



The Grapevine

A Monthly Newsletter For The Family And Friends
Of Faith Lutheran Church Of Sonoma Valley

—Volume 2, July 2009 Issue—



A Listener's Guide To The Pulpit

Fellow Listeners of the Gospel:

Pastor Todd Wilken is host of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod radio program "Issues, Etc." heard nationally. In a recent issue of the print version of this program, Pastor Wilken offers "a listener's guide to the pulpit." Following are some excerpts from that article in which Pastor Wilken offers three questions to guide your listening of any sermon or homily you might ever hear:

- (1) How often is Jesus mentioned?
- (2) If Jesus is mentioned, is He the subject of the verbs?
- (3) What are those verbs?

How often is Jesus mentioned? Listen to the sermon and keep a running mental tally. The preacher might mention God in a generic way; that doesn't count. . .obviously, Jesus has many titles: Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, Redeemer, Savior, etc. Those all count. Remember, don't do the preacher's job for him. A surprising number of sermons beat around the bush, come close, and almost mention Jesus. The preacher shouldn't make his audience fill in the blanks, so don't. . . .

Here is the point of the first question: a sermon that doesn't mention Jesus isn't about Jesus. Since you can't preach the Gospel without mentioning Jesus, a Jesus-less sermon is a Gospel-less sermon....

Many sermons mention Jesus, but never preach the Gospel. This brings us to part 2. . . **If Jesus is mentioned, is He the subject of the verbs?** There's a difference between a sermon that says, "I love Jesus," and a sermon that says, "Jesus loves me."

One is talking about you. The other is talking about Jesus. There's a difference between "give your life to Jesus," and "Jesus gave His life for you." The point of the second question is that a sermon that mentions Jesus but still has **you** driving the verbs is still about you, not Jesus. **The Gospel is all about what Jesus does for you.** A sermon about what you do for Jesus isn't the Gospel. For the Gospel to be preached, Jesus must be driving the verbs.

But even if Jesus is the subject of the verbs, does that mean the Gospel has been preached? Not necessarily. There's one more important part of the sermon diagnostic.

If Jesus is mentioned, and He is the subject of the verbs, what are those verbs? Listen to the sermon and ask yourself, "What are the verbs? What is the preacher telling me Jesus has done, is doing, or will do for me?"

The Gospel isn't Jesus your example, educator, life-coach, or therapist. The Gospel is Jesus, your crucified and risen Savior from sin and death. So, listen for the scriptural verbs of salvation: the Jesus who lived for you, suffered for you, was crucified for you, died for you and rose again for you. The Jesus who forgives you, redeems you, reconciles you, and has mercy on you.

MAY FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SONOMA VALLEY ALWAYS BE A FAMILY OF BELIEVERS GATHERED AROUND THE GOSPEL!



Pastor Tom

BIBLE STUDY CLASSES ON SUMMER BREAK:

TUESDAY AFTERNOON CLASS, led by Pastor John Marozik, will take a summer break through July and August. We shall resume class on the day after Labor Day, Tuesday, September 8, at 1:00 pm. We have just completed a brief study of some of the great Psalms. When we return in September, we shall begin reading through the letter of Paul to the Galatians. Martin Luther, in the 16th century, relied heavily on this letter in his writings and arguments against the prevailing teaching of the Church in his day. A key theme verse of this letter is 2:16. Look it up! See you in September!

THURSDAY EVENING CLASS will be on recess during the summer months. We will gather in September to begin a major new study of the Gospel of John.

F.I.S.H. Food Give-Away

For over 35 years, F.I.S.H. (Friends in Sonoma Helping) has used Goehring Hall to distribute food on the first Wednesday of each month for individuals and families in need. Each month, our parishioners are asked to contribute a specific food item, such as peanut butter, macaroni and cheese, canned fruit, etc. and deposit these in the F.I.S.H. box located in the Narthex. It's a small donation, but when several people contribute, many are fed.

Ever since our beautiful landscaping between the church and Goehring Hall was installed, several plants have been getting trampled on and dying. Thanks to the efforts of Herb and Nancy Heil, and Vagn Nielsen, plants are being replaced regularly. But this expense for new plants and time planting can't continue. The last couple of months the Church Council has addressed the concern and dilemma to solve this ongoing problem. We first had to identify when the pattern of destruction was occurring. We've all witnessed children (and at times adults) walking through the landscaping after church and at social events. However, most of the destruction seems to take place during the food give-away.

The F.I.S.H. volunteers work diligently and try to monitor the activities of the people coming to the food give-away, but they can't police everyone. Stopping F.I.S.H. from using Goehring Hall is not an option. So how do we solve the problem? Council decided to ask parishioners to volunteer to take turns supervising the landscaping area around the fountain. John Casciani volunteered for the first three months. The first time was in June. He provided the children with etch-a-sketches and other small toys to keep them from getting bored while waiting in line for their families' bags of food. It seemed to work because not one plant was stepped on. In July, he and the youth group members plan to play games and do crafts with the children to keep them occupied.

We need more people to sign up. The sign up form is attached to the bulletin board in the Narthex. One person can supervise for four hours or two people can each take two hour shifts. Your time will be well spent and very much appreciated.

In love and service,
Cheryl Casciani

ASAP Ever wonder about the abbreviation ASAP? Generally we think of it in terms of even more hurry or stress in our lives. Maybe if we think of it in a different way we will find a better way to deal with the rough days along the way when there is too much work to do, deadlines to meet, family chaos, hurry and scurry--try this ASAP **Always Say A Prayer**.

FEEDING THE FLOCK UPDATE We are very proud to announce that cookbook sales are going great! However, we discovered, after publication, a couple of errors which were posted in a previous Grapevine issue. We were recently notified of another correction to be made. Corrections have been made in all books we have on hand and are ready for sale. However, if you have a book without the following changes, please adjust your copy (and pass the word along to people to whom you may have given the books as gifts). **REVISIONS** — **Spanish Chicken** (pg 100). Under ingredients, add 1 can of cream of mushroom soup and in directions, mix both soups, etc. **Carrot Pineapple Cake** (pg 124). Under ingredients, change 3 c. oil to 2/3 c. oil. **Trifle** (pg 150). Under layering instructions, add **pudding** after cake; the rest of the directions are accurate.

Thank you one and all for supporting this most wonderful endeavor and for your understanding in our efforts to make sure all recipes are correct! If you, or anyone you know, is interested in purchasing a book, contact Valerie in the church office or Janice Meneken (996-1629).

THE CRACKED POT Once there was a man who carried water every day from a stream to his house. He carried it in two large pots hung on each end of a pole slung across his neck. He called them his “wonderful pots.” One pot was perfect. It was always full of water at the end of the long walk from the stream. The other pot was cracked. It leaked and always arrived at the house only half full. One day by the stream it spoke to the man.

“I am ashamed of myself,” it said. “Why?” the man asked. “Water leaks out of the crack in my side, all the way back to your house,” the pot said. “Because I’m not perfect, you can’t bring home two full pots of water. I’m a failure; just a cracked pot.” “You should not feel that way,” the man said. “You are not a failure. You are a wonderful pot. And, you can prove it to yourself. As we return to the house today, look carefully alongside the path. When we get home, tell me what you saw.”

All the way home, the cracked pot paid attention to everything it saw. At home the man asked, “What did you see?” “Flowers,” said the cracked pot. “I saw lots of flowers.” “Yes you did. Aren’t they beautiful?” “Yes,” said the pot. But, once again, half the water I was carrying leaked out. I’m sorry.” “There’s no need to be sorry,” said the man. “Tell me, did you notice where the flowers were growing?”

“Well yes,” said the pot, a little puzzled. “They were only on my side of the path, but not on the other side. Why is that?” “For all these years,” the man said, “I have planted flower seeds on your side of the path, every day as we walked back from the stream.” “Oh!” the pot interrupted, shaking with excitement. “I watered the seeds through the crack in my side and the seeds sprouted and the flowers bloomed and —“

“Yes,” said the man, who was as excited as the pot. “Because of the way you are, everyone in the village can decorate their homes with beautiful flowers. Each of us is a cracked pot in one way or another, but there is still no limit to the beauty we can create.” From that day on, the cracked pot knew just how wonderful it really was.

[A traditional story from India submitted by Anna Dohse in loving memory of Gerhard]

“HERE’S TO YOU!” A poem by Anne Weems

This morning I was toasted by a 2 year-old
Who raised her orange juice glass to mine and said,
“To you!”

She brought the morning; she moved a mountain;
She brought flowers out of barren land, and sunlight from darkness.
What a way to start the day—affirmed and celebrated.

Remember to celebrate those across the breakfast table.

When did you last tell them they are precious?

You told them to take out the trash, to make their beds, but did you tell them they are beautiful?

We celebrate events or days or heroes, but take for granted the joy of the familiar.

Free us God to thank You for each other!

Free us to click orange juice glasses clear across Your Kingdom.

Here’s to you Saints who remember to love!

Here’s to those who heal, teach, listen, comfort;

Here’s to those who have been freed to free us,

To their song that never ends.

Here’s to you!

