

“My Worst Enemy”

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What is the most dangerous and destructive device in the devil’s arsenal? What should I fear as the worst enemy to my faith? I know the devil has many deceptions and temptations with which to deceive me and plunge me into darkness and despair, still which remains the singularly most dangerous?

From one perspective it is a very individual and person problem. I am all too familiar with the specific weakness the devil has identified in me and with which he attacks relentlessly. So a short test might be in order. From the list below, fill in the blank at the end of the following sentence: My most dangerous and destructive enemy is: _____.

Here are some suggestions to consider --

- doubt regarding God’s promises
- guilt over a sin; or lack of guilt over a sin
- misplaced priorities in respect to serving the Lord
- general apathy to spiritual matters
- fear of the unknown; or fear of the known
- family problems
- health problems
- financial problems

This is definitely the “short list.” If each of us would think about it long enough, we could easily arrive at multiple suggestions for inclusion. While all are predictably dangerous and can become extremely destructive in the devil’s hands, which would have to receive the label of “the most?”

Certainly we have fallen victim to many of Satan’s cleverly designed traps. We have known the sting of disobedience and the pain of remorse. We live Paul’s dilemma regarding good and evil, and unfortunately it is a daily occurrence. Still the question lingers, who or what is our *worst* enemy? The answer is fairly simple, yet it might be surprising. The most dangerous and destructive device in the devil’s hands is me. I am my own worst enemy!

Outside influences will always have an effect on me, and they will always affect my life of faith and my walk with God. It is just as important to understand what goes on “inside”

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of me should never be overlooked. It would be foolish to underestimate how the devil can influence my sinful flesh.

I really don't want to think about it or acknowledge it, but I can, and often do, become my own worst enemy. This happens daily when I --

- fail to take the battle with my flesh and the devil seriously
- fail to understand the consequences of being apathetic to God and his Word
- fail to prepare myself for battle by putting on the full armor of God
- fail to watch and pray
- fail to rely on the defense the Lord has provided in Word and Sacrament

In the end, regardless of how the battle is lost, I am the one who is responsible. I may try to blame someone else. I may try to shift the responsibility to consequences beyond my control. I may even point a condemning finger at the devil and declare, "he made me do it." Even though I may try to shift the responsibility it was my decision. It was my action or my inaction that brought about my fall. What compounds this problem is the devil remembers. This means he will focus his attention on me and the weakness of my flesh hammering it over and over again. You and I need to understand, and accept without excuse or debate, we are our own worst enemies.

Since my flesh has placed me in this unfortunate predicament, what do I need to do? Without sounding too cryptic, the answer is found in what I fail to do or take seriously. I need to prepare myself for battle through the means the Lord has provided. You could look at it another way. What needs to change is me. I need to understand what my Savior has done for me. Remember how Luther wrote:

All this he did that I should be his own and live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness.

I need to understand, first and foremost, I am not a victim of circumstances. I am not some poor unfortunate character who can only succumb to the devil's seductions and machinations. I am a child of God and thereby a conqueror through Jesus Christ who loved me. While this means the victory is secure, it doesn't mean I can become lazy or haphazard in my preparations. Nor can I rest on my laurels. I still need to fight the battle, but I can fight it confidently knowing Jesus has already secured the victory for me.

When Jesus gave up his life on the cross and rose from the grave, he signaled the battle was finished. I need to accept this truth without hesitation. I also need to understand I will never be totally free from my worst enemy. As long as I am in this world I will have a sinful flesh, so I know that no good thing dwells in me. Consequently, the battle will be daily and difficult. There will be no time outs or commercial breaks. Nor can I depend on a challenged call or a replay. I will have to fight, and I will have to fight with every ounce of strength and determination the Lord provides to defeat my enemy.

It is clear we are surrounded by enemies from without and from within. If it weren't for our Savior, we would lose the battle and be lost eternally. Through Jesus we are prepared to fight. Through Jesus we are equipped to win the battle and the war. Through Jesus we can overcome even our worst enemy.

My soul, be on thy guard; Ten thousand foes arise,
And hosts of sin are pressing hard To draw thee from the skies.

Oh, watch and fight and pray, The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day And help divine implore.

Ne'er think the victory won Nor lay thine armor down;
Thine arduous work will not be done Till thou obtain thy crown.

The Lutheran Hymnal, 449 st. 1-3

Pizza and a Movie - "Still Standing"

By Alan Todd

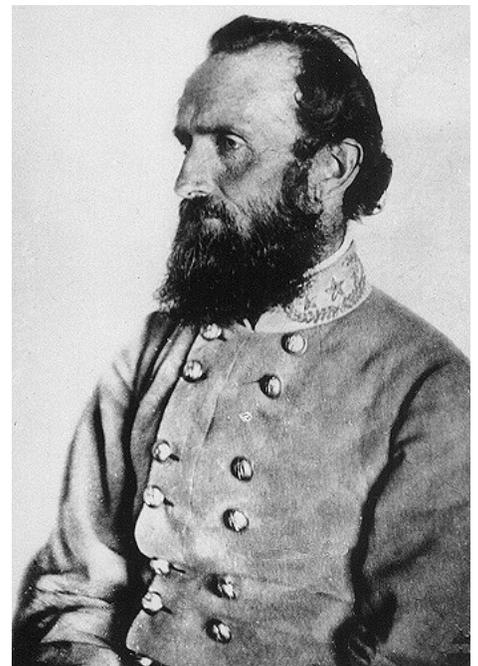
On Sunday night, February 19th, Our Redeemer hosted a "pizza and a movie" event at the church in honor of the President's Day holiday. The Fellowship Hall was set up with tables and chairs and separate tables were set up for serving the pizza, salad, soft drinks, water, and coffee. The event was scheduled to kick off at 5:00 P.M., but actually got started about 5:20 P.M. with Pastor Proeber leading us all in giving thanks to God for the blessings we enjoy as Christians and as American citizens. The meal was self-serve buffet style and there was plenty to go around for members and non-members who attended.

Following the meal, we all adjourned to the sanctuary at 6:00 P.M. to view the movie Still Standing (The Stonewall Jackson Story). This was a 50 minute movie from Franklin Springs Family Media about the life of one of the greatest Generals of the Civil War – Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.

We learned that although Jackson was orphaned by his tubercular mother who could no longer care for him and raised by a taciturn Uncle who owned a mill in the Shenandoah Valley region, he was able through sheer determination and hard work, to learn to read and was accepted into the West Point military academy.

Jackson was always determined to better himself and buried himself into his studies at West Point where he was the top cadet in his class. The Mexican War cut short his West Point matriculation. He was commissioned as a junior officer and posted to an artillery division on the battle field in Mexico. He quickly distinguished himself as a fearless leader and clever tactician and was promoted ahead of his contemporaries to Major. It was during this time under the leadership of his senior officer, Captain Taylor, a mature, committed Christian, that Jackson grew in his Christian faith and was baptized.

Between the Mexican War and the Civil War, Jackson taught at the Virginia Military Academy (VMI), was married (and shortly thereafter widowed), and started a long running Sunday School for African American slaves to teach them to read so that they could read the Bible for themselves and deepen their Christian faith. Jackson supported this Sunday School until the end of his life.



Jackson fought for his state of Virginia in the Civil War on the confederate side. He saw the conflict mostly in terms of State's Rights. That is, the Federal government had no constitutional authority to dictate how the state's were governed. Loved by his men, Jackson again gained a reputation as a formidable warrior who was feared by the Northern (Union) Generals. It was during the first year of the Civil War that he earned the nickname "Stonewall" because of his fearlessness on the battle field.

Jackson was mortally wounded by friendly fire while on a scouting excursion and died a hero eight days later. The entire Confederacy mourned his death and thousands attended his memorial service.

A key theme in this movie was Jackson's belief that God's law trumped man's law. When there was a conflict, as when he defied the law by setting up a Sunday School to teach African Americans how to read, he didn't hesitate to follow his beliefs. This was an inspiring story of the "legacy of a good Christian man arising in terrible times".

After the movie, we returned to the Fellowship Hall for dessert.

These events are good opportunities to invite your friends and family to meet church members, have a free meal, and watch an interesting movie. Plan to attend in the future!

Notes & News

Adult Choir

Practice is every Thursday at 7:00 pm.

Practices are underway and preparations are being made for Lent, Easter and Pentecost. The choir is currently practicing some familiar arrangements, based on hymns from Christian Worship. They are also working on some newly published selections.

If you would like to come and sing praises to the Lord, both men and women are welcome. Please speak with Pastor Proeber for more information.

Handbell Choir

Practices are Monday evenings at 7:00 pm

The bell choir is hard at work preparing for the upcoming festival season of the Church Year. There is always room for more ringers - experienced or not. So if you would like to try the bells, please speak with Debbie Aitkins.

Bible Class - Sunday Mornings

Just recently we concluded a study on the prophet Malachi. It was an interesting and insightful study which focused on God's "last word" to his people until the Promised Savior came.

The next study will be a video series on the Gospel of Luke. In the four parts we will look at the writer and his message.

Plan to make Bible Study a part of your regular Sunday morning routine.

Bible Class Wednesday Nights

Once again the study of the "Harmony of the Gospels" has to be set aside. In December it was to offer mid-week Advent services. After this Wednesday, February 17th, it will be to observe the six weeks of Lent.

Following Easter, the class will resume and will offer a retrospect of the Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Plan to make Bible Study with your sisters and brothers in Christ a part of your Spring and Summer schedule. Classes will begin at 7:00 pm.

Other Ministry Opportunities

If you are interested in a specific "ministry," please speak with the appropriate Council Member or Pastor Proeber so we can evaluate it, and prepare to include it into the larger ministry plan of our congregation.

Reporters Wanted!

Book review Personal Story of Faith
Event Reports Potluck, Gathering, Party, Field Trip

Half-page to three pages
Reviewed for scriptural consistency and readability
by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy to Carl Schueler, or email to Carl Schueler
(cfs_home@hotmail.com) or Pastor Proeber
(pastor@orlcsb.net)

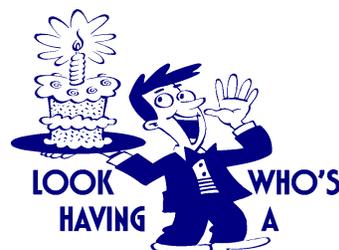
A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Carl and Al for their articles, as well as Sonja's information on the LWMS Spring and National Rallies.

There is always a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past ten volumes, articles authored by members have really made every issue more interesting. We pray that every member will provide an article for 2012. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber or Carl Schueler for advice. Thanks!



We rejoice in the many blessings given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.



7th - Irene E.
9th - Frank F.
12th - Zachary W.
16th - Kallie H.
28th - Chris M.

BIRTHDAY!
in MARCH

Notes & News

Coming Events & Worship

April 1st - Palm Sunday

Holy Week begins with a special 9:30 am service that welcomes Jesus as the “one who comes in the name of the Lord.” The service will combine song, Scripture readings and a visual display to take us to the streets of Jerusalem.

April 5th - Maundy Thursday

In a special service we remember what Jesus did on the night he was betrayed. Not only did he celebrate the Passover with his disciples, he gave them, and us the new covenant which is established in his blood for the forgiveness of sins. Come, receive the assurance of your forgiveness through the Lord’s Supper at this 7:00 pm service.

April 6th - Good Friday

Jesus died on the cross. It is a bitter-sweet message, but a message that reveals the power of the cross. In this 7:00 pm service, we will be led from the cross to the tomb to understand God’s great love for every sinner.

April 8th - Easter Sunrise Worship

The joy of resurrection dawn is captured in this 6:30 am service “under the oaks” on the church property. For the last few years we have used this site. Not only does it provide us with a beautiful outdoor setting, it also makes set-up much easier.

April 12th - Easter Festival Worship

The celebration of the resurrection continues with this 10:00 am service. Readings, handbell music, songs of praise, and the open tomb combine together to invite not only our praise, but also our trust in our Living and Victorious Savior.

May 19th—Ladies Tea and Presentation

A proper “high tea,” an inspirational speaker, and attentive service has become the tradition for this 2:00 pm activity. Please call the church office for more information, and to RSVP.

This year we will have Cindy Hains with us again. She was one of the first speakers, nearly 10 years ago. She will remind us of the valuable work being done through the Central African Medical Mission which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary.

Invite Your Friends and Neighbors!

DRIVEN...

BY THE LOVE FOR CHRIST

LWMS 2012 SPRING RALLY
 April 14th — Prince of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church
 3415 Erbes Road Thousand Oaks, CA 91362 (805) 492-8943

Featured Speaker: Betty Pfeiffer

Registration 8:30 am Rally 9:00 - 2:00

Please note -- Mission Box gifts are to be turned in before March 30th. Please get your gift to Sonja Todd by **Sunday, March 25th** at the latest. Thank You!

Meetings for March

Church Council	March	6th at	7:00 pm
Board of Education	March	13th at	7:00 pm
Outreach	March	17th at	10:00 am
Board of Elders	March	20th at	7:00 pm
Board of Trustees	March	27th at	7:00 pm

Congregational Work Day March 31st at 0900

During the morning we will clean the church, fellowship hall, and prepare the grounds for our Easter worship services.

Methodism and WELS Doctrine

By Carl Schueler

This is a fifth comparison between WELS and non-WELS doctrine (cf. Feb 2012 “Presbyterian doctrine vs. WELS,” Dec 2010, “Catholic Canonical Doctrine vs. the Bible,” Sept 2006 “Critical Doctrine—The Issue of the Papacy,” and June 2006 “WELS Confessional Heritage—an Overview”). The Methodist church is traced to 1739 with John Wesley’s teachings in England labeled “Methodist” by critics due to Wesley’s emphasis on “rule” and “method.”

Methodism became part of religious life in the United States in the late 1700’s and grew to become one of the two most popular Protestant churches in the nation by the early 20th century. In 1939, the three branches of American Methodism (the Methodist Protestant Church, Methodist Episcopal Church, and Methodist Episcopal Church, South) united as “The Methodist Church.” In 1968, the Evangelical United Brethren Church combined with the Methodists to become the second largest Protestant denomination in America: The United Methodist Church.

The major doctrinal disagreement between Methodist’s and WELS is with their doctrine of salvation. John Wesley followed John Calvin, who taught that once a person is in faith, faith cannot be lost. Moreover, Calvin taught double predestination—that God selects the saved (as the Bible teaches) and also thereby selects the damned, which is not taught in the Bible. For these reasons and others discussed below, WELS is not in fellowship with the United Methodist Church, which claims over 10 million members in the United States, over twenty times WELS membership.

The 25 Articles of faith from the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* are available on-line at <http://www.umc.org>. If you read them, I think you will agree that there is nothing in them that appears to set Methodism apart from WELS or the Bible! From these doctrinal statements, it is not clear for example where Calvinism resides within formal Methodist doctrine. Reading these made me wonder why WELS is not in fellowship with Methodists!

Methodist published doctrine provides an example of how “insidious” Satanic influence can be within a church body! It is not enough to review a church’s formal doctrine to understand that body’s doctrinal position. Additionally, one must evaluate the church body’s actions and compare those to formal doctrine. If WELS is not in fellowship with another church, it may be because their actions are inconsistent with WELS doctrine, even though there appear to be no formal doctrinal statements that are inconsistent with WELS. Two examples:

1. In 1956, the Methodist church began to ordain women as members of the clergy. Today, thousands of Methodist women ministers serve congregations in the United States. Of course, this is in direct opposition to the teachings of St. Paul and inconsistent with WELS doctrine. This, along with the Calvinist influence on Methodist doctrine regarding salvation, prevents WELS fellowship with the United Methodist Church.
2. As described in *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2008*, Methodism engages in earthly political activities inconsistent with the WELS policy of political disengagement. WELS believes that the church’s role is to seek the lost, while the earthly government’s and citizen’s roles are to deal with earthly problems. The United Methodist church believes part of the church’s role is to participate directly in earthly political affairs. Again, this sets the Methodist church apart from WELS and prevents our fellowship with the Methodists.

As in previous comparisons to Catholic and Presbyterian doctrine and practice demonstrating why WELS is not in fellowship with the churches discussed, the fact that WELS is not in fellowship with a church body does not suggest that members of the other church body are not Christians. Membership in a church in fellowship with WELS is not a prerequisite for a person’s membership in the invisible Church of Christ! Indeed, membership in WELS is no guarantee of membership in the invisible Church!

What is necessary and sufficient for membership in Christ’s invisible church—that is, salvation—is belief in the teachings of our Lord. No more, no less. Doctrinal error may exist within WELS as in other church bodies. Let us pray for the salvation of souls in Christ through all means—WELS and other Christian churches, whether in fellowship with WELS or not.

Cyber-Immortality: God's "Powerful Delusion?"

By Carl Schueler

Alas, the Devil lied: "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4-5

Eve bought the lie! Eve and Adam fell into sin disobeying loving instruction from their Lord based upon Satan's lie that death would not overtake them after eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan continues to tell that lie! And unbelievers buy it—even knowing the most basic of all death statistics—100%! No one who has lived (except Enoch and Elijah) has escaped death!

Yet intelligent people, such as my respected Professor Glen Wade who passed away in June 2009 at the age of 88, continue to "buy" the lie! Glen told me six months before he died that he believed "there is no Heaven and no Hell." Glen convinced himself that there is no accountability before God—no "afterlife." That is, his death would be that of any other animal, as if his life were that of any other animal: Soulless.

The idea that there is no soul, but a person is a mere biological machine with no future beyond this life, is an attempt to "get around" the natural knowledge of God written on each individual's heart. It is a form of Satan's lie to Eve. While Satan may no longer convince anyone he or she will not die, he can foment the delusion that death is the "end" of life, with no consequences—good or bad—and life is to be lived on earth any way we want and as long as possible.

This idea has become so prevalent today that significant *serious* effort is underway to extend human "life" by "downloading" the human mind to a computer! The idea is based on the assumption that the essence of human life is the "information processing" in the brain, and that the way to immortality is to replace the brain with an artificial machine that won't "break down." The foundation of such deluded thinking is that there is no "soul."

Should technology succeed in "downloading" the brain to a computer, after the human being dies the soul will exist apart from the machine. If the person whose mind was "transferred" to the computer was an unbeliever, that soul will burn in hell for eternity as the "silicon" copy on earth pretends to "be" the person who died! Now if that's not a nightmare scenario, I don't know what is! *I predict the nightmare will soon be reality.*

Cyber-Immortality

To my knowledge this idea originated with one Martin Rothblatt, and is being developed by numerous others with legal efforts underway to provide computers (robots) with "human rights." This is no joke! Martin took a degree from the University of California Law School along with a Masters in Business Administration in 1981. Very soon after he demonstrated a remarkable genius: *The ability to pursue strange visions and realize them!*

Martin decided to pursue a career establishing commercial applications of communication satellites. His first venture was a company called GeoStar, formed in 1983 to provide satellite-based geo-location services, now provided by the Global Positioning System (GPS) to get us from where we are to where we want to go.

In 1987 I was Director of the Satellite remote sensing commercialization division of another startup company. I learned about GeoStar from the trade press, and contacted Martin to offer our services. I met him shortly thereafter in his offices in Washington, DC and provided consulting services. I found Martin an exceptionally intelligent, capable, and industrious individual, and though he was trained as a businessman and corporate lawyer, he was "up" on satellite technology.

About a year after I met Martin, I completed my work and Martin transitioned from GeoStar to a new startup—known

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Cyber, from page 7

as Sirius XM radio. Very successful! Often a six-month subscription to Sirius XM radio is part of a new car sale today. By 1990 Martin was a successful tycoon at 35! And a family man with four young children.

Just then, his eldest child, a daughter, was diagnosed with a rare, then-fatal disease. Martin sought a cure. He could not find one. Pharmaceutical companies noted the disease was too rare to incentivize research for a cure. Martin decided if he could not “find” a cure, he would “fund” a cure. He sold \$3M of his GeoStar stock and in 1996 founded still another start-up company called United Therapeutics. Over the next several years while obtaining a PhD in bioethics, United Therapeutics convinced investors to fund a cure to successfully treat Martin’s daughter and tens of thousands of other sufferers. By 2001 United Therapeutics reported sales of \$50M/year. By 2004 when the company went public, it reported annual revenue of \$300M/year, and today is one of the prime pharmaceutical success stories of the last two decades. A key employee is Martin’s now 28 year old daughter whose life was saved by United Therapeutics.

Early in the process of forming United Therapeutics, Martin underwent a philosophical epiphany regarding life and death. In the 1990’s, while struggling to develop a cure for his daughter’s illness, he decided life can be redefined any way we want. He decided his life could be redefined to his choosing regardless of how it was defined at birth.

He underwent transgender surgery from Martin Rothblatt, husband and father of four, to *Martine* Rothblatt. Still married to the same woman since 1982, Martine and “her” (to God, Martine remains a man—a role given at birth) wife now direct their non-profit foundation *Terasem* they founded in 2004. The founding principle of Terasem is “transhumanism focused on promoting joy, diversity, and the *prospect of technological immortality* via personal cyberconsciousness and geoethical nanotechnology.”

Roughly translating that strange mouthful of recently coined words, I think what Martine and “her” foundation promote is that human life is merely the information processing in the brain! In other words, a human is a machine with no soul! I’d chuckle except I know Martine has the ability to “make it real.”

Realizing Cyber-Immortality: God’s “Powerful Delusion?”

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason ***God sends them a powerful delusion*** so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. *2 Thessalonians 2: 9-12*

Research funded by Terasem is developing techniques to connect the brain to computers. The US Air Force has demonstrated pilot thought-control of an airplane and armaments such as “climb,” “lock onto target,” and “fire!” As weapons become more sophisticated and the speed required to react to threats outpaces human ability to control the hand to point a gun and squeeze the trigger, direct mental control of the weapon “as fast as thought” *is essential* to the future soldier!

As such techniques develop, Martine’s “technological immortality” may materialize soon and in 30 years when I would turn 92 (if I live to 92), my (Satanic!) doctor may suggest this “prescription” (*indeed a powerful delusion!*):

Mr. Schueler, at 92 you are too frail for us to continue to replace vital organs such as your heart, lungs, and kidneys which have all been replaced at least once the past 20 years since your 2022 heart attack. To avoid impending death, we can offer you ‘transhumanism,’ uploading your brain to a robot appearing as you did at 25 with all the legal rights you have enjoyed since birth. 5’10” tall, 160 lbs with the same engaging smile in this 1975 photo of you. Ten times stronger, though, capable of leaping build-ups at a single bound!

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20-10 vision, perfect hearing, and other senses you will have to experience to believe! Why, you will be more alive than ever! Ageless and tireless! Immortal! Just sign here and this time tomorrow you can say goodbye to this 92 year old frame! Trade for a new one? Sure, *your* life can continue forever in your ‘posthuman’ condition!

The “new man” described above would be “like me” in many ways, acting and thinking like me. But would it be “me?” No! It would be a “copy” of my memories and emotions with artificial “consciousness” others might mistake for me. But without my soul, just a machine.

The real “me” (my soul) would transcend the death of the 92 year old for eternity. Praying me still in the Lord’s hands at 92, perhaps I will reject the “powerful delusion” as it would cost my heirs and as a believer I would know it would do me no good, in fact, it would be suicide!

But what about an unbeliever—might this not offer a Satanic hope of immortality? Might this be just a form of assisted suicide leading to Hell?

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.” Matthew 24:12

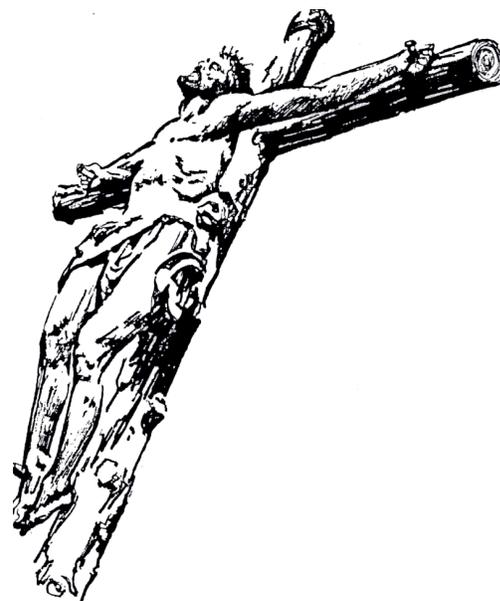


Watch and Pray - Mid-week Lenten Worship

On February 22nd, we began our mid-week Lenten worship. Through the course of six consecutive weeks, and Holy Week, our attention will be drawn to the Lord’s Prayer, and how it not only teaches us to pray, but how it also strengthens us to be on our guard against sin and Satan.

Ash Wednesday	Our Father in Heaven
February 29th	Hallowed be your Name
March 7th	Your Kingdom Come
March 14th	Your Will be Done on Earth as in Heaven
March 21st	Give us Today our Daily Bread
March 28th	Forgive us our Sins
Maundy Thursday	Deliver Us from Evil
Good Friday	Yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory

Plan today to attend these 7:00 pm evening services. Plan to hear the precious message that Jesus died to save sinners, and strengthens us to watch and pray because “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”



CORNER

DEVOTIONAL



“Get the Story Straight”

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” *Mark 8:31-33*

Jesus went to great lengths to explain his ministry to his disciples. He also went to great lengths to prepare them for the time he would leave this world. Unfortunately the disciples formed their own conclusions which led to their confusion, and finally to Peter’s rebuke of the Lord.

Jesus had just finished telling them about the immediate future. This included rejection, crucifixion, and being raised from the dead. While the disciples were horrified at the thought of Jesus leaving them for any reason, Peter made certain Jesus knew he disapproved.

In the end Jesus sharply rebuked Peter and the others. He charged them with being allies of Satan and only being concerned about their own welfare. Although his words were abrupt, he wanted to make sure they had the story straight.

I need to pay close attention to Jesus’ response to his disciples. When he rebukes them for only having in mind the “things of men,” I need to hear the same rebuke. It is easy for me to try to reshape Jesus into something I like. It is just as easy for me to distance myself from him, because he doesn’t follow my designs. I need to understand this is the work of the devil.

This is why I need to get the story straight, and why I need to understand why Jesus had to go the way of the cross. The Prophet Isaiah helps me when he writes, “He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

Jesus had to endure everything he did so I could be set free from the devil’s dungeon and sin’s condemning curse. Even though I may be horrified at the thought of crucifixion, I must believe Jesus endured it for me. It is only because of his faithful work that I am forgiven and I am released from the punishment I deserved. In addition, I am declared a child of God and an heir of heaven. I even have peace for this life and joy as I look forward to eternal life. What I need to understand is that it all depends on Jesus doing what God the Father said he would. Consequently, it is imperative that I put my trust in everything God has recorded in the Bible. Then, not only will I get the story straight, I will keep it straight.

Prayer Thoughts

O blessed Jesus, through the Scriptures your Father proclaimed you would come to be my Savior. Help me trust every word your have recorded. Make it my peace for this life, and my hope for eternal life. Amen.

Daily devotions can be accessed through www.whataboutjesus.com or www.wels.net. Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as “podcasts.”