to keep your stuff... while you go out and get more stuff. Stuff you don't want, stuff you don't need, stuff that's poorly made, stuff that's overpriced. Even stuff you can't afford! Gotta keep gettin' more stuff. Otherwise someone else might wind up with more stuff. Can't let that happen. Gotta have the most stuff. So you keep gettin' more and more stuff, and puttin' it in different places. In the closets, in the attic, in the basement, in the garage.

So now you got a house full of stuff. And, even though you might like your house, you gotta move. Gotta get a bigger house. Why? Too much stuff! And that means you gotta move all your stuff. Or maybe you could sell some of your stuff. Have a yard sale, a garage sale. Some people drive around all weekend just lookin' for garage sales. They don't have enough of their own stuff, they wanna buy other people's stuff.



I just saw a study saying the average new home built in America is over 2300 sq. feet. In the 1960s it was less than 1400. Gotta find a bigger place to put our stuff. Jesus said, "What does it profit someone to gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Maybe you're in danger of that happening to you. The walls of that prison may be shutting out your responsibilities to your family, to your friends, and worse—to your God. It may be a prison with most attractive walls, but still it is a prison if the main priority in your life is your stuff. In our sin, we want to turn away from God. Remove him from the throne of our hearts and put something else there. We want to have other gods before him. And before you know it, you start believing you are your stuff... your value is in what you

have. But that always betrays you because you can never have enough stuff.

If your stuff was the measure of your value; if your stuff gives your life meaning; if it's your stuff that gives you happiness and makes you at peace with yourself... Why is it many with the most stuff have little peace and less happiness? If our stuff could make us free, those with the most stuff should be the most free, the most happy, the most fulfilled, but our experience says otherwise. Letting your stuff set your worth is a prison. You can't look to the things of the world, temporary things, perishing things, to find your worth. You won't find freedom in your stuff, even if it's a Jeep.

The second way to answer the question of worth is to look for it inside yourself. There's the old song, "Learning to love yourself is the greatest love of all." Oh really? There are all kinds of prisons. In our sin, we move away from God—by what we do and what we leave undone. We don't always love God with all our hearts. We don't always love our neighbors as ourselves. Before long, you start believing you are what you do; or you are what you have done. Your prison tells you that you can never escape the guilt of past mistakes, sins, actions. You can't find your worth in your stuff, the heart is never satisfied, there is never enough, and it can be here today and gone tomorrow. That way puts you in chains. You can't find your worth looking inside yourself. That little thing called sin is there to convict you of the things you have done you should not have done and the things you haven't done you should have. Looking inside yourself puts you in prison.

But there's a third way to answer the question: What am I worth? This third way is not to look outside at your stuff or inside at yourself but to look up to the cross. there's good news for everybody stuck in their prisons! Jesus declared Independence Day. On Good Friday, he hung on the cross and fought the battle of battles. That's where he defeated the power of sin once and for all. That's where he took away the devil's power to put you in chains. You don't have to be a prisoner ever again!

Jesus says it's not stuff that makes you free; it's not looking inside for the "goodness" of yourself: no, that won't give you freedom. Jesus said it is the truth that makes you free. What is this truth that frees? Jesus said that as he walked to the cross. The cross stands as God's signpost, God's truth. It says you are loved for who you are... God's son. God's daughter... his very good creation made in his own image. Whether you have a lot of stuff or very little makes no difference to the cross. Jesus suffered and died there to bring you home to God and he did that purely out of love. You are of infinite worth to Jesus, not because you have stuff but because you have the cross. The cross shows you how much you are worth to God. That is the truth that sets you free. Jesus says if the Son sets you free you are free indeed. Don't look for freedom in your stuff, what you have out there. And don't look inside for worth or freedom. That comes down to you from the cross. God loves you because of who you are, not because of what you have. God loves you because of who you are, not because of what you do or don't do. You don't ever have to live in any kind of prison again. Just open your eyes, look to his cross and live free!

The cross frees from the prison of stuff because the cross says the externals don't matter to God. We all

stand equal under the cross, and we all stand equally loved and forgiven: rich, poor, man, woman, parent, child, black, white, brown, straight, gay, liberal, conservative. The cross frees from the past; through its lens of forgiveness you see God will not remember your sins so you don't have to carry them around either. The cross says you are free from guilt over what you have done and what you haven't done. The cross lifts you up and sets you back on your feet so you can walk forward, free to meet each new day.

People dream about being free. People look for it somewhere "out there" or in here [heart]. But real freedom is up there [cross]. *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.* There's no other way that leads to true freedom, but the way of the cross. You break out of prison only by surrendering to the love of that cross! There are all kinds of prisons. Don't you want to be free? If the prison walls are still up, they don't have to be. Let Jesus tear them down. And then, live free! ✨

...Pastor Steve Eckert

AUGUST SUNDAYS

- Aug 07 - Christian Education Board
- Aug 14 - Crystal Shaffer
- Aug 21 - Lisa DiModica
- Aug 28 - Wobrock Family



MOWING IN AUGUST



Aug 03 Corey Maddison, Harold Oliver

- Aug 10 Bill Williamson, Arlin Weiting
- Aug 17 Reese Riddiough, Keith Almond, Nathan Schofield
- Aug 24 Art Atrops, Jim LaBelle
- Aug 31 Mark Hathaway, Terry Morgan, Dick Scholar

SUMMER WORSHIP

8:30 AM – Bible Study

9:30 AM – Worship Service

(Effective through September 1)



Aug 01 7:00 pm Elders' Mtg.
Aug 03 9:00 am – 2:00 pm – VBS ROAR!
 Aug 04 8:30 am SS/Bible Study
 Aug 04 9:30 am Comm. Svc
 Aug 04 LWML Mite Box
 Aug 11 8:30 am SS/Bible Study
 Aug 11 9:30 am Worship Svc.
 Aug 12 6:00 – 8:00 PM – Men's Club
Aug 15 August Ministry Schedule Due
 Aug 18 8:30 am SS/Bible Study
 Aug 18 9:30 am Praise/Comm. Svc.
 Aug 20 9:30 am Tabitha Quilting Group
Aug 20 August Newsletter Deadline
 Aug 22 7:00 pm Council Mtg.
 Aug 25 8:30 am SS/Bible Study
 Aug 25 9:30 am Comm. Svc.
Aug 25 Rally Day
 Aug 28 9:30 am Worship Svc.

Aug 01 Eleanor Barraza
 Aug 02 Merlin Meyer
 Aug 03 Lucy Riley
 Aug 05 Bonnie Jo Lange, Trevor Morgan
 Aug 06 Benjamin Barraza, Micah Miller
 Aug 08 Samantha Andersen
 Aug 09 Emma Olney, Bill Williamson
 Aug 10 Brandon Heuchert
 Aug 12 Zachary Andersen, Bruce Summers
 Aug 14 Sarah Ganschow
 Aug 16 Dylan Gomez
 Aug 17 Don Benson
 Aug 18 Nathan Schofield
 Aug 19 Drew Crawley, Reese Riddiough, Samuel Riley
 Aug 20 Natashja Borchert
 Aug 21 Tina Mitchell, Matt Olney, Jane Riddiough
 Aug 23 Shirley Eckert, Jeff Sweeney, Linda Sweeney
 Aug 27 Frank Presnell
 Aug 28 Mark Andersen
 Aug 29 Douglas McRoberts
 Aug 30 Paul DiModica
 Aug 31 Henry Clavin



Aug 04 Bill & Judy Moffatt
 Aug 08 Billy & Diana Brown
 Aug 12 Corey & Deborah Maddison
 Aug 17 Darrell & Marianne Heuchert
 Aug 21 Pastor Steve & Caydee Eckert
 Aug 22 Pastor Harold & Ruth Oliver

LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION



MITE BOX – 1ST SUNDAY

The Mite Box will be available on August 4 outside church. Once again, you will have the opportunity of supporting many worthwhile Lutheran mission activities.



ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE Saturday – September 21

The annual Rummage Sale will accept donations beginning September 16 until the sale itself. Why not begin setting aside gently used, clean clothing; operable appliances; knick-knacks, kitchen ware, toys, jewelry, etc. It's never too early to declutter cupboards, closets, and garages!



SUPPORT OUR MILITARY

Erin Bridges (nee Lange) has been deployed to Afghanistan for 9 months to 1 year. She would enjoy hearing from LCOS friends. **Write to:**

Erin Bridges
976 MCT
Camp BAF
APO, AE 09354

ELDER'S CORNER

God's Will?

The *Lutheran Witness* recently added a new section to its publication. It's called "World Views" and it's a collection of short articles that deal with worldly issues and views that are contradictory to Christian beliefs.

The April 2019, issue had an article that particularly caught my attention. It was entitled "Religious Diversity Is God's Will." It states that a "Christian" religious leader co-signed a document with a Muslim imam saying that diversity of religions is willed by God. What this means to me is that God is okay with us believing in the doctrines of the cultists: Mormons, Muslims, Jehovah Witnesses, Buddhist, etc. Diversity—there are many roads, different ways to get to heaven.

But, God is not okay with us believing in false religions. It is not His will for us or His plan for His children to follow these false gods. God's word is very clear on this. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6) This fact is proclaimed over and over again in scripture. God's will for us "...is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I shall raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40) The First Commandment tells us to have no other gods before Me.

So, this must be our witness to the non-believer. There is only one way to eternal life. Believe that God sent His one and only Son to die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins and then on the third day rose from the grave and lives today.

You Christians are pretty exclusive, aren't you? Your way or the highway. Jesus or else. Yeah, I guess we are exclusive, but it's not us saying it. It's God! ✿

...Mark Hathaway



Dearest LCOS family—Thank you so much for the many cards, visits, food, and prayers. It has really meant a lot to me! I have a few more medical procedures ahead, but I think I'm on the mend. I truly realize that "God's grace is sufficient."—LaDene Hersman

SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA!

Church Photo
Directory



Send your updated photo to Lisa DiModica at pldimodica@yahoo.com by August 11, 2019. (Exceptions can be made!) Any questions, please call or text Lisa DiModica at 805-354-4443.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



August's Featured Items – School Supplies

Pencils Erasers Notebooks
Pencil Cases Glue Sticks

Thanks to those who have donated financially. Please make your check payable to: **LCOS**. Mark "OCC" in the check memo section and deposit in any Sunday offering plate. These funds will be used to purchase shoebox items. ✿

Contact Persons: **Kathy Lee (530-263-0479).**
Anita Lange (805-680-8522)

LISTEN FOR THE "ROAR"

Vacation Bible School--one day
kids' retreat: **ROAR VBS!**

Saturday, August 3,
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Save the date. Registration information is available online (www.myvbs.org/lcos), from Deborah, or at the church office. See Deborah or Kelly Olney if you are able to help out. ✿

THE MASTER'S WORKS

As a skilled inventor, John Muir was a prized factory employee in Indianapolis. If not for an industrial accident in his 20s, he may have spent his life making things indoors. But after recovering from being temporarily blinded, Muir headed on a 1,000-mile walk to "consider the lilies." He then began doing that literally, as a botanist.

To his résumé, the 19th-century Renaissance man added naturalist, glaciologist, conservationist, founder of the Sierra Club, and Father of National Parks. Yet when Muir was asked what he did, he replied simply, "I study the inventions of God." ✿



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Our Mission

"Responding to God's love, Lutheran Church of Our Savior desires to reach more people for Christ by proclaiming Him, by growing in faith, and by caring for all people."



SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship – 9:30 AM
Sunday School/Bible Class – 8:30 AM
(effective thru September 1)

*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that
whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16*