

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



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Seated with Christ in Heavenly Places

We creatures are bound by time. We tend to speak even of eternity in terms of time, for we have no experience other than time. For example, the popular hymn “Amazing Grace” tries to put eternal life in terms we can understand. “When we’ve been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise Than when we’d first begun.”

But bound as we are by time, we understand that our God is above time. He is not bound by it, for it is His creation and is under his control. “With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet. 3:8).

We see the timelessness of God in some of the Bible passages that speak of the work of the Savior. Speaking by

the Holy Spirit hundreds of years before Christ, Isaiah described the events of the passion of Christ as though they had happened in his day and he had witnessed them. “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter . . . He was cut off from the land of the living . . . they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death” (Is. 53:7-9). The book of Revelation speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus as an event in history that had its origin in eternity, calling Him “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

God’s mastery over time is important to us, for since the fall of Adam, time is uncertain and even dangerous to us. Satan uses the time of our life to tempt us to sin and lead us away from

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Christ. Our deliverance from evil and entrance into the safety of eternal life lies in the future.

. . . Before The Foundation Of The World

The journey from here to there is hard and perilous. But it is comforting to learn from the Bible that our salvation has its origin outside of time, in eternity.

God who devised His plan of salvation in eternity also chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. God who saw the work of His Son as complete already in Old Testament times also sees us as already brought to glory.

The New Testament says that by faith we have a part in everything that Christ did. We were crucified with Christ and died with Him; the old sinful nature in us has been put to death (Rom. 6:6).

We also have a part in each stage of His exaltation. We were made alive together with Christ, raised up together with Him, and made to sit together with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:5,6). The Holy Spirit has called us by the gospel out of this world into the kingdom of Christ. We have been delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of God's love (Col. 1:13).

“God who devised His plan of salvation in eternity also chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. God who saw the work of His Son as complete already in Old Testament times also sees us as already brought to glory. . . .”

So we already have a seat in the heavenly places. Our assurance of this is in Christ's ascension. Jesus our Savior has ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. His work on our behalf is complete, His sacrifice for us acceptable to God, our sins forgiven, our salvation won. His coming again in glory will reveal what He has done and will bestow on us eternal life in Him.

Our eternal life doesn't depend on anything yet to happen. We can live with the same confidence that Paul expresses in Romans: “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

—Pastor John Klatt



Spring Harvest Festival

Approximately five weeks after Easter Christians celebrate the festival of Pentecost. Probably few realize that before Pentecost was a Christian festival, it was the Jewish

Harvest Festival held fifty days after the seventh Sabbath of the year, as the LORD had commanded Old Testament believers: “. . . You shall keep a feast to Me . . . the Feast of Harvest, the

firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field . . .” (Ex. 23:14,16).

But if few realized that Pentecost was the Jewish Feast of the Harvest, probably even fewer have thought of it as the Christian Harvest Festival. What? Harvest Festival in the springtime? In the springtime you don’t harvest, you plant seed!

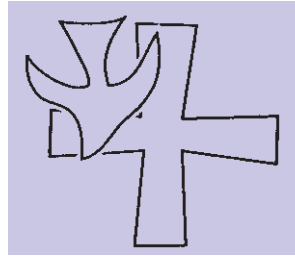
This is true when we’re talking about planting and harvesting produce. But when we’re talking about the harvest of souls, the planting of the Word and the “harvest” of a soul (that is, gathering into God’s kingdom) often occur almost simultaneously.

A week before Pentecost Christ Jesus had given instructions to His sowers/reapers, the apostles, to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15). Now on Pentecost the sound of the rushing, mighty wind signaled the beginning of the Christian Harvest Festival. At that sound of wind, men from all over the world, who had gathered in Jerusalem, came running to the house where the apostles were gathered to see what had happened. When they arrived, we are told that each one heard his own language being spoken to him by the apostles.

The Apostles Sowed

Men came running, and the apostles sowed the seed of God’s Word; and the Holy Spirit breathed life into their once dead hearts and caused faith to spring up and grow in their hearts. That very day we are told that the Holy Spirit produced a harvest of about three thousand souls.

On the first Christian Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the



twelve apostles in a very special way. With the sound of a mighty, rushing wind, suddenly the apostles were speaking in languages that they had never learned. Believers were added to the Church through the preaching of the Word, since they had been given the gift of faith in the Savior.

The so-called Pentecostal churches of our day say that unless you display the extraordinary “gifts” of the Spirit similar to those given to the apostles on Pentecost (healing, tongues, and so forth), then you do not really have the Spirit and have not been “saved.”

But what about those “ordinary” gifts of the Holy Spirit? Gifts like faith? By grace you have been saved through . . . speaking in tongues? No. By grace you have been saved through . . . healing? No. By grace you have been saved through . . . what? “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8).

Wherever God’s Word is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit is there working through that Word, working a miracle that is impossibly wonderful—by working faith in once unbelieving hearts, the Holy Spirit is bringing dead sinners to life! Through the Word the Holy Spirit gives to damned sinners the forgiveness of sins. Through the Word the Holy Spirit reverses the course of hell-bound sinners and instead puts

them on the Way that leads to eternal life through faith in the Savior.

The gifts of the Spirit come through the preaching of the Word, as it is written, “Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits . . .” (Jas. 1:18).

Let us in whom God’s Word has

taken root and sprung up into faith make every day a Harvest Festival—sowing the Word in the hearts of others that the Spirit may reap more fruit; for whenever the Word is taught, it is Harvest Festival in the Kingdom of God.

—Pastor Joel Fleischer



A Mother’s Day Devotion—

A MOTHER’S (DAY) BEAUTY

“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight” (1 Peter 5:3-4)

Beauty is subjective. It lies in the eye (and heart) of the beholder. Whether it be what attracts a man and woman to each other or the different ways people view art, music, flowers, homes, or many other things, the opinions and desires of people vary widely.

The inspired words of Peter in our text as well as of Proverbs chapter 31, remind us that in God’s sight—and we pray in ours as well—the Christian woman is beautiful.

It is sad that our world and society do not see it that way. Both boldly and discreetly they send a far different message of human beauty, value, and worth: “Man *does* look at the outward appearance—and that’s really all that matters: who you are, what you possess, what you have achieved, and how you look!”

To be sure, God wants us to care for our bodies as His temple (fifth commandment). Physical fitness, good eating habits, rest and relaxation—even dressing up and looking nice—all have

their place. Yet media and peer pressure can easily change those desirable goals into absolute obsessions. Soon one’s entire sense of well-being and worth may be tied to one’s perceived physical appearance. And how easily physical flaws then become magnified—leading to a sense of failure, depression, and even emotional and physical health problems.

How empty one’s life is if the physical (which is superficial and fleeting) overrides the spiritual. Is there anything more tragic than the person whose physical appearance is the be-all and end-all of his or her life?

As God Sees Us

Oh, that we might see ourselves as God sees us, and that His view might be the most important!

To be sure, by nature the human is not a pretty spiritual sight. Sin is always an ugly, soul-deforming part of us that can leave us spiritually scarred for eternity. Yet God performed an

May your father and
mother be glad . . .



May she who gave you birth
rejoice! Proverbs 23:25

amazing spiritual surgical procedure that transplanted the horrible effects of sin to His holy Son. In our stead Jesus bore the full eternal devastation of sin that we might receive the glorious beauty of His holiness and righteousness (Hymn #371, TLH).

And now, in God's sight we possess an indescribable and eternal beauty—that of a bride adorned for her Bridegroom (Ephesians 5:25f).

This is the beauty we see in our many Christian women, wives, and mothers: "It is that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in

God's sight." Such a spirit humbly recognizes and rejoices in the blessings of Christ and in His gift of her marriage, family, and calling as a Christian woman. She finds no greater joy or purpose than in glorifying God and doing His will in her calling.

And we pray that such beauty is appreciated and encouraged by Christian husbands, fathers, children, and by our churches—all of whom declare her "worth more than rubies" and join in "rising and calling her blessed" (Prov. 31:10,28).

In a day when society glorifies physical beauty and sexual attractiveness, when many diminish and even demean the role of the Christian woman in the home and in the church, her "unfading beauty" needs to be appreciated and heralded by her greatest admirers. Is there anything more wonderful than to be "beautiful" to those who love you—your spiritual Bridegroom, Christ, and your family?

Indeed, "charm is deceptive and (physical beauty) is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (Prov. 31:30).

—Pastor David Schierenbeck



(Editor's Note: Assistant Editor Paul Koch has provided us with further devotional writings from the pen of the sainted Prof. Egbert Schaller. This one was a chapel talk for the festival of Ascension, 1968. The text was Psalm 47.)

CHAPEL TALK FOR THE ASCENSION FESTIVAL

This is a festival on which Christians may feel a little lonesome because nobody else celebrates it. The world at least observes Christmas and Easter in an outward manner, if not as holy days; but Ascension Day is little

known, and Christ's little flock finds itself quite isolated. Thus it might seem that the Ascension of our Lord is good news only to Christians and does not concern others.

Such, however, is not the case, as

the prophetic Psalm we have read points out: “Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!” What a delightful invitation to child-like joy, bidding ALL to clap their hands and shout with happiness like children at a picnic or a sports event. We might marvel that this should include the sorrowing Christians, the sick, the bereaved, the unloved and the forsaken, widows and orphans; but in fact it is even more wonderful in that God calls even upon the unbelieving world, to those in spiritual darkness who are without God and hope in the world—to those who are His enemies.

What is it that should arouse in all mankind such enthusiasm and wonder? The Psalm in answer speaks of the good times that have come and are here: “For the Lord Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth. Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding. God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.” Do you see or hear the world clapping its hands over this news? No, of course not! A few may listen but see no joy or reason for joy. Frankly, they do not believe a word of the message. They say, “If God is King and a great King indeed, deserving our praise, why does He govern so poorly? Why not right the many wrongs of Earth? Why permit such suffering? Why the constant wars, the great disasters? Why does He allow wild men to roam, the killers and the fools?”

No, the world does not applaud the reigning God. Yet the good times HAVE come, whether men realize it or not, for “God has gone up with a shout.

The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.” A great event is proclaimed, but its implications are even greater. God has gone up, but He that ascended is also He that descended. Lowly in form, making Himself of no reputation, He had come to take upon Himself the burden of Earth and the fight against the powers of sin and darkness that held all men in thrall. Here, where sin ruled—and death by sin—the Son of God died and by His death destroyed the power of death.

This God went up with a shout amid the trumpets of victory. “All power is given unto Me,” He assured us, and then He left to take over the Throne. That was when good times began for the world. It may not know it or believe it, but truly Christ’s Ascension was the beginning of a season of opportunity which only a great and awesome God could have brought about.

For what is the real situation on Earth since the Ascension? No one would want to deny that the surface conditions are as bad as they have ever been. If you read only the newspapers, you will find little good over which to rejoice. But the real news comes not from the papers, but from the papyri and parchments which the Holy Spirit caused to be inscribed. Sin is the product of Satan who keeps his power in those who reject the mercy of Jesus Christ. But how fortunate is the lot of this poor world, for the wicked do not rule in fact. The Lord rules, and He speaks the last word. He has set up a marvelous reign under which the world may be saved: “The princes of the people have gathered together, the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.”



The shields of the earth belong to God. Jesus has set up His Church, and like Abraham in his day the Church is “the princes...and the shields” through whom Christ can save from destruction. Without these believers, the world would not have a chance. The Church keeps the world going by continuing to offer sinners a safe refuge from the gathering storm. Through His Church

Christ calls men to repentance, picks up the weary and heavy-laden and gives them rest, forgiving their sins. What great good fortune it is for the world that Jesus ascended into heaven and keeps His believers surging through this vast human ghetto, living by the assurance, “He will subdue the peoples under us, And the nations under our feet.”

Let us then, as His people, remember the glorious promise and the charge, “He will choose our inheritance for us, The excellence of Jacob whom He loves.” Such words must fill us with holy awe and with sincere determination. This work of ours, and the inheritance to which it points, deserves our penitent promise of renewed zeal. Let us pray for strength as we sing the closing stanza of the hymn with which we opened today.

O risen Christ, ascended Lord,
All praise to Thee let earth accord,—Alleluia!
Who art, while endless ages run,
With Father and with Spirit One.—Alleluia!”
(TLH, #212)



LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

Second Kings, Chapters One Through Four

“And the power of the Lord was present...”

(See Luke 5:17)

“Where is the LORD God of Elijah?” So spoke the new prophet Elisha as he stood on the eastern shore of the Jordan River (2:14). In his hands

he held the mantle of his predecessor who had just been taken miraculously to heaven by a whirlwind. In the prior few weeks these two men had started

out from Gilgal and had spent time with the sons of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho. In both places Elisha was met with the same words: his master Elijah was soon to be taken away from him. Elijah himself encouraged Elisha to stay behind at each place where they stopped, but he was determined to be with Elijah to the end.

Elijah Is Taken Up

And this he had done. The two of them had continued on from Jericho and stood at the western shore of the Jordan where Elijah struck the water with his rolled up mantle, and it parted, allowing them to walk through on dry ground. Once on the other side, at Elijah's encouragement Elisha made the request that he might be Elijah's successor as the Lord's prophet. Elijah responded, "If you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so" (2:10).

He had seen. As the two of them continued conversing, suddenly a chariot and horses of fire came between the two of them, and Elijah was taken up in a whirlwind.

Now there he stood once more on the shore of the Jordan. He had torn his clothes in two; now he had Elijah's mantle in his hands. As he called out to the Lord and struck the water with the mantle, it became obvious to him and to all the sons of the prophets who were watching from the other side that the power of the Lord was now present with him as it had been with Elijah. The water parted before him and he crossed on dry ground as before.

The times in which Elijah and Elisha carried on their ministries were far from believer-friendly. We have heard of Elijah's run-ins with wicked

king Ahab and his wife Jezebel; things weren't any better here (2 Kings 1) where we find Ahab's son Ahaziah on the throne. When he had been seriously injured, falling "through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria" (1:2), Ahaziah had sent for a word from the false god Baal-Zebub. The true God sent Elijah to intercept the king's emissaries with the message that the king would die of his injuries. The king sent a group of fifty soldiers at two different times to bring Elijah in; both times they were consumed by fire from heaven. It wasn't until the third group of fifty was sent that God told Elijah to go with them and deliver God's message to King Ahaziah in person.

Encouragement For Believers

We can well imagine that it was comforting and encouraging for the small number of believers among the Israelites to have the power of the Lord present among them in the person of a prophet. Such had been the case with Elijah, and now certainly also with Elisha. These opening chapters of 2 Kings set before us a half dozen instances in which the power of the Lord was present to help, to heal, and to save.

First, there was the problem of bad water and barren land in Jericho. Elisha took a new bowl of salt and threw the salt into the water, saying, "Thus says the LORD: I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness. So the water remains healed to this day" (2:21-22).

The next situation involved Jehoram, who became the king of Israel after Ahaziah. He and the king of Judah were in the process of going through the land of Edom to attack

“ . . . the same thing was true at Jesus’ time as in Elisha’s—miracles served to comfort and heal, and to lead people to see in Jesus the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world.”

Moab from the south. They had made the mistake of not having enough water on hand. Elisha was summoned. He said, “Thus says the LORD: Make this valley full of ditches. For thus says the LORD: You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink” (3:16-17). The Lord did as He had said. Mistaking the rosy dawn reflected off the water as being bloody water, the Moabites thought their enemies had killed each other off; so when they rushed to the Israelite camp to gather the spoils, the Israelites rose up and slaughtered the Moabites.

Another miracle the Lord performed though Elisha was to save the sons of a woman who was a widow of one of sons of the prophets. Her creditors were coming to take her two sons as slaves to pay a debt she couldn’t pay. The only thing she had left was a jar of oil. At Elisha’s word she and her sons collected as many containers as they could lay their hands on, and closing the door behind them, they began to pour the oil from the container they had into all the empty ones, until they all were miraculously filled. This gave her oil to sell to pay off her debt!

Another woman who was the recipient of the power of the Lord through Elisha lived in Shunem. Not only did she invite Elisha to eat with them when

he traveled through the area, but also had her husband add a room on to the house where Elisha could rest. The Lord blessed her kindness to Elisha with the birth of a son. And when that young son died suddenly, through Elisha the Lord brought him back to life.

Two More Miracles

Chapter 4 closes with two more miracles. When those cooking the meal for the sons of the prophets got some wild gourds in the stew by mistake, Elisha made it safe to eat by putting some flour in the stew. After that, when one hundred men needed to eat, Elisha took a mere twenty loaves of bread, and said, “Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: They shall eat and have some left over” (4:43-44).

This very same power of the Lord was present when Jesus Himself was living on the earth. Some of the miracles He performed were strikingly similar to those performed by Elisha; the dead were raised, and many were fed from little food. The difference, of course, was that Jesus performed miracles by His own power as God. And the same thing was true at Jesus’ time as in Elisha’s—miracles served to comfort and heal, and to lead people to see in Jesus the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world.

It might be tempting to think that because we don’t have such Biblical “miracle workers” today that the power of the Lord is not around anymore. If miracles signal that God’s power is present, then it is presumed that the lack of miracles signals that no power of the Lord is present. But no! All we have to do is look to the modern-day

miracles of cancer-fighting drugs and life-saving operations to see the Lord still preserving us alive.

And even more important and blessed is that power of the Lord which

is present to heal souls through the gospel, “for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).

—Pastor Paul Krause



Understanding Our Faith

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
(From a series of bulletin articles)

To the accomplishment of His purpose, it is God’s will and command that only truth be taught. . . . If the bottom-line of the church in the world is not God’s (which is truth and faithfulness to the Word and ultimately eternal salvation), whatever other bottom line it establishes for itself is without merit or blessing.

OUR PURPOSE

The corporate world is changing. Old-line companies are being bought and sold; sometimes they are merged with others. Start-up companies appear and often are swallowed up. It almost seems as if there is a merger-mania.

The basic purpose of mergers and buy-outs is to affect the bottom line. These activities occur sometimes because of greed and sometimes out of necessity. Sometimes it benefits the consumer, and sometimes it hurts.

In our age there is a merger frenzy occurring also in the church. Unfortunately—and at great spiritual loss—most mergers in the church are also bottom-line oriented. The church in the world today is becoming more conglomerate and corporate than it is spiritual. Whatever the alleged benefits of that attitude, the fact is that when merger is at expense of truth, the loss is incalculable.

It is a Biblical truth that all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are saved regardless of the name by which they call themselves. Scripture tells us, “The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Therefore the Heavenly Father determined a plan and brought it to pass. He sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son . . .” Furthermore, He gave promise that “whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16)

To bring His loving purpose to pass in individual hearts, God left us with His Holy Word and commissioned His Church—believers in Christ—to “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things,

whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). By this blessed gospel message the Lord comforts troubled sinners, brings people under His gracious rule, and keeps them unto eternal life in heaven.

To the accomplishment of His purpose, it is God’s will and command that only truth be taught. He attaches freedom to truth in John chapter 8. The end result of dilution of truth is error. Error is dangerous. It undermines the confidence of salvation, as it undermines the objective truth of the Bible. It leads people away from truth and thus away from salvation.

All people are saved by grace. Thank God! But the church is not to challenge that grace by denying truth. The Lord warns Christians to “Beware of false prophets” (Mt. 7:15) and tells us what to do when we are confronted with error. We are to “come out from among” errorists (2 Cor. 6:17) and “avoid those who create divisions...” (Rom. 16:17,18).

But promoters of merger-mania in the church seldom respect the truth.

This disregard is to a great extent rooted in rejection of the divinely appointed purpose that God has given to His Church. This purpose is not social, political, financial, or the self-

aggrandizement of the leaders. The purpose is not to define and redefine Scripture as though the holy God did not know what He was talking about. The divinely appointed purpose is to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the whole counsel of God. If merger is based upon a common agreement and acceptance of the Word of God, God will bless such a merger. It is His will and command that Christians be of the same mind and of the same judgment (2 Cor. 1:10) in matters of Scripture.

If the bottom-line of the church in the world is not God’s (which is truth and faithfulness to the Word and ultimately eternal salvation), whatever other bottom line it establishes for itself is without merit or blessing. For if truth and the eternal salvation of souls redeemed through the atonement of Jesus are at best an afterthought (rather than the essential thought), if it is even a thought, they shall not profit this people at all, says the Lord (Jer. 23:32).

It is clear from Scripture: any self-ordained bottom-line pursuit of the church that is not true to God’s purpose and truth means that the consumer is always hurt.



Berea Activity Center, Inver Grove Heights, Minn. (story, p. 18)

Parables Of The Master

Matthew 25:14-30

Accountability Requires Faithfulness

In the last week of His life Jesus focused the attention of His disciples on the Day of Judgment. He would return to judge the living and the dead. Several parables—the fig tree (Mt. 24:32-35); the five wise and the five foolish bridesmaids (Mt. 25:1-13)—stress the need for Jesus’ disciples to be found ready and waiting. “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Mt. 24:44). “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming” (Mt. 25:13).

Jesus stressed that the Day of Judgment will be a day of accountability. Only those clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus and those who have their sins washed clean in the blood of the Lamb will be able to be found blameless in this day of accountability. In this parable Jesus stressed the further need to be faithful in the use of everything that God has given us.

The parable is to the point. A businessman was traveling to a far country for a long time. He committed his goods to three of his servants. This man distributed his goods according to the ability of his servants. “And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey” (Mt. 25:15). A talent was the largest weight used for

metals such as gold or silver. It was a considerable amount of money.

Then the businessman returned to settle accounts with his servants. The first servant had gained five more talents with his original five talents. The second servant also gained two talents with his two talents. Both of these servants received the approval of their master. “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord’” (Mt. 25:23).

The underlying principle of stewardship (the use of what God has given us) and accountability is that God gives us what we have. Our Lord entrusts us with everything we have and everything we are. We have been given material and spiritual gifts in rich measure. God gives these gifts individually as He pleases. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all” (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

It is important that we consider the gifts and “talents” that God has given to us. It is more important that we use these gifts in the service of the gospel. It is only our “labor in the Lord” that is not in vain in this world.

The Lord will require an accounting

As the CLC Convention approaches in June, we have an opportunity to thank God for the spiritual and material blessings He has entrusted to our care. We also will carefully decide with the help of the Holy Spirit how we can best use these blessings to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.

of each one of us in the Day of Judgment. May Jesus be able to say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

What about the third servant, who was given one talent? The problem was not that he was given only one talent. The problem was that he had buried his Lord's talent in the ground. He did not use what had been entrusted to him. This servant is characterized as "wicked and lazy," losing even that one talent given to him. Then he heard these terrible words, "And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer

darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 25:30).

These words should give us pause as we consider our use of the blessings God has entrusted into our care. Many people look at their material blessings and talents (abilities) as something to be used to further themselves and their enjoyment of this life. The believer realizes that God has given us these blessings so that we may use them in Jesus' service.

As the CLC Convention approaches in June, we have an opportunity to thank God for the spiritual and material blessings He has entrusted to our care. We also will carefully decide with the help of the Holy Spirit how we can best use these blessings to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. Some of the decisions are one-talent decisions; some of the decisions are five-talent decisions. There is no area of kingdom work too small or humble to deserve our best.

May we be found "good and faithful" servants in our day of accountability.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck



A "Father To Daughter" Letter

Dear Daughter,

I have been thinking about the telephone conversation that we had a short time ago, in which you told us about your frustrations. Your words reflected an unhappiness in your work. I decided to put together some things for you to think about.

Above all else, you need to continually remember what you are doing. There may be times when the day-to-day problems drive from your mind the

wonderful things that are taking place in your classroom. I know that this has happened to me many times, both in the preaching and in the teaching ministries.

Each day as you bring God's Word to your children (including the obstreperous ones), the Spirit of God is working in His silent and wonderful way. He is convincing them of the reality of their sins, of the reality of their righteousness in Christ, and of the real-

From the Editor:

This letter was sent to the *Spokesman* by a mother whose daughter in the teaching ministry appreciated the word of encouragement from her father—who happens to be trained as a pastor.

While the words may “hit home” particularly for others in the teaching/preaching ministry, there is something here also for lay Christians who may have times of discouragement in their calling.

In this connection we might add that sentiments have come our way that the *Spokesman* consider having more articles “geared for the young.” We surely want to reach the younger generation with gospel-oriented articles. Attempts will be made to oblige that request. We welcome more specific suggestions.

ity of the final judgment in which Christ will receive them into glory (see John 16:7ff). The Spirit is busy doing each of these things at various times in order to accomplish God’s purpose.

You can’t see it, but it is happening, and nothing more wonderful can ever happen. I know that we would like to SEE the wonder of it. Sometimes we do, when a child repents of his sin or confesses his faith in Jesus or does something nice for another student (or for you) or simply sits and listens when you are talking about Jesus.

I used to get “down” because my congregation wasn’t growing. Then I was reminded that the very fact that my people kept coming back to hear God’s Word showed that God was at work in the congregation. So often, it is not the big things that reveal the working of God, but the little things.

And so that little soul is being nurtured and cared for by the Spirit, and the Spirit is working through the words you speak. Imagine that! The mighty God working through the preaching of the frail teacher. In this way He protects your little ones from the old dragon . . . the roaring lion, who wants to

devour them.

Look at you: the knight in shining armor, standing there with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit and fighting off the old, evil foe. Maybe it LOOKS better in the movies, but that’s just pretend. What you are doing is real.

And frequently the fiercest part of the battle is when you are wielding the sword on behalf of a rebellious child. That is when you must fight the hardest to fend off the enemy. That is also when you come away the bloodiest. But when the pain and frustration are great, remember what is really going on . . . what you are doing and why you are doing it. Remember why you are “bleeding.” The cause is worth the pain.

Then, as you rise up the next morning, battered and bruised and wishing that you could stay in bed . . . that you didn’t have to put on the armor and fight the battle . . . remember. Remember that this is not an earthly battle that you are fighting, but a heavenly one. Remember how Christ fought and died for each of those little people sitting at their desks (even the mulish ones)—and for you.

Close your eyes and picture Christ saying: “Dear Teacher, please guide and protect My little ones. They don’t know the enemy as well as you do. They don’t know how to fight as well as you do. I need you to be with them in the battle. And that naughty one . . . you know who . . . he needs you the most. I know what it’s like to be bruised and beaten. I will be your strength. Remember, you didn’t end up where you are because you decided to come here. I brought you to this place and to these children, because I know you and I have trained you for this. Be strong and of good courage. I am with you.”

These are the last days of the world. Satan is fighting fiercely, for he knows that his time is short. We need to expect that the battle will be hard and painful. However, the victory is ours through Christ.

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31:6).

Love,
Dad



SMORGASBORD

● RE: INDEX OF THE LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

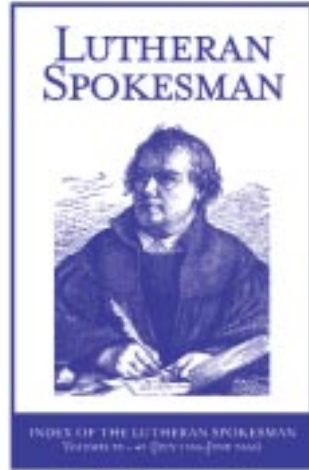
A 40-page (5 1/2' x 8') hard-copy index covering volumes 33-42 (July 1990-June 2000) will be available in limited quantity for \$5.00 per copy at the Convention in June. Only 300 have been printed. We hope there are enough to go around.

To save postage and facilitate distribution, pastors are being asked to bring orders with them to Convention. Readers, please indicate to your pastor if you would like him to procure a copy for you, and reimburse him. After Convention, the booklets will be available through the CLC Bookhouse.

The 2000 Convention recommended “that a *Spokesman* index be prepared and published on the CLC web page, and, if possible, produced on a CD” and also “that the index be updated at least annually.” The intent, we know, is for such a “high-tech” index to cover all volumes from the inception of the magazine.

We have found that such a recommendation is much easier said than done. It remains, however, a goal—and that goal accounts for the limited quantity of hard-copies being made available.

This latest Index is now the third hard-copy booklet. The first one covered Volumes 1-20 (June 1958-1978),



the second booklet covered Volumes 21-32 (July 1978-June 1990). These first two Index booklets continue to exist, but only in scant quantity, until they can be posted on the internet.

The last two hard-copy Indexes are almost exclusively the work of Pastor Arthur Schulz, Trinity Lutheran Church, Millston, Wisconsin. We owe him a debt of gratitude. For years Pastor Schulz has taken on himself the tedious task of compiling—typing the old-fashioned way and updating month by month!—an index to the *Lutheran Spokesman* (succeeding his father-in-law, Pastor Clarence Hanson, who had begun the task with the earliest volumes).

Since 1995 the monthly issues,

including all articles, have been posted on the internet. We understand that there are ways to index these via “hyperlinking” or some other high-tech fashion. We’re sure Pastor Schulz

will gladly relinquish his efforts once it’s determined how that kind of indexing can be accomplished!

Stay tuned for further information.



In Our CLC Classrooms—

Meet Jonathan (JD) Sydow



Jonathan (JD) Sydow is teaching at Gethsemane School in Spokane, Washington.

While attending Immanuel Lutheran College, JD was led to see that his gifts could best be used in the classroom. He graduated from ILC in May 2001. An avid sports fan, he has continued to participate in athletics both in and out of school. He led his students in a skiing P.E. class at Lookout Pass. He has also joined an amateur baseball league in the

Spokane area.

In the classroom he particularly enjoys teaching catechism class and Algebra I. the frequent smiles on his students’ faces provide him with daily rewarding experiences. JD is the son of Professor Michael Sydow and his wife Kathy of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Meet Rachel Snell



Rachel Snell is a first-year teacher at St. Stephen Lutheran School in Mountain View, California.

Feeling the Lord had called her to be a teacher, Rachel trained at Immanuel Lutheran College after attending Immanuel High School. Her most memorable experience as a teacher so far was being able to attend the annual CLC Teachers Conference held this year in Phoenix, Arizona.

In her “spare time” Rachel enjoys reading, walking, and playing volley-

ball. She is the daughter of two other CLC teachers, Robert and Judith Snell of Berea Lutheran School, Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

Although teaching far from “home,” Rachel is daily encouraged by the knowledge that the Lord is with her and working through her. May He continue to bless her work.

Meet Rachel Pfeiffer

Rachel Pfeiffer is presently teaching at Gethsemane Lutheran School in Saginaw, Michigan.

Rachel attended both Immanuel Lutheran High School and College and graduated from the teaching program in May 2001. She felt certain this career is what the Lord wanted her to do. Her favorite subject to teach is Bible History, where she has the daily opportunity to gather her students to talk about Jesus.



Outside of the classroom Rachel enjoys reading, playing the guitar, decorating, and watching old movies. Rachel is the daughter of Professor John Pfeiffer and his wife Barb of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. May the Lord continue to work through her at Gethsemane.



BEREA ACTIVITY CENTER

Over the years Berea Lutheran of Inver Grove Heights, Minn. has been blessed with membership growth, resulting in increased space needs.

Despite construction of a new sanctuary in 1993, the existing fellowship, narthex, and Sunday School classroom areas were no longer adequate. A special committee identified those needs and presented various options to the congregation.

While the original plan was to add to the existing building, connecting costs and a city-required sprinkler system and elevator made it cost prohibitive. Attention then shifted to a separate building 40 feet north (where none of those costs would be involved); the project was approved in December of 2000 at a projected overall cost of \$430,000 (about \$75/sq. ft.).

Work began on the 76' x 76' structure last June, with its recent completion in January.

The Activity Center will help meet



**Doug Bester, Expansion Com. Chm.
Pete Sydow, Congregation President
Jeff Bomber, Dedication MC**

all of the anticipated congregational space needs—providing classrooms, a fellowship area seating 300 (the first time in recent memory our entire congregation could gather together in a fellowship setting), a kitchen, restrooms, storage areas and a much-expanded paved parking area. In addition, the hardwood floor in the fellowship area will allow usage as a gymnasium as well.

About 2000 hours of volunteer labor helped keep the project within budget. In addition, over \$75,000 in special gifts were given. The congrega-



**Dedication Day
in the new
Fellowship/Gym
area**

tion is deeply grateful to the CLC Board of Trustees for accommodating both the need and the timing of our Church Extension Fund loan request.

Our February 17, 2002 Dedication Day dawned warm and sunny. On the basis of Nehemiah's "Dedication Joy and Thanksgiving" at the completion of the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah

chapters 12 & 13), Pastor David Schierenbeck encouraged the 260 worshipers to joyfully celebrate God's marvelous hand in this project—and to strive to have our every activity center in His greater glory. A special program and dedication meal followed the service.

—Doug Bester

Announcements

Lutheran Spokesman Online Etc.

The *Lutheran Spokesman* online can now be viewed on the internet at <http://www.lutheranspokesman.com> and <http://www.lutheranspokesman.org>.

This is thanks largely to Pastor Joel Fleischer, a member of the CLC Publishing Division.

The CLC Publishing Division is looking to make the *Lutheran Spokesman* (in print and online) more accessible to CLC members; and, in general, an effort is underway to improve the *Lutheran Spokesman's* availability in this increasingly high-tech day. For example, the *Lutheran Spokesman* has long been on audiotape (thanks to the efforts of Pastor Walter Schaller). Now those audio-tapes are being transferred also to CD's. More later on the availability of the *Lutheran Spokesman* on CD.

Also in the works is a survey to be taken of you, our readers, in an attempt to aid us in "marketing" the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

Minnesota Delegate Conference

The 2002 Spring Delegate Conference of the

Minnesota Conference will convene at Grace Lutheran Church, Sleepy Eye, at 3:00 p.m. on June 2.

Agenda:

- * Presentation and discussion of the CLC Convention *Prospectus*
- * Business Meeting
- * Elections

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Secretary

West Central Delegate Conference

Dates: June 4-6, beginning at 10:00 a.m. (MDT) on Tuesday

Place: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Colo.

Agenda:

1. Devotional Study of the first nine chapters of Proverbs — Pastor George Dummann
2. A Scriptural Perspective on Organ and Tissue Donation — Mr. Dennis Ahrens
3. In the World But Not of the World — Pastor Peter Reim
4. The Addressing and Resolving of Controversies in the Church — Mr. Roger Knief

5. Record Keeping and Filing Systems for
Congregations — Mr. Aaron Durst

6. Discussion of Convention *Prospectus*

Conference Chaplain: Pastor Mark Gurath

Communion Service Speaker: Pastor Roland
H. Gurgel

—*Pastor Michael Schierenbeck,*
Secretary

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SPOKESMAN INDEX

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For more information, please see this month's SMORGASBORD section.

—*The Editor*

CLC CONVENTION **June 17-21, 2002**

Immanuel Lutheran College
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Theme:

JESUS CHRIST—OUR CORNERSTONE

Essays:

Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone of Our Faith—

Pastor Peter Reim

*Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone of Our Confessional Life—*Pastor

Wayne Eichstadt

Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone of Our Message—

Pastor Joel Fleischer

Chaplain: Pastor David Baker

Preacher: Missionary David Koenig

Liturgist: Pastor Michael Wilke

Memorial Service Speaker: Pastor Em. L. Dale Redlin

Organ Coordinator: Professor John Reim

Convention Reporter: Professor Joseph Lau