

February
2015

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
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“Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last.”

Matthew 20:14-16

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The above quote is taken from the end of Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard which wonderfully illustrates the incomprehensible goodness of God: He proved His great goodness by offering, out of pure grace, His dear Son for the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, eternal life, and salvation to all who would believe in Him, to all those He has called to His kingdom, His vineyard. He does not ask for merit because all people are equally unworthy and deserving only of wrath. However, because they are redeemed and reconciled by Christ, God offers the same grace to all.

Many follow the call into the kingdom of Christ while they are still children. Others heed the call later in their youth, following a miserable or rebellious childhood without God. Some first hear God's Gospel call in middle age, after they have become disillusioned with serving themselves and the world and finding it empty and meaningless. Still others are elderly when they first think about salvation. Some have lived honorable lives, while others have fallen into great and serious sin. During their lives, many have carried a heavy load of suffering, while others were spared it. What is God doing? He is so good that He makes no distinction, but offers the same grace to all, saying: "Come, for everything is ready! Whoever comes to Me, I will not cast him away. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And does this not happen by God's gracious command? Do not all true preachers of the Gospel preach the same good news to all sinners without distinction—young and old, great and small, children and elderly, honorable and godless? No one is shut out.

But where do many people stand? In our text, the Lord says in the Koine Greek of the New Testament, "Or is your eye evil because I am good?" We have an example of this "evil eye" with the Pharisees. They lived under the yoke of the Law and, therefore, they thought they were getting a Messiah who would honor them by making all people subject to them. However, when Christ declared that He came to have mercy on all, accepting sinners as well as the honorable, the Pharisees were offended and said, "Why should we, who so scrupulously concerned ourselves with the Law, be treated as if we were sinners?" Instead of accepting Christ, they slandered, persecuted, and crucified Him.

It is still the same today. When someone preaches that a person must be virtuous to earn his way into heaven, people praise this as a sermon of righteousness. However, when these same people hear the message "Come unto Me all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," offering grace to all sinners without distinction, they are offended by it and consider it to be a false doctrine. They reply: "How should this or that great sinner be able to come into heaven just as well as I, who from childhood have been intent on virtue and uprightness?"

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HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Words from the Cross

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Away with such a religion!" These people look upon God's goodness as evil. What a horrible sin! God's Word tells us that the angels in heaven rejoice over a sinner who repents and finds grace. Therefore, whoever does not wish the Gospel of grace to be received by a sinner becomes a devil, and his wish is that all of humanity would perish. He becomes a devil even against himself: whoever looks with evil at a sinner who has been offered God's grace rejects the Gospel, shuts himself off from that grace, and becomes irretrievably lost.

Oh, let us not look with evil at God's goodness, but let us instead rejoice and find comfort for ourselves in it. Let us thank the Lord and praise Him because He calls all sinners—including us—to Himself.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Skelton



Holy Cross Lutheran Early Learning Center

Registration Open!

Summer and Fall 2015 Registration Open for Church Families
Active members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church
will receive a 15% discount!

**The growth of our Early Learning Center starts with you! Word of mouth is powerful.
Please pass the word to family members, fellow church members, coworkers, and friends!
We provide quality Christian early childhood education and childcare.*

Events this Month:

February 8: All ELC children are invited to sing at the 10:30 am church service

*Meet at 10:15 am in the narthex

February 12 and 13: Valentine's Day parties

February 16: Center is closed in observance of President's Day

February 25 and 26: Individual and class pictures

Prayer Families for the month of February are the following students and church families:

February 1: Anthony Paulsen; Haley Pequette; Lopez Family; Macbride Family; Marttila Family

February 8: Nathalie Polo; Brielle Smith; Mary Mason; Paula Mayer; McDaniel Family

February 15: Isabel Ullom; Noah Brubaker; McGillivray Family; McQuarrie Family; Staci Meredith

February 22: Zachary Barry; Alyssa Crosswhite; Mihok Family; Mikkelson Family; Mitchell Family

In His name,
Megan Keeling, Director