

PASTOR'S PENNINGS

How can I be happy when I'm hungry all the time?

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” Matthew 5:6

I have never really been hungry. Have you? What I mean is that I can't remember a time when I had gone days without eating and didn't know when I would eat again. What a terrible, desperate feeling that must be. People who go on diets can't say they know that kind of hunger, but they speak of feeling hungry all the same. And it's not a pleasant feeling.

Jesus once said that actually it's great to be hungry all the time. In fact, it makes you happy. But listen to the “hunger” He's talking about: “Blessed (happy) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matthew 5:6). The only hunger that makes someone happy is the hunger for righteousness.

Jesus used the word “righteousness” to talk about two related blessings for His followers. First of all, righteousness is being declared not guilty by God. It's an acquittal. Righteousness means that God the Judge looks at you and declares you not guilty of all your sins because Jesus covers you in His holiness. Jesus' holiness becomes your holiness in God's sight. That's righteousness and it's a gift that is received by those who put their trust in Jesus as their Savior. Flowing from this gift is another one. When you know God has forgiven your sins, you want to do things God's way. This, too, is righteousness. Jesus says when you long for God's not guilty verdict, you will also long for ways to say “thank you” with your life. You will hunger for righteousness.

There's lots of spiritual junk food out there, and it may seem like your soul's hunger will be satisfied by it. What about the idea that if you're pretty good or just try a little harder or are better than the next guy, then God will have to accept you? That's not real righteousness. It's self-righteousness, and it's a spiritual Twinkie that can never truly satisfy your spiritual needs.

Instead be hungry for Jesus' righteousness. Yearn for the forgiveness only He can supply and receive it by trusting in Him. And then stay hungry. Stay hungry for making the words and deeds of your life a big “thank you” to God who sent His Son Jesus for you. To be hungry for righteousness is to be happy ... and satisfied.

PRAYER LIST

“I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord.
Psalm 77:1a

** Please pray for our elderly folks who are having severe health issues. Charlie Quam is still in a rehab center. Pray that he does not lose courage in his illness. Pray for his wife, Bev, and their children.

** On April 3rd we prayed as a congregation thanking God for giving Mike and Kris Winkel 25 years of marriage together. God has been good to them.

** Please also keep the Hahn family in your prayers as they grieve the loss of Doris. May they look to the Lord in this time of sorrow and know that He is with them.

** Pastor Paul Johnston's father needs our prayers too. Please pray that Pastor Johnston will have the strength to help his father who is failing and to bring the Gospel to him in his hour of need.

** Let us also thank the Lord for giving us rain, as well as for blessing Aimee with the gift of pregnancy, and for blessing Ben and Sarah Strackbein with the gift of a new girl.

** Pray also for Tom Strackbein and Courtney Stuever who have graduated this month from their respective schools.

MARY-MARTHA GUILD

The ladies of the Mary-Martha Guild would like to thank everyone who participated with their prayers and offerings for the "New Beginnings" project they sponsored during the month of May. Our Guild does not meet during the summer months, but will resume meeting again the 2nd Saturday of September.

MONDAY/THURSDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

The Thursday night Bible Study with Al Cardwell has finished its general overview of Genesis and has started to give an outline of each of the books in the Bible. The Monday night Bible Study will continue to cover modern doubts about the Bible and how to apply the true Word of God to those doubts, no matter whether they are your own or someone else's. This month it is our plan to cover: 1) The purpose of life; 2) What our motive as Christians is to evangelize the world beginning with our closest friends and neighbors; 3) Why prayer and worship; and 4) Is it true that all the church cares about is money?

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

ATTENTION: The VBS date has been changed to July 25-29 from 6:00-8:00PM. This year's theme focuses on a State of Grace: Symbols of Our State, Symbols of God's Grace. There will be classes for all ages from 4-18.

ASCENSION DAY SERVICE

The Feast of the Ascension commemorates Jesus' triumphant return to heaven by simply rising up into the air until a cloud hid Him from view. It occurred 40 days after His resurrection. Thus Ascension Day falls 40 days after Easter, on the 6th Thursday of Easter. In 2011, Ascension Day falls on June 2nd and will be celebrated in a special 7:00PM service at Gethsemane Lutheran Church. Pastor Born will preach. Every year Gethsemane and Holy Cross take turns hosting the service. Make a point to come and celebrate. Why? Well, for starters, it is a major church festival. Of course there is more to it than that.

Along with the resurrection, the Ascension functioned as a proof of Jesus' claim that He was the Messiah. The Ascension is also the event whereby humanity was taken into heaven. Finally, the Ascension was also the "final blow," so-to-speak, against Satan's power, and thus the lion (Jesus) conquering the dragon (Satan) is a symbol of the Ascension. Early Christian art and iconography portrayed the Ascension frequently, showing its importance to the early Church.

But wait, there is more. Christ's ascension marks the definitive entrance of Jesus' humanity into God's heavenly domain, whence He will come again (cf. Acts 1:11); this humanity in the meantime hides Him from the eyes of men (cf. Col. 3:3).

Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, precedes us into the Father's glorious kingdom so that we, the members of His Body, may live in the hope of one day being with Him forever.

Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the Mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

PIONEER/YOUTH GROUP

Mark your calendars for Friday, June 17th. An overnight camp-out/sleep-out is being planned to occur at Holy Cross church. All youth and friends are invited to attend. If you have a tent and would like to sleep out at church--bring it. If you have a sleeping bag and would like to use it--bring it. If you like to sleep on the floor, come on, there is plenty of that for sleeping. Then during the day there is softball, volleyball, soccer, or other games followed by pig eating. So all youth make plans for a fun filled weekend.

ROAST PIG-OUT

Attention everyone who likes to "pig-out." You will get a chance Saturday, June 18th. To work up an appetite, a softball and/or volleyball game is scheduled to begin at 3:00PM. The games will then be followed by the pig-out at 6:00PM. Scott Peters and his crew, along with the Pioneer and Youth Group members, will start roasting the pig early (2:00 or 3:00AM) Saturday morning so it will be ready by 6:00PM. Everyone is invited to attend both the softball game and the pig-out. If you would like, please bring some finger food (potato salad, baked beans, coleslaw, desserts, etc.) to go along with the pig. Beverages will be provided. Look out pig, here we come!!!!

MEN'S BREAKFAST

All the men are invited to breakfast and Bible study on Saturday, June 11th. Breakfast will be at 8:00AM at Denny's Restaurant on I-240 & Penn. Bible study will be at Holy Cross church at 9:00AM. Make plans to enjoy some good food, fellowship and Bible study.

BASEBALL GAME

Let's go cheer on the Redhawks baseball team. The baseball game is Sunday, June 5th at 4:30PM, so everyone meet at Holy Cross church at 2:45PM and off we will go to the game. If you did not get your

order in for tickets you will still be able to purchase tickets at the game. So let's "get some peanuts and cracker-jacks at the ole ball park!"

CHURCH PICNIC

Mark July 3rd, 12:00PM on your calendar. A church picnic is being planned. More details will be available in the July newsletter and in the worship bulletins.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

The following is a review of some of the funds that have been established by Holy Cross congregation to which offerings may be given:

Debt Reduction

The box of offering envelopes everyone received at the beginning of 2011 contains envelopes marked "Debt Reduction." Presently Holy Cross does not have any outstanding debts. So, the Voters' Body passed a resolution that any offerings received in the Debt Reduction envelopes will go to the Renovation/Expansion Fund. The Renovation/Expansion Fund has been established to save money until a large enough amount of money is available to renovate and expand the church fellowship area and rest rooms. Presently the Renovation/Expansion Fund has about \$19,000 in it. Estimates have indicated approximately \$100,000 is needed for renovating and expanding the fellowship and rest room areas. So if you would like to give an offering for renovating and expanding these areas, please place it in the Debt Reduction envelopes.

DISTRICT MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In March a new program began for members of congregations in the South Central District of our church body. Video-assisted Christian counseling services are available as a benefit of official membership in a district congregation, and are offered at no direct cost to members. These counseling services cover various types of mental, addiction and family problems. Pastors in the district can directly refer members to the program. If you are interested in taking advantage of this program, check with Pastor Strackbein or one of the Elders.

GRACE NEWS

Grace did not get the vicar they were hoping to get. The next application will probably be for a lay Kingdom Worker who, if we are selected, will do a lot of outreach work in our target area and, in addition, set up some Bible studies as an outreach tool for University students. Grace has been invited to apply for funding for a full time pastor in 2012. The forms have to be sent in by September. Please pray for this effort to start a fourth WELS church and get a fourth WELS pastor to come to Oklahoma. Of course, the main reason is to bring the Gospel to as many souls as possible. That has been happening.

GOD'S DIRECTION FOR A CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION

Members, Buildings, Money

Gaining members, constructing buildings, and raising money--when these become a congregation's chief goals, a vicious circle is created.

Members need buildings. For buildings you need money. For money you need more members. With more members, you need more buildings, which produces the need for more money, for which you need more members, etc. When does it all end? Presumably when the property is filled with buildings and there are enough members to keep things going on an even keel financially. Then you have accomplished your goals and can, like the farmer in Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool, sit back in self-satisfied comfort. But a congregation that has adopted short-sighted "survival goals" rather than long-range, ongoing "formal goals" may well, like the church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1), be dying even while it appears to be alive and thriving. It is highly unlikely that a congregation will consciously plan to set its sights on such survival goals. It is easy, however, to let that happen by default, to let concern for survival goals, the things you can see, overshadow what we would all agree should be numbered among the real goals of the church: fellowship, nurture, and service (outreach). Is this perhaps happening in our own congregation? You might examine the agendas of meetings of your Church Council and Voters' Assembly. Where is the emphasis--on survival or on LIFE?

The Direction Taken by the Early Church

Let us examine now the direction the early church took as it is described in the Book of Acts.

Survival Goals? No.

Members, Buildings, Money

It doesn't take much looking at all to reach the conclusion that the early church paid scant attention to such survival goals as members, buildings, and money. It didn't worry about getting more members. It let that matter rest in the Lord's hands. As the church went about its business of fellowship, nurture, and service (outreach), "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). It had no buildings for some time. It didn't even contemplate a building program but was content to gather in the covered outer court of the temple and in the homes of its members. As far as money is concerned, it appears that a good share of the members were quite poor; but money did not seem to be a problem to them. On the other hand the formal goal--Teaching, fellowship, nurture, service (outreach)--these the early church actively pursued.

MY SON FOR THE WORLD

The day is over, you are driving home. You tune in your radio. You hear a little blurb about a little village in India where some villagers have died suddenly, strangely, of a flu that has never been seen before. It's not influenza, but three or four fellows are dead, and it's kind of interesting, and they're sending some doctors over there to investigate it.

You don't think much about it, but on Sunday, coming home from church, you hear another radio spot. Only they say it's not three villagers, it's 30,000 villagers in the back hills of this particular area of

India, and it's on TV that night. CNN runs a little blurb; people are heading there from the disease center in Atlanta because this disease strain has never been seen before.

By Monday morning when you get up, it's the lead story. For it's not just India; it's Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and before you know it, you're hearing this story everywhere and they have coined it now as "the mystery flu." The President has made some comment that he and everyone are praying and hoping that all will go well over there.

But everyone is wondering, "How are we going to contain it?" That's when the President of France makes an announcement that shocks Europe. He is closing their borders. No flights from India, Pakistan, or any of the countries where this thing has been seen. And that's why that night you are watching a little bit of CNN before going to bed. Your jaw hits your chest when a weeping woman is translated from a French news program into English: "There's a man lying in a hospital in Paris dying of the mystery flu." It has come to Europe. Panic strikes. As best they can tell, once you get it, you have it for a week and you don't know it. Then you have four days of unbelievable symptoms. And then you die.

Britain closes its borders, but it's too late. South Hampton, Liverpool, North Hampton, and it's Tuesday morning when the President of the United States makes the following announcement, "Due to a national security risk, all flights to and from Europe and Asia have been cancelled. If your loved ones are overseas, I'm sorry. They cannot come back until we find a cure for this thing." Within four days our nation has been plunged into an unbelievable fear.

People are selling little masks for your face. People are talking about what if it comes to this country, and preachers on Tuesday are saying, "It's the scourge of God." It's Wednesday night and you are at a church prayer meeting when somebody runs in from the parking lot and says, "Turn on a radio, turn on a radio." And while the church listens to a little transistor radio with a microphone stuck up to it, the announcement is made. "Two women are lying in a Long Island hospital dying from the mystery flu." Within hours, it seems this thing just sweeps across the country. People are working around the clock trying to find an antidote. Nothing is working. California, Oregon, Arizona, Florida, Massachusetts. It's as though it's just sweeping in from the borders.

And then, all of a sudden the news comes out. The code has been broken. A cure can be found. A vaccine can be made. It's going to take the blood of somebody who hasn't been infected, and so, sure enough, all through the Midwest, through all those channels of emergency broadcasting, everyone is asked to do one simple thing "Go to your downtown hospital and have your blood type taken. That's all we ask of you. And when you hear the sirens go off in your neighborhood, please make your way quickly, quietly, and safely to the hospitals."

Sure enough, when you and your family get down there late on that Friday night, there is a long line, and they've got nurses and doctors coming out and pricking fingers and taking blood and putting labels on it. Your wife and your kids are out there, and they take your blood type and they say, "Wait here in the parking lot and if we call your name, you can be dismissed and go home." You stand around scared with your neighbors, wondering what in the world is going on, and if this is the end of the world.

Suddenly a young man comes running out of the hospital screaming. He's yelling a name and waving a clipboard. What? He yells it again! And your son tugs on your jacket and says "Daddy, that's me." ...Before you know it, they have grabbed your boy. "Wait a minute, hold it!" And they say, "It's okay, his blood is clean. His blood is pure. We want to make sure he doesn't have the disease. We think he has got the right type."

Five tense minutes later, outcome the doctors and nurses, crying and hugging one another - some are even laughing. It's the first time you have seen anybody laugh in a week, and an old doctor walks up to you and says, "Thank you, sir. Your son's blood type is perfect. It's clean, it is pure, and we can make the vaccine." As the word begins to spread all across that parking lot full of folks, people are screaming and praying and laughing and crying.

But then the gray-haired doctor pulls you and your wife aside and says, "May we see you for a moment? We didn't realize that the donor would be a minor and we need . . . we need you to sign a consent form." You begin to sign and then you see that the number of pints of blood to be taken is empty. "H-h-h-how many pints?"

And that is when the old doctor's smile fades and he says, "We had no idea it would be a little child. We weren't prepared. We need it all!"

"But - but . . . "You don't understand. We are talking about the world here. Please sign. We - we need it all - we need it all!"

"But can't you give him a transfusion?"

"If we had clean blood we would. Can you sign? Would you sign?" In numb silence you do.

Then they say, "Would you like to have a moment with him before we begin?"

Can you walk back? Can you walk back to that room where he sits on a table saying, "Daddy? Mommy? What's going on?" Can you take his hands and say, "Son, your mommy and I love you, and we would never ever let anything happen to you that didn't just have to be. Do you understand that?"

And when that old doctor comes back in and says, "I'm sorry, we've - we've got to get started. People all over the world are dying."

Can you leave? Can you walk out while he is saying, "Dad? Mom? Dad? Why - why have you forsaken me?"

And then next week, when they have the ceremony to honor your son, and some folks sleep through it, and some folks don't even come because they go to the lake, and some folks come with a pretentious smile and just pretend to care. Would you want to jump up and say, "MY SON DIED! DON'T YOU CARE?"

Is that what He wants to say? "MY SON DIED. DON'T YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I CARE?"

Doris Elaine Hahn, age 80, went to be with her Lord and Savior on May 17, 2011. The funeral was at Holy Cross Church on Saturday, May 21st at 1:00PM. She was born July 30, 1930 in Valentine, Nebraska, to the late Wayne and Anna Bonge.

Doris was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and homemaker. She also worked a number of years as a teller at Arvest Bank of Del City.

In addition to her parents, Doris was preceded in death by her husband Robert, a son, a brother, two sisters and a great-grandchild.

Doris is survived by 4 sons: Gary, Alan, Rex and Douglas; 5 daughters: Rosalie, Sheila, Sharon, Patti, and Nancy; 1 sister, and 30 plus grandchildren, and 30 plus great-grandchildren.

God redeemed Doris on the cross, brought her to faith in baptism, led her to a faithful service in His Kingdom and finally brought her home to glory. For all this, we praise and worship the God of grace. We pray that God will also bless us with opportunities to serve in His Kingdom and finally, through faith in Jesus to be gathered in to glory, where with saints we join Doris and all saints in worship and splendor that our minds now cannot yet fully grasp. To God be the glory!

SOUP CAN LABELS/CEREAL BOX TOPS

Please continue to bring your Campbell Soup labels and box top coupons and give them to Dina Shoumaker.

HC - JUNE GREETERS

June 5 - Scott & Carole Peters

June 15 - Jack & LaVon Post

June 19 - Byron & Dina Shoumaker

June 26 - Paul & Aimee Barnett

HC - JUNE CLEANING LIST

June 4 - Andrea Smith/Ed Taylor & Family

June 11 - Paul & Aimee Barnett/Lance Barnett

June 18 - Mike & Latischa Huller/Phillip & Autumn Class

June 25 - Debbie Korff & George Bradshaw/Joyce Hendrickson

HC - JUNE MOWING LIST

June 4 - Bill Shoumaker/Byron Shoumaker

June 11 - Scott Peters & Sons

June 18 - Kris Timm/Andy Quam

June 25 - Dean Thomas/Troy Thomas

GOD'S CREATURES

By Delores Staats

Your creatures such a lesson teach
If only we could hear them preach.
Such words of wisdom they would say
To help us on the narrow way.
They wait to find a proper mate
Before a family they make.
They don't neglect their growing young
Or leave before the job is done.
The squirrel prepares his winter store
And scurries to come back for more.
The birds all know it's time to go
Before the cold and winter snow.
They faithfully fulfill their call
And never try to do it all.
Don't mind what other say or ask
Just dutifully go at each task.
If only each of us would know
Our rightful place and wisdom show.

As all Your creatures try to teach
Our goal in life we'd surely reach!