

Pastor's Thoughts

MARCH 2024



Greetings, Saints of God in Christ at Holmes,

March is upon us. The month brings with it thoughts that allude to the promise of spring. For some of us that means anticipating planting seeds in our fields. Seeds that are planted will one day mature. Before you know it, thoughts of harvest will consume the hours that fill our days. March anticipates with great wonder what the year in front of us might look like.

Wondering about our future is a wonder that never seems to fade from our reality. You don't need to be a farmer to have your thoughts consumed by curiosity about what the future will look like.

In the temporal world our futures are determined by our strong desire to finish the job. As citizens living in a temporal world, it appears to be that we are always chasing after finishing the job. The question I have for you, is life in this world all that we must look forward to? As I see life, this manner of thinking limits us who are in Christ to worrying if there will be enough moisture in the ground to sustain our crops until harvest. Focusing on weather reports blinds us to the reality of the life promised to us who walk in the light of Christ. My point is not that those thoughts are useless, they are valid, but life consists of much more than the things we see and touch. I want our minds to be expanded by Christ to include more than what our carnal minds can conceive.

When our thoughts are reduced to what is happening now. We lose sight of the eternal glory prepared for us who are in Christ. My advice for us is for us guard our hearts from being deceived to believing that the treasures of life in the world offer are the most valuable treasures that God has prepared for us. I assure you far greater things are waiting for us whose intent is focused on finishing the race with victory assured for us by Christ.

This world focused thinking is what leads us to being consumed by thoughts that keeping the law can provide us with assurance that heaven is the just result of determination for moral living. Living a moral and upright life cannot be the engine that drives our faith train. Living a moral and upright life is the result of our lives being driven by the engine of Jesus Christ. His presence as our Head fuels our fire and His presence feeding our fire moves us to live with the glorious expectation of life lived eternally beyond the law.

The American composer Philip Bliss wrote many well-known hymns that are still sung in our churches today. You might know some of the titles, "Hold the Fort", "Almost Persuaded", "Halleluiah, what a Savior", "Let the Lower Lights be Burning", and the "Wonderful Words of Life." Bliss also composed the tune to Horatio Spafford's, "It is Well with my Soul." He also wrote the hymn, "Free from the Law- Oh Happy Condition." The words he wrote proclaim, "*Freed from the law, O happy condition, Jesus has bled, and there is remission.*"

We know the words express truth because those thoughts are reflected in the writings of Saint Paul. **Romans 7:6** "*But now we are released from the Law...*" by dying with Christ. Similar truth is expressed in **Romans 8:2** the words are, "*The law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the Law of sin and death.*" The freedom is the freedom Christ provides from relentless and righteous claims of the Law on our lives. The Law demands our death on the account of our sins.

Freedom from sin is not absolute. What I mean is the Law of God cannot be discarded. We cannot in faith murder, slander, lie. We cannot live a life defined by adultery or covetousness. The wage of our sin remains, our wage earned is death. We require freedom

Pastor's Thoughts Continued...

from the death sentence we earn through our sin. Our freedom from sin's power demands that we live perfect lives free of any manor of sin against our Holy God. Living with perfect righteousness is our requirement demanded by God. Paul tells us that the redeemed fulfill the righteous requirements of the law both positionally in Christ and practically by walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. The foundational aspect of this life is the understanding what ***"the Law could not do, God did, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh."*** **Romans 8:3** built into this foundational thinking is the thought that our hearts in Christ delight in the perfection of God's Law. The sad truth is that even though we delight in God's Law, confined by our old sin nature we will never live out this life perfectly. If salvation from sin is our desire Luther contends, we need righteousness that comes to us from outside of us.

I said earlier that the month of March brings with it hope. Our hope in our fields and in our church is for a fruitful season. I said before life consists of so much more than thirty-bushel corn and overflowing pews. In Christ our hope for life lived eternally beyond the Law springs up in our lives. Filled by the waters of new life that comes through Jesus Christ our lives overflow with the goodness of Jesus presence in our lives. In Christ our hope and joy are no longer confined to this earthly kingdom. Our hope springs eternally fueled by the reality of the heavenly kingdom prepared for everyone whose life has been captured by Christ.

In heaven, our lives are forever delivered from the wretchedness that defines the temporal world. In Christ are bodies are promised to be instantly glorified. We will delight in our transformed bodies. No longer will we lack strength; our health will be forever redeemed. Imagine the glory that is credited to us for the sake of Christ! For now, we can only imagine what that day will be like.

Far greater than our outward perfected body is the truth that our delight is magnified when we consider the perfection that awaits a soul who is surrendered to Christ. One day our hearts, souls, minds will be conformed to be like Christ. Conformed by Christ's presence in us we live perfectly keeping the great commandment to love the Lord our God every moment for all of eternity. What a glorious day that will be.

The best thought in that truth is that we will never need to be commanded by God to love him. Consider the thought that we don't need a command to love a good chocolate pie, or to delight in fields ripe for harvest. Those temporal delights we experience now lag far behind the delights of our very beings when our lives are found in Christ.

Therefore, the month of March, allows us to remember and imagine spending eternity with our nature gloriously conformed to Christ. Never again will we be commanded to love our God with all our hearts, souls, bodies, and minds. Never again do we lack the desire to love our neighbors. We will never again desire the worship of idols, nor will we be forbidden to murder or steal, covet or lust.

This is the transforming love of God perfectly and eternally revealed for us who are in Christ. He is in us, and we are in Him. We are redeemed in Christ to be who God created us to be. His children forever. Our song will be, "Freed from the Law, O perfect condition."

March is a perfect time to return to the hope that belongs to all who have received forgiveness for the sake of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May the fields of our hearts be prepared to grow the seed that has been planted in our lives through the power of God's Word.

Be blessed to be a blessing,

Pastor George

Home Circle

Wednesday, March 6

1:30pm

Devotion/Lesson: Naomi Lette

Hostess: Joan Gangestad

Altar Flowers:

Jayne Pate



APRIL newsletter and
calendar items are due by
Monday, March 18th.

Items can be emailed to:
holmeslutheran@gmail.com

Thanks!

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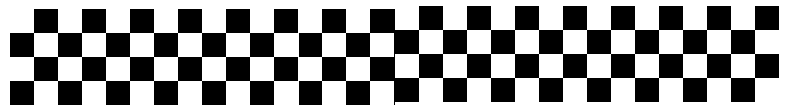
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Happy Birthday!!!

MARCH

3- Jayne Pate

6- Benson Burres

8- Annette Odland

11- Tom Thornton

18- Zoie Steffenson

20- Galen Andrews

2024 Lenten and Holy Week Schedule

Return To The Lord

Wednesday February 14, 2024 - Ash Wednesday –
Theme/ A Call to Return

Wednesday February 21st, 2024– Midweek One –
Theme / Return to Prayer

Wednesday February 28th, 2024 – Midweek Two –
Theme / Return from Betrayal

Wednesday March 6th, 2024 – Midweek Three –
Theme / Return from False Witness

Wednesday March 13th, 2024 – Midweek Four –
Theme / Return from Denial

Wednesday March 20th, 2024 – Midweek Five –
Theme / Return to the Kingdom of God

HOLY WEEK

Thursday March 28th, 2024 – Maundy Thursday w/ Holy Communion –
Theme / Return to the Table

Friday March 29th, 2024 – Good Friday –
Theme / Return to Truth

Sunday March 31st, 2024 - Resurrection Sunday –
Theme / Return and See

We plan to share a light meal before each midweek worship service beginning with Ash Wednesday. The meals will not happen during Holy Week. Each meal will begin at 6:00 pm and the service will begin by 7:00 pm