

PASTOR'S PENNINGS

How can I be happy when I'm crying?

“Blessed are those who mourn.”

Matthew 5:4

Be happy while you're crying? I don't think so. Most tears come because of sorrow. People usually cry because something important to them has gone horribly wrong. But Jesus says that Christians are happy even when they're crying.

To understand what Jesus is saying, one must first understand why Christians cry. Christians cry for many of the same reasons everyone else cries. They cry at funerals. They cry when someone has been cruel to them. They cry when they hear a very sad story.

Christians can cry when they realize how horribly they have hurt someone. The burden of guilt weighs heavily on their hearts and brings them to tears. Christians can cry when they think of bad things they have done. They know that they deserve nothing from God but a punishment that never ends.

So where is the happiness?

Happiness is in knowing that while we deserve only the worst from God, He has given us only the best. When we mourn because of guilt, our Savior dries our moist eyes. When hearts are heavy with sadness, Jesus puts His hand under our chins and lifts our eyes to see His cross, where He made all of our guilt and all of the sorrow connected to that guilt His own. Jesus looks at you and me and says, “Be at peace. Your guilt is gone.”

Christians still cry, but Christians find comfort in the midst of their tears. This comfort is for you too.

It is a comfort that brings calm in the face of all kinds of tears. Jesus gives you the peace of knowing that death does not mean defeat. Jesus assures you that being mistreated by others does not mean God has abandoned you. Jesus fills you with the sure hope that all the hurt and evil in this world is not the end of every-thing.

Can there be happiness even when you are crying? Yes, because Jesus is your comfort.

PRAYER LIST

The Lord tells His redeemed in Zephaniah 3:16, “Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in

you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.” The reason Zephaniah says these lovely things is because he is looking forward to the Messiah's coming. With our relationship with God restored through the forgiveness of sins, we have every reason to come to the Lord in prayer and with rejoicing.

**During the last week of January and the first weeks of February we prayed for Carroll Dinse, thanking God for allowing the surgery for a hearing implant to be successful. She is back in church and is recovering well enough to try and play the organ on Ash Wednesday.

**Earlier this month Lola Poulin was taken to the emergency center with blood sugar and heart problems. We prayed for Lola and thankfully she is doing better.

**Tom Bigaouette and Mary Cartwright developed pneumonia and have difficulty breathing. We have had several prayers in church for them. Both of them are still struggling and need a lot of your continued prayers.

**Jimmy Schnell is experiencing significant pain. He was in the hospital for a week and is very weak. Please pray that God would grant him patience and strength to face the problems he has.

**A request for your prayers has been asked for Tiffany Loper's children, Cameron and Sydney, who are experiencing some difficult and painful circumstances.

**Please thank the Lord for the blessings He has given us in our outreach effort at the Legacy Apartments on 89th St. Pray that the Bible Information Class that has begun there will be a blessing to the participants.

**Please also continue to pray for several new people who are contemplating membership at Holy Cross. They are: Bernie Nelson who is about 3/4th through his Bible Information Class, Becky Cateora, Charylene Bul, and Tamra Binning who have started a class. Shawna Williams (Tom Bigaouette's granddaughter), Craig Smith (brother of Kahle Mayfield), and Todd Smith have requested the opportunity to begin a class in the near future.

**Please continue to pray for our current teen confirmation class: Stefan Paxton, Allison Evans, and Tom Shoenborn.

**Phillip Class and Autumn Krawczynski will be united in holy matrimony on Saturday, March 19th, at 4:30PM. Please pray for them that this day will be very special in their lives and that God will bless them with a lifetime of blessings as husband and wife. Please plan to come and worship and praise God the Lord on this their special day.

EVANGELISM

Holy Cross' Board of Outreach has been busy. On February 13th, after a cookout, invitations to attend a Bible Information Class at the Legacy Crossing Apts. at 3131 SW 89th St. were handed out. Two people responded and have begun classes with Pastor. The Board has decided to conduct outreach events every month. The next one will be on Sunday, March 13th. Door-to-door work will begin after church for an hour, with a one-hour break for lunch. Everyone is then invited to come down to Norman and help with an out-reach effort involving four Wisconsin Lutheran College women. The WLC women will arrive Saturday, March 12th, and leave on the 20th. Grace members are hosting them. The canvass activity at Norman will begin at 3:00PM. Canvassers will meet at the Embassy Suites Hotel off NW 23rd.

Holy Cross coffee cups and jackets were offered to Holy Cross members by Doug Hahn, a former Board of Outreach member, as a way of getting our name known among our friends. Many members purchased these items.

One of the things that are especially true when it comes to our witnessing life is the fact that, "We are not competent in ourselves" (2 Corinthians 3:5), rather our competence comes from God. We cannot convert anyone. We are only God's messengers. That is why we need to look upward and NOT inward as we give witness to Jesus.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Beth Lindquist was accepted into membership by the Voters in January. We are happy that God led you to do this and we pray that we will be a blessing to you and that you will grow closer to your Lord through the Word and Sacrament you receive here.

MARY-MARTHA GUILD

The Red River Circuit LWMS Spring Rally will be held Saturday, March 19, 2011, at Abiding Faith Lutheran Church in Ft. Worth, TX. The rally theme will be "Spreading the Word in South Asia." Pastor Stephen Valleskey will be the guest speaker. Anyone interested in attending the rally, please contact Joy Hahn.

The Mite Box offerings will be sent prior to that date, so if anyone would like to contribute to this, and you do not have a Mite Box, you can put your Mite offering in the Sunday service offering plate by Sunday, March 6th. Please designate the offering to go to Mary-Martha. The Mite Box offering for Home Missions is "Vicars in Mission Settings." This program allows seminary students to receive field training with a missionary in an actual mission setting. The World Mission selected was "Russia Projects." The LWMS gifts enabled them to purchase video equipment used to record and upload Bible classes and worship services on the Internet. It also

helps to broadcast weekly radio devotions to the 1.5 million people of Novosibirsk. Also, as needed, it helps to cover the Novosibirsk Radio Program, Seminary Stipends, and Outreach in the city of Tomsk.

The 48th Annual Synod-wide LWMS Convention will be June 23-26, 2011 at the Frontier Convention Center in Milwaukee, WI. More convention information will be posted on the church bulletin board or you can contact Joy Hahn.

The next meeting of the Holy Cross LWMS ladies will be Saturday, March 12, at 9:30AM. All ladies of the congregation are invited and encouraged to attend.

ATTENTION ALL COOKS

The Board of Stewardship is sponsoring a barbecue cook-off on March 26th at 6:00PM. If you would like to barbecue some chicken, ribs, sausage, brisket, or what-ever else, this is the time to do it. You can barbecue it at home and bring it, or if you would like to do it at church, arrangements will be made. If you would rather do a dessert or a side dish that goes with barbecue, that will also be great to bring. So whatever your cooking talent may be, put your talent to use for the barbecue cook-off. If your only talent is eating barbecue, please come, there will be a place for you also. If you have any questions, contact Paul Barnett, Tony Taylor, Cliff Gallarneau, or Terry Eischen.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

The Endowment Committee reported to the Voters' Body in their January meeting about the Holy Cross Endowment Fund By-laws that are under construction. The Committee has completed the final draft of the document. The Committee sent a first draft of the by-laws to the South Central District Constitution Committee for their review. The first draft has been updated based on feedback received from the Constitution Committee. The Holy Cross Endowment Committee would now like to get this document out to all Voters and members of Holy Cross congregation for their review and input. The Committee thinks the easiest way to do this will be through e-mail. So, please look for this document in your e-mail in the coming weeks. If you would rather have a paper copy of the draft by-laws, please contact Byron Shoumaker (392-2286). The Committee invites all members to attend their next meeting if they have any pressing concerns or questions about the by-laws. The next Endowment Committee meeting will be March 23rd at 5:30PM before the Lenten service. Please join the Committee with any questions you might have.

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE CLASS

During the season of Lent the Monday and Thursday night Bible classes will not be meeting starting March 7th. These Bible classes will begin meeting again the week of April 25th.

LENT SERVICES

Brothers and Sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with Him, to love all people, and to live in harmony with His creation. But sin separates us from God, mars our relationship with one another, and brings ruin to God's good creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. Moreover, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under His judgment, but to turn to Him and live.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from loving God and our neighbor. Repentance, self-denial, prayer, and works of love -- the disciplines of Lent -- help us wage our spiritual warfare. We invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves anew to this struggle, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

Our Lenten Services

Our liturgy this Lenten season incorporates several features that should have special meaning for God's people. In the invocation, we are invited to bring all our sins, troubles and cares to the cross of Jesus. Each week we will be directed to Him who alone can provide the healing that we need.

This year, the themes of our services will be, "People of the Passion." The people of the passion include, Judas - the Opportunist; Nicodemus - the Silent Believer; Peter - the Born Leader; Caiaphas - the Schemer; Pontius Pilate - the Thinker; and One of the Mob - the Follower. In Holy Week the people will be: The Apostles - the Servant Leaders; the Centurion - the Astonished; and on Easter, the Women - the Witnesses.

We hope that you will make special plans to attend all our Lenten services beginning with Ash Wednesday, 7:00PM, March 9th. Once again, there will be a rotation of the pastors in the Oklahoma Circuit.

May God bless your worship!

ESTABLISHING A CONTEXT FOR FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

One of the ways is to communicate the church's ministry, not the congregation's budget.

...Budget - a wall of worry, a point of contention, or a road of trust?

...Share the impact and communication of the budget in your congregational life.

1. Understand the financial goal of the congregation:

It is not about--Budget

It is about--Ministry

2. Understand the role of the budget--it is a spending (not giving) guide:

It is the directive for the treasurer (and leaders of ministry) on how to spend money according to the congregation's ministry focus. Let the budget be a tool to help you manage--not bury you in details and controls.

3. Begin with development of ministry plans and visualizing them for people--the budget is not an end to itself--must be the supporting framework for the visions, and ministry activity of the congregation:

a) Supporting your plan for your local ministry within your congregation.

How do you visualize this for people?

b) Taking proper care of workers--(cf WELS compensation guidelines).

How do you properly measure this?

c) Advancing your plan for your mission in the community.

How do you connect with people in the community you are to reach?

d) Reflecting your worldwide kingdom work.

To make a difference, congregations should be intentional, globally focused, and working together with other like-minded churches to fulfill the Great Commission. It provides a greater sense of its part in the greater body of Christ and clarifies the local piece of God's overall kingdom work.

GRACE NEWS

The members of Grace, with approval from Holy Cross, are in the process of applying for a mission vicar. Our WELS Board for Home Missions together with the Seminary, sponsors one vicar that will be used principally in a mission setting. Money has already been received for our share of the costs. Please pray for this possibility. If our request is granted, the vicar would arrive this September and stay till the following September. We will learn if the request was granted in late March. Please pray that if it is God's will we would get this year's mission vicar.

Grace is also gearing up for four Wisconsin Lutheran College women who have volunteered to spend their spring break canvassing and passing out literature in Norman. Grace will provide a car, pay \$400 to Kingdom Workers and cover the food expenses. The women will arrive on Saturday, March 12th and leave on Sunday, March 20th. Please pray for them and their work. Holy Cross' Outreach Board and any Holy Cross members who care to participate will be helping the ladies canvass on Sunday, March 13th from 3:00-5:00PM. If anyone else would like to join them during the week of the 13th, please let Pastor know so he can help get you connected with them.

WHAT A DEAL

Janet Finney has become a certified Notary Public in and for the State of Oklahoma. She will gladly notarize any of your documents for no charge. So, if you need this kind of service, please contact Janet. Thanks Janet for serving the Lord in this manner.

STROKE SCREENING

Life Line Screening will be at Holy Cross church on Tuesday, March 8, 2011. They will be conducting four screening tests. These tests consist of "Stroke/Carotid Artery Screening," "Heart Rhythm Screening," "Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening," and "Peripheral Arterial Disease Screening." The cost for these four screenings is \$139.00. Pre-registration is required. Call 1-800-324-1815 for registration.

LUTHERAN WOMEN MISSIONARY SOCIETY (LWMS) CONVENTION

The theme for this year's convention is, "The Great Commission On A Great Lake." It will be held June 23-26 at the Frontier Convention Center in Milwaukee, WI. The convention center is connected to the Hyatt Hotel by a skyline walkway. The hotel cost per night is \$139.00 plus tax. Four women can stay in one room for that price. The registration fee is \$60.00. There are several meal plans with the most complete being \$110.00. The registration deadline is May 1st.

If you go, the convention will recharge your heart. Meeting and greeting missionaries and their families is an experience you will cherish long after the convention is over. Hearing about

the ways God uses missionaries to carry out His Great Commission will both humble you and build your mission awareness beyond what words can express.

Pre-convention tours will be available to see our Northwestern Publishing House, our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Wisconsin Lutheran College and Time of Grace, Luther Haven Retirement Community and the WELS Historical Institute.

Some of the lectures/Bible studies you can attend are:

- Using Baptism More Effectively for Making Disciples - Pastor Jeffrey Mahnke
- Make Disciples Through Publishing - Pastor Paul Hartman
- The Great Commission on the Great Steppe - Pastor Luke and Jennifer Wolfgramm, Siberia
- Carrying Out the Great Commission to the Chinese - Pastor Joshura Yu
- On Campus: The Crossroads of Christianity and Culture - Pastor Bill Limmer
- Sailing Through the Great Commission - Pastor Grady Coleman
- Reaching Out With the Outreach Committee - Outreach Committee

If you need help registering call Joy Hahn or Pastor

FAITHFUL WORKERS

Posted by Kathryn Strackbein

Work on the mission field is often slow and tedious. There are often setbacks in the work. When the work does go well, we give thanks to the Lord for this great blessing. "All that we have accomplished YOU have done for us" (Is. 26:12).

The work that Pastor Juan is doing in Pueblo Nuevo is very admirable. His congregation had previously been affiliated with a Pentecostal group. When he learned the true doctrine and teachings of the Bible through the witnessing of one of our seminary students, his desire was to share this teaching with his congregation. As can be expected, many of his members questioned this "new" teaching and many left his congregation.

Those who have remained are a small group. They receive much persecution from other surrounding churches and former members. Some Sundays, people who live close to the chapel will play loud music making it hard to concentrate on the message.

How have the members responded? They have been faithful. Pastor Juan diligently continues with his Bible studies and evangelism visits. The nucleus of members continue

witnessing to their family and friends. Pastor Juan faithfully prepares sermons that are excellent and wonderful messages filled with clear Law and Gospel preaching.

We keep Pastor Juan and his congregation constantly in our prayers. They are thankful that the Lord sent the Gospel to them and that they have been turned from their false beliefs by the work of the Holy Spirit. We ask God to bless their faithful efforts according to His will.

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 - MARCH GREETERS

March 6 - Gene & Ada Hill

March 13 - Mike & Latischa Huller

March 20 - George & Nancy McKinnis

March 27 - Scott & Carole Peters

HC - MARCH CLEANING LIST

March 5 - Chad & Whitney Walker/Kris Timm

March 12 - Mary-Martha Guild

March 19 - Craig & Jeanie Trowe/Dean & Lynn Thomas Family

March 26 - Pastor & Barb Strackbein/Andrew & Christie Thompson

TRIALS

Oh! Who can fathom such deep love

For sinners who have gone astray?

For when I think I'm cast aside

I find Your love was there always!

Ah Lord, my faith is truly weak

And trembling on the narrow way;

My heart so easily gives up;
Your help and strength I need each day!
We cannot always comprehend
The way You lead us here below;
Or why the path we thought we'd take
Was dealt, it seems, a cruel blow.
Someday I know we'll understand
My soul's eternal good You sought.
Your Word supplied my every need
And to my heart great peace it brought.

BIBLE QUIZ

Read each of the following statements carefully. Each statement is either true or false. If the statement is true, draw a circle around the T. If the statement is partly or wholly false, draw a circle around the F.

1. T F - At the resurrection the believers will have glorified bodies.
2. T F - Faith in Christ removes the fear of the final Judgment.
3. T F - The Christian can never be sure of his entrance into heaven.
4. T F - The only benefit of prayer is the self-assurance it gives you.
5. T F - It is idolatry to pray to anyone but the Triune God.
6. T F - Prayers to the saints are God-pleasing when they are made in the name of Jesus.
7. T F - The name of Jesus must be mentioned in every prayer.
8. T F - A Christian should pray for the dead as well as the living.
9. T F - Joint prayer with persons who deny Jesus is forbidden.
10. T F - A prayer may be a true prayer even though it is not offered to the true God.

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ANSWERS: 1 - True; 2 - True; 3 - False; 4 - False; 5 - True; 6 - False (We might state humorously if this were true, the Lord's Prayer could not be used. Every Christian prayer must be from faith and from the understanding that we approach the Father in the name of Jesus -- whatever you ask in My name.); 7 - False; 8 - False; 9 - True; 10 - False

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