

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Remember your blessings

Sometimes it is difficult to keep things in perspective. We forget how blessed we are. We live in the most prosperous and free nation on earth. Many of us have enjoyed financial stability, rewarding employment, numerous possessions, healthy children, and a wonderful marriage that lasts for years. When we look back, we see that life is filled with gifts from God. We are truly blessed. We should be filled with gratitude. When we compare our blessings to those of so many who have lived lives filled with suffering, we know we have no place to complain.

Yet, what do we do when one or more of these precious gifts is taken away? How do we react? Whether it is our health, or a dear loved one passes away; our kids get into trouble, or our marriage is going through some rocky times; we are heartbroken, hurting, suffering, and grieving. And when we are in the throes of it, our minds can go in any and every direction. The questions arise. Why is this happening to me? Did I do something wrong? Is God punishing me? The questions keep us up at night. We want the suffering to end. No doubt, the devil delights in this. He loves to see us vulnerable and waits until we are at our lowest to whisper in our ear, "God doesn't care. If He did, he wouldn't let this happen to you." The tempter's doubt grows to accusation. Some are tempted to blame God and reject him. This is a great evil. But an even sadder conclusion is the assumption that God is not good. That He is withholding His blessings out of anger or spite.

All of this is part of the human experience. Sooner or later, we all face suffering and along with it, doubt and despair. We want to know the reason for

our pain. We always have. In fact, one of the oldest books of the Bible addresses this very subject.

The Book of Job tells us of a righteous man who was greatly blessed by God. He was faithful and the Lord bestowed on him many blessings. But then, through no fault of his own, Job had his blessings taken away. He lost his children, his property, and his health. But through it all, he did not lose his faith. He was tempted to. His friends encouraged him to repent of sin—for surely his tragic life was the result of some wrong he had committed. But Job did not blame God for punishing him. Even his wife told him to reject God and give up on him. "Curse God and die," she told him! But Job wouldn't hear of it. When he was sick and his wife told him to renounce God, he said, "Foolish woman! Should we receive good from God and not evil?" And when he heard the news of his property and children being destroyed, here's how he reacted: "Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

Scripture tells us in different ways that we do not always know the reason for suffering. (Example: Luke 13:1-5, John 9) We cannot see all the angles. We cannot begin to comprehend the reasons involved. But we are told that God knows the reasons and in spite of our suffering, His love for us remains. What's more, in Jesus, God enters into suffering. In infinite compassion, the God of heaven, lowers Himself and goes in our place. He suffers what we deserve. He endures a punishment fit for sinners. But this He does so those who trust

in Him will not have to suffer eternally. He dies so that we might have life. Abundant life lived in honor of Him.

Perhaps for those of us who have been blessed so richly, this is an especially difficult truth to remember. Maybe this reveals an understanding about our God and how and why He blesses. Maybe we have thought we were deserving, when in reality it was purely because of His kindness and mercy. Maybe we began to think we were entitled to every good thing? Or, we falsely thought that this earthly life and its fleeting pleasures were the goal of our existence and not the Kingdom of God and His righteousness which we were to seek first all along?

Remember, therefore, to count your blessings and remember that all you have and ever have had, are only gifts from the Lord. And when the Lord withholds one of those gifts, remember the words of a righteous man spoken in faith: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Remember also, that the greatest gifts the Lord gives, are yet to come. Not in this life, but in the Kingdom of Heaven. When earthly gifts are taken away, perhaps the Lord is shifting our focus to where it belongs.

WHATEVER IS
True
 WHATEVER IS
Honorable
 WHATEVER IS
Just
 WHATEVER IS
Pure
 WHATEVER IS
Lovely
 WHATEVER IS
Commendable
 IF THERE IS ANY
Excellence
 IF THERE IS ANYTHING
Worthy of Praise
Think about these things.



prepare for worship in february

Sunday, Feb. 3: Fourth S. a. the Epiphany

Texts: Jer. 1:4-20; 1Cor. 12:31b-13:13; Luke 4:31-44
 Hymn of the Day: "Son of God, Eternal Savior,"
 842

Sunday, Feb. 10: Fifth S. a. the Epiphany

Texts: Is. 6:1-8; 1Cor. 14:12b-20; Luke 5:1-11
 Hymn of the Day: "Hail to the Lord's Anointed,"
 398

Sunday, Feb. 17: Sixth S. a. the Epiphany

Texts: Ex. 17:5-8; 1Cor. 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26
 Hymn of the Day: "Songs of Thankfulness and
 Praise," 394

Sunday, Feb. 24: Seventh S. a. the Epiphany

Texts: Gen. 45:3-15; 1Cor. 15:21-26, 30-42; Luke
 6:27-38
 Hymn of the Day: "My Soul, Now Praise Your
 Maker," 820

The Golden Rule

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

This is how I remember learning the golden rule in my early years, as taught by my parents and reinforced by my teachers in school. It's a good rule to practice for getting along peaceably in society. And, as parents, this is a good way for us to teach our children how to behave and get along with others, too. We may say, "Treat people the way you would like to be treated."

Of course, this saying is originally Jesus' as recorded very succinctly in John 6:31 with words very similar to those above. However, our Sunday morning small group Bible study recently covered the parallel passage in Matthew 7:12, which adds something to this saying: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, **for this is the Law and the Prophets**" (emphasis added).

These additional words indicate that this pithy saying is more than just good advice for getting along with others; in fact, this saying sums up all that God has to tell us in the Law and the Prophets. For that matter, my study Bible quotes Luther regarding this passage as saying: "He concludes the teaching He

has been giving in these three chapters, and wraps it up in a little package where it can all be found." Thus, this saying is also a summation of the Sermon on the Mount.

To that point, we should recognize that while the Sermon on the Mount teaches us how we are to live and get along with one another, it also teaches us that we cannot attain salvation by our own works. Matthew 5:20 makes this clear when it says: "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." The Pharisees in particular thought they were achieving holiness and meriting salvation through living by strict rules. We know that it is by faith in Christ that we are saved through His work for us and that we share in His holiness.

Therefore, we can expand our understanding of the Golden Rule by appreciating what God has done and regularly does for us, and by recognizing that when we treat others as we wish to be treated, we are doing no more than passing on what we have received from God in Jesus Christ - His grace, mercy, peace and forgiveness. This is put into clear context when we consider what comes immediately before the Golden Rule in Matthew's Gospel: "Ask, and it will be

find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ... If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:7,11)

Finally, we may also consider another passage in Matthew that sums up the Law and the Prophets: "And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.'" (Matthew 22:37-40)

This tells us that to love God and to love one another is what God calls us to do throughout all His Word - and by following the Golden Rule, we are doing just that.

In Christ,
Mike Kunschke, Elder

Mike Kunschke teaches the small group Bible study class Sunday mornings at 9:30 am in the Library. Anyone is welcome to join in - you need not attend regularly. Currently, they are studying the book of Matthew.



By: Nicholas Belcher

There is a sad truth that lies ahead of the children of men—something that no one can avoid no matter how hard they try: eventually you will die; you and your children and their children will come to nothing. All of your achievements, all of your hard work, all of your life's work will turn to ashes. And no one can do

anything about it. This is the message of Ecclesiastes. Life is vanity, a striving after the wind. You might think to yourself, 'why would anyone strive to capture the wind?' And yet, this is exactly what all of us do. We strive to make the most of every day (*Carpe Diem*). We make the most of every dollar. We do all we can with the time we are given. Deep down we know exactly how fleeting time is, but we never really want to admit what awaits us at the end of our days. We never want to stare into the abyss of death and meaninglessness that stares us down as the grains of sand in our hourglass slowly fall from top to bottom. The inevitability of death is like watching and waiting for an avalanche at the bottom of a mountain. There's nothing you can do to stop it. All you can do is watch it come and swallow you completely without hope for reprisal.

Have you lived life to the fullest? Have you crossed everything off your bucket list? Have you done everything you always hoped you would do? According to the Word of God, it doesn't matter. Death is laughing at you, waiting. Perhaps taking that dream vacation abroad will leave you fulfilled. Maybe seeing your kids grow up and obtaining lucrative jobs without any struggle to make ends meet brings you relief. Maybe accomplishing that which you have always envisioned is what has fulfilled you in your latter days. No matter. Death comes for you just as it comes for the sluggard who has achieved far less. All go down to the pit. When the Lord says that "[He] will make you a city laid waste, like the cities that are not inhabited, when [He brings] the deep over you, and the great waters over you," do you think He is only referring to Tyre as He spoke through the prophet Ezekiel (Ez. 26:19)? No. He will bring your Old Adam "down to the pit," and He "will bring [him] to a dreadful end, and [he too] shall be no more. Though [he] be sought for, [he] will never be found again" (Ez. 26. 20-21). So then, what can *you* do as Death smiles at you so mercilessly?

Luckily—providentially—Christ Jesus *has* done something for you. Christ has taken the curse of Genesis 3 upon Himself that you might live. He has given Himself into the hands of sinful men so that you might become the Righteousness of God (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21). Now Death has no claim on you. As Holy Scripture says, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 5:5-57). By virtue of your Baptism, Death is merely the means by which you are brought to your sovereign Lord. Death is how your Old Adam is completely cast off, never to be seen again. Rejoice, my dear saint, knowing that "the dead who die in the Lord from now on [are blessed]...Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!'" (Rev. 14:13). In faith, none of your labors are forgotten. Even the smallest of your works done out of love for Christ Jesus are by no means lost. You may rest knowing that even one who "gives [a child]...a cup of cold water...will by no means lose his reward" (Matt. 10:42). Because your life is bound to Christ's, it is no longer meaningless. Since Christ has claimed you, Death has lost its hold on you. Since the very Word of God has named you as His own, who then can say otherwise? Go in peace and serve the Lord then, O child of God. Amen.

Teen Times



SR. IMPACT PRESENTS

Island Valentine's Luau

Saturday, February 9

6:00 pm

Appetizer

*Tossed Salad with pineapple
vinaigrette dressing*

Main course

*Grilled Chicken Kabobs with
veggies on fried rice
Marinated Pulled Pork*

Dessert

*Coffee Ice Cream sundae
with crushed macadamia nuts, roasted
coconut, and hot fudge*

Women's Prayer Gathering

Saturday, March 2, 2019, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

St Paul Lutheran Church

6565 Independence, Plano

Sponsored by St Paul Women's Ministry



*Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer*

Register for Free Event www.stpaulplano.org

Free babysitting

Coffee/Tea/ Scones

Prayer is the most powerful tool we have on earth. It is a discipline to be developed and a skill to be practiced. Women's Prayer gathering is designed to help women have a more meaningful prayer life. Through prayer we create unity of heart, mind, and mission for Christ.

8:30 – 9:15	Registration/Coffee	Julie Beaudrie/Ann Iscaro
9:15 – 9:45	Praise and Worship	Lorilee Toole
9:45 – 10:45	Small group prayers	Small Group Mentors
10:45 – 11:00	Break	
11:00 – 12:00	Testimonies	Open to the Floor
12:00	Circle of Prayer	

SMALL GROUP MENTORS

Julie Beaudrie, Ruthanne Kern, Mollie Watkinson, Marilyn Sevin, Larie Evans, Allison Brown, Michelle Brown, Martha Little, Joanne Riddle, Leslie Dixen, Linda Schafer, Cynthia Paddock

LWR Stamporee The goal of the Lutheran World Relief Stamporee is to support LWR's Project Comfort, which provides funding for the shipping of goods to those in need around the world. All churches are encouraged to collect and save cancelled postage stamps and send them to the district stamp chairman. Here are a few pointers about saving stamps:

- Buy and use commemorative stamps, since they are worth more than common stamps.
- Save all cancelled stamps.
- Place stamps on envelope in the upper right hand corner, allowing 1/4 inch from each edge.
- Stamps need not be trimmed or removed from envelopes.
- IF trimming from envelopes, leave at least 1/4 inch around stamp. Sorting into categories or weighing is not necessary. Do not soak off!

Please place stamps in the labelled box in the hallway.

Event for Women

Saturday March 23, 2019
Zion Lutheran Church
6121 E Lovers Ln, Dallas
9am to 12:30pm

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Celebrating 50 years of LWML in North Texas. Speakers – Jan Brunette and Heart to Heart sisters. \$10 registration includes lunch.

RSVP to Charis Bennett by March 10th.

Lord of Life Small Groups

EMPTY NESTERS' CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike and Sandra Paradise at (972) 424-2951 or itsparadise.inplano@verizon.net
- † Will meet on Sat. Feb. 16th at 6:30 PM

EPIC PARENTING

- † For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com
- † Usually meet one Sunday a month in the afternoon or evening

FRUITS OF THE VINE CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Scott Peters at 972-898-3351 cell or speters@planolutheran.com
- † Usually meets one Sun. a month at 5:30 PM

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Chris Oltmann at (972) 727-6330 or Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Usually meet the 2nd Sat. of each month at 6:30 PM for Bible study

MIXED BLESSINGS

- † For info contact Fred and Ruth Bernhardt at (972) 398-0771
- † Will meet the Sat. Feb. 16th at 6:30 PM

TWENTY SOMETHINGS

- † For couples and singles in their twenties
- † For info contact Pastor Shaltanis at PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com
- † The group is currently in transition, but has usually met on Sundays after late service



February
BIRTHDAYS &
anniversaries

1	Bette Martin
3	John Clark
3	Julz Cruz
4	Cheryl Scaglione
6	Sal Cruz
6	Dee Peters
6	Tom Womack
7	Dorothy Meyer
8	Marty Buckmeier
8	Vi Krohn
11	Wayne Massie
13	Stephen Belcher
13	Ben Heffner
14	Tom & Karen Ashburn [54]
14	Alvin Gerry Bryant [51]
14	Gary & Bonnie Holtzman [42]
14	Jerry & Winona Parish [12]
18	Amy Reinert
19	Paul Grabow
19	Charles Hacker
19	Rebecca Short
20	Reuben Martin
23	Sarah Loewecke
25	Jackie Barnes
25	Madeline Prescott
27	Kelsey Crabtree
27	Ernie Gromatzky
27	Bailey Lund
28	Kris Crabtree
28	Kate Lutek

Save the Date!

Take me out to the ballgame!

Frisco Rough Riders Game vs Amarillo Sod Poodles

Friday May 17th, 2019. 7:05 pm game, \$20 per ticket includes premium seating, premium meal basket, bottomless snacks and Dr. Pepper drink products. Parking is not included--\$5-\$10 depending upon where you park. See signup sheet in Narthex.

Serving in Worship in February

	February 3		February 10		February 17		February 24	
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM
Elder	Lutek		Moudy		Kunschke		Ziegelbein	
Common Cup	Moudy	Hite			Peters	Hite		
Altar	Lynda Abbott, Kathy Hite and Barbara Sinclair							
Acolyte	Josh	Hayden	Jonah	Luke	Athan	Mallia	Kaitlyn	Ashley
Greeter	Martin	Dorak	Schrank	George	Hampton	Bennett/Tyler	Vess	Abbott/Moore
Sound	J Hacker	Hite	Moudy	Wolf	Wilkerson	Shaltanis	G Hacker	Reinert
Usher	Bunger Shaltanis Scarth	Loewecke Ziegelbein Ozlowski	Frinsko Read Paradise	Moudy Carter Cruz	Prescott Ozlowski Messinger Bunger	Berger Parish Oltmann	Schrank E Hacker C Hacker	Short Crabtree Buckmeier

FINANCIAL REPORT

January - December, 2018

		ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
RECEIPTS:	Regular Offerings	\$578,777	\$598,340	(\$19,563)
	Other	\$233	\$0	\$233
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$579,010	\$598,340	(\$19,330)
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$524,618	\$587,075	(\$62,457)
	RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES	\$54,392	\$11,265	\$43,127

OTHER INFORMATION

1. General Operating Fund Balance	\$113,005
2. Dedicated Funds Balance	\$151,240
3. Building Note Balance	\$267,580