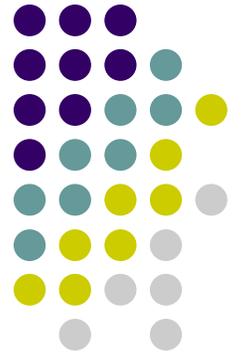


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Redeemer's Christian Connection

May Newsletter

Pastor's Corner



A Deeper Look Into Psalm 23

While I was on vacation toward the end of last month I missed preaching on one of my favorite Sundays of the church year. Not only are we in the pivotal season of Easter, but the center of the season of Easter is the Fourth Sunday of Easter, which (in the three year lectionary) is Good Shepherd Sunday. While the Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel readings vary over the three year period, the Psalm for this Sunday is always Psalm 23. *"The Lord is my Shepherd..."* Not only is this at the top of the list of my favorite Psalms, but now that we know Jesus as the Good Shepherd as well as the Lamb of God who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:15), these things put Psalm 23 at the top of my list of all Old and New Testament Scriptures.

What continues to amaze me about God's Word in Psalm 23 (as with the rest of the Bible) is His limitless depth of insight. The more we study and meditate on His Word, as in Psalm 23, the more He blesses us with His priceless treasures, especially found in "*Christ crucified*" (1 Corinthians 1:22-23; 2:1-2). That's why, as an illustration, I chose the "magic eye" picture above, which was a bit of a fad years ago. In this picture it's easy to see the variety of little one dimensional pictures which relate to Christ, including Mary and baby Jesus, vines, crosses, and lambs. But if you train your eye to look past the one dimensional pictures and deeper into the picture, you'll see some 3-D images which include the main figure of Jesus hanging on a cross, two smaller figures of the two thieves hanging on Jesus' right and left, as well as a soldier raising his sword to pierce Jesus' side (see instructions on one suggestion of how to see these 3-D images*). These 3-D images can serve to remind us of the deeper focus and dimension of Christ in Psalm 23.

In this article about Psalm 23 I would like to expand on something that was recently pointed out to me by a Hebrew scholar. If you count the original Hebrew words of this Psalm, at the numerical center are the words "*You are with me,*" referring to the "*LORD.*" There are 26 Hebrew words before this phrase and 26 Hebrew words after this phrase.

While this numerical center of Psalm 23 doesn't work in the English language, if we consider the verses of this Psalm using the common literary style of writing called a "chiasm" (which is a sequence of words or ideas that are presented and then repeated in reverse order. For example, Benjamin Franklin's saying, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail"), God focuses our attention on the same central axis phrase, "*You are with me.*" What an awesome thing on which to meditate, the abiding presence of our crucified and risen Good Shepherd!

*[Hold the center of the printed image right up to your nose. It should be blurry.
Focus as though you are looking through the image into the distance.
Very slowly move the image away from your face until the 3-D images appear.
Once you see the 3-D image of Jesus on the cross,
you can look around and see the other images.]

Psalm 23 as a chiasm

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>A - <i>The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.</i></p> | <p>A - The LORD's care and limitless provision.</p> |
| <p>B - <i>He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.</i></p> | <p>B - The LORD's abundant physical and spiritual nourishment (foreshadowing the Lord's Supper and the waters of Holy Baptism).</p> |
| <p>C - <i>He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.</i></p> | <p>C - The LORD's guidance, protection and comfort.</p> |
| <p>Axis X - <i>Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
<u>for you are with me.</u></i></p> | <p>Axis X - At this crucial point the tense changes from third to second person ("<i>He</i>" to "<i>You</i>"), adding a sense of intimacy. "To talk to someone instead of about Him is to assume that He is near and can hear and respond..." This switch and intimacy comes right at the time we need the LORD most, the time of death. Once past death, we enter into the eternal banquet hall with Him!</p> |
| <p>C - <i>Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.</i></p> | <p>C - The LORD's Guidance, protection and comfort.</p> |
| <p>B - <i>You prepare a table before me in the presence
of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.</i></p> | <p>B - The LORD's abundant physical and spiritual nourishment (foreshadowing the Lord's Supper and His anointing or choosing us as His own in Holy Baptism).</p> |
| <p>A - <i>Surely goodness and mercy shall pursue me
all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the
house of the LORD forever.</i></p> | <p>A - The LORD's care and limitless provision</p> |

HYMN OF THE MONTH



Son Ripened Fruit of the Spirit

Our Hymn of the Month for May, “**Fruitful Trees, the Spirit’s Sowing**” can be found in both the Lutheran Service Book (LSB #691) and our new hymnal, One and All Rejoice (OAR #270). Since it’s a more recent copyrighted hymn, I won’t be able to print the words in this newsletter. But once you sing this hymn you’ll notice that it focuses on the fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Ephesians 5:22-23 - “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*” To help us meditated on these words of Scripture, the following is from Martin Luther’s commentary on Galatians 5 (translated by Theodore Graebner <http://www.ctsfw.edu/etext/luther/>)

LOVE — It would have been enough to mention only the single fruit of love, for love embraces all the fruits of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul attributes to love all the fruits of the Spirit: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind,” etc. Here he lets love stand by itself among other fruits of the Spirit to remind the Christians to love one another, “in honor preferring one another,” to esteem others more than themselves because they have Christ and the Holy Ghost within them.

JOY— Joy means sweet thoughts of Christ, melodious hymns and psalms, praises and thanksgiving, with which Christians instruct, inspire, and refresh themselves. God does not like doubt and dejection. He hates dreary doctrine, gloomy and melancholy thought. God likes cheerful hearts. He did not send His Son to fill us with sadness, but to gladden our hearts. For this reason the prophets, apostles, and Christ Himself urge, yes, command us to rejoice and be glad. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee.” (Zech. 9:9.) In the Psalms we are repeatedly told to be “joyful in the Lord.” Paul says: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Christ says: “Rejoice, for your names are written in heaven.”

PEACE— Peace towards God and men. Christians are to be peaceful and quiet. Not argumentative, not hateful, but thoughtful and patient. There can be no peace without long-suffering, and therefore Paul lists this virtue next.

LONG-SUFFERING [Patient] — Long-suffering is that quality which enables a person to bear adversity, injury, reproach, and makes them patient to wait for the improvement of those who have done him wrong. When the devil finds that he cannot overcome certain persons by force he tries to overcome them in the long run. He knows that we are weak and cannot stand anything long. Therefore he repeats his temptation time and again until he succeeds. To withstand his continued assaults we must be long-suffering and patiently wait for the devil to get tired of his game.

GENTLENESS — Gentleness in conduct and life. True followers of the Gospel must not be sharp and bitter, but gentle, mild, courteous, and soft-spoken, which should encourage others to seek their company. Gentleness can overlook other people’s faults and cover them up. Gentleness is always glad to give in to others. Gentleness can get along with forward and difficult persons, according to the old pagan saying: “You must know the manners of your friends, but you must not hate them.” Such a gentle person was our Savior Jesus Christ, as the Gospel portrays Him. Of Peter it is recorded that he wept whenever he remembered the sweet gentleness of Christ in His daily contact with people. Gentleness is an excellent virtue and very useful in every walk of life.

GOODNESS — A person is good when he is willing to help others in their need.

FAITH — In listing faith among the fruits of the Spirit, Paul obviously does not mean faith in Christ, but faith in men. Such faith is not suspicious of people but believes the best. Naturally the possessor of such faith will be deceived, but he lets it pass. He is ready to believe all men, but he will not trust all men. Where this virtue is lacking men are suspicious, forward, and wayward and will believe nothing nor yield to anybody. No matter how well a person says or does anything, they will find fault with it, and if you do not humor them you can never please them. It is quite impossible to get along with them. Such faith in people therefore, is quite necessary. What kind of life would this be if one person could not believe another person?

MEEKNESS — A person is meek when he is not quick to get angry. Many things occur in daily life to provoke a person’s anger, but the Christian gets over his anger by meekness.

TEMPERANCE [Self-control] — Christians are to lead sober and chaste lives. They should not be adulterers, fornicators, or sensualists. They should not be quarrelers or drunkards. In the first and second chapters of the Epistle to Titus, the Apostle admonishes bishops, young women, and married folks to be chaste and pure.

Birthdays

Lowell Kindschy—May 1st
Scott Keene—May 3rd
Mark Thiebaud—May 5th
Matthew Holden—May 7th
Christopher Miller—May 9th
Bobbi Koppes —May 12th
Jeff Sidor—May 12th
Ryan Althaus—May 12th
Renee` Orros—May 14th
Macy Weber—May 14th
Jim Gilleece—May 18th
Teresa Sidor—May 23rd
Alissa Heinecke —May 27th
Paul Althaus—May 29th

Wedding Anniversaries

Jace & Sandy Holden—May 6th
Dale & Carol Rustebakke—May 11th
Bob & Sandy Oeltjenbruns—May 14th
Ron & Rebecca Cumins—May 14th
Tom & Kathy Bieth—May 26th

Baptismal Birthdays

Nick Orros—May 3rd
Evan Fischer—May 10th
Heidi Weber—May 12th
Christopher Miller—May 13th
David Wacker—May 13th
Rick Oberheu—May 23rd
Sharon Althaus—May 25th
Jim Black—May 29th

THE LORD'S MINISTRY

Redeemer Lutherans attendance figures and financial blessings that were given for the month of April to further maintain the Lord's ministry.

Date	Attendance	Communicants	Offerings Received Gen./Designated Funds	Needed Operating Budget
4-1-2021	33	29	\$245.00	\$4,455.06
4-2-2021	60			
4-4-2021	132	98	\$3,262.50/\$435.00	\$4,455.06
4-11-2021	101	76	\$3,277.50/\$1,000.00	\$4,455.06
4-18-2021	88	70	\$1771.50/\$139.08	\$4,455.06
4-25-2021	73	59	\$1597.00/\$65.00	\$4,455.06



Life Thoughts in the Church Year

May 2 “We pray in our services for ‘the race of man’ not the races of man. There is only one race. All else are ethnic, national, cultural, or other differences. We’ve past histories to trouble us to be sure—like the Irish and the English, the Jew and the Christian, the Greek and the Ottoman Turk, and the slave and the slave owner—but there is no place from which a genuine reconciliation can emerge today, except in Christ. The goal is fellowship, brotherhood in Christ.” *James M. Kushiner, The Fellowship of St. James – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

May 9 “Little though you can see it now, God intends to do wonderful things with you. If He is taking it slowly, that’s no surprise; He did it the first time, too. Nothing the devil can do will stop the Lord from finishing His work in you. After all, He has already laid down His life to make you His own.” *Dr. Kari Vo, Lutheran Hour Ministries – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

May 16 “Christ Jesus has risen from the dead, my friend, and everything is different. It changes everything: the whole course of human events, the whole meaning of history, the whole present, and the whole future. Christ has risen, and that changes everything.” *Rev. Dr. Oswald Hoffman, The Lutheran Hour – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

May 23 “[W]e demand an end to the injustice of abortion. We demand an end to the injustice of human trafficking, pornography, slavery, and the separation of children from their parents. But we do so as confessors. We confess that we are sinners, great sinners, with the culture of death flowing in our veins and pulsing through our corrupted brains. And we confess that only in Jesus is the life we need.” *Rev. Christopher Esget, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alexandria, Virginia – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

May 30 “God has placed each of us here at this very moment in time for His purpose: to be lights in the darkness, to be warriors in His battles, to be the hands and feet and voices that bring the good news of salvation to the whole lost world. He asks us to strengthen our feeble arms and weak knees, to open our mouths to the words He will give us, and to run the race to the finish line.” *Dr. Barbara Lane Geistfeld, Regional Director of Texas for Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

Parish School Board



The Parish School Board and Tiny Treasures staff are VERY grateful for all the helping and willing hands—old, young, and in-between—that scrubbed, caulked and painted walls, washed windows, stripped and waxed floors, assembled bookshelves and cubbies, and accomplished so much more. Many thanks also to generous donors who purchased equipment, supplies and furnishings for the school. We appreciate each and every one of you! We hope to paint, wax floors, and wash windows in two more classrooms before May 14. Please contact Paul Althaus (596-5476) if you are able to help.