

St. John's Monthly Newsletter

June 2018

Idols

“But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”

James 1:14-15

Idols. They're everywhere. Oh sure, there are the blatantly obvious idols in our world, idols made of wood, stone, metal, or even plastic, but there are other idols as well. We have idols of the heart and mind, idols that might not be physical in existence like desire and covetousness. So prevalent is the problem of idolatry (the worship of idols) that our Lord set a commandment against this sin, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). But what is an idol?

Martin Luther in his explanation to the first commandment in the Large Catechism states, “Now, I say that whatever you set your heart on and put your trust in is truly your god” (Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*, 1.3). In other words, whatever we fear, love, and desire the most in life plays the role of a god in our life. If that thing we fear, love, and desire the most is anything other than the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we have a false god or an idol.

Our false gods or idols in life always develop along a slippery slope that ultimately leads to physical death and/or spiritual death. You see, idols always demand sacrifice. It doesn't matter if it is an idol of stone or an idol of our mind and desire, idols will always take something away from us. An idol of power can mean that we sacrifice friendships, family, or even our very job in pursuit of more power. An idol of wealth can mean that we sacrifice our reputation, other people's well-being, or even another person's life. No matter what the idol is though, it all begins from that initial thought or reaction of misplaced fear, trust, and desire.¹

Once we misplace our fear, trust, or desire into something that is not God, we start to make demands. We fear the loss of our financial well-being (one of the beginning points of an idol of wealth) and so we make a demand upon ourselves and others to make more money. That demand will begin the slippery slope toward death and sacrifice. That slope continues as soon as our expectations become challenged or unmet.

Once our expectations are challenged or unmet we become frustrated. Using our example above, if we don't make more money, or as much as we thought we needed to make, we become frustrated at anything and everything in the way. We may become frustrated with friends who don't seem to be helping, we may get angry with our boss who seems to be too stingy, we may become critical of our family's demands on our time. In short, we begin to judge others, our self, and even the True God. And once we pronounce judgement on behalf of our idol, we then punish. We lash out, we spread rumors, we break our morals and maybe the law to achieve what we want. Thus sacrifices are made, always justifying our actions as a means to an end. A means to serve the idol we created with our misplaced fear, trust, and desire.

You can plug this slippery slope into any form of idolatry and see how it works- anger, hatred, jealousy, lust, covetousness, selfishness, pride, etc.... Maybe you've seen how it has already taken over in your life. I know I can see the effects of this slippery slope in my life. This is precisely why God sets up a hedge around our worship with that first commandment, “You shall have no other gods.” For if we set up idols for ourselves, we will eventually sacrifice everything to them.

So that's the bad news and it hurts. We have idols, and yes they have hurt us all. But there is good news. There is a way off this slippery slope. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 7:10 “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” So identify those idols in your life with the Ten Commandments and the rest of the scriptures (Exodus 20:1-17, Matthew 15:19, Ephesians 4:29), own your sin before God and your neighbor (Psalm 32:3-5, Psalm 51:3-4), express your sorrow for hurt your sin has caused another person (Luke 15:21), be willing to bear the consequences of your

¹ I know, as Lutheran's we normally express this phrase as, “fear, love, and trust in God.” Yet love is a word that is loaded in our day and age. I find that the word “desire” is helpful to diagnose our sinful idolatry.

sins (Luke 19:18), ask for forgiveness from God and those you hurt in life (Psalm 32:5, Luke 18:13), and then, most importantly, trust in the forgiveness Christ has won for you (Colossians 1:13-14, Ephesians 1:7-10) regardless if the other person forgives you.

Idols are dangerous, they always lead to sacrifice which means they always lead to death. Yet our heavenly Father, in His infinite mercy, has given us a way out of the slippery slope of death to our idols. He put His Son to death in our place. A sacrifice has already been made – the work has already been done for you. It is that comfort that allows us to boldly confess our sin to God and those we have hurt with our sinful actions; it is the confidence of Christ's forgiveness that allows us to confidently forgive those who have sinned against us.

May the forgiveness of Christ transform your lives,
Pastor Jacobsen

Oh! Don't forget, each and every Sunday you can hear more of that comforting Gospel, the forgiveness of sins, and how we live that new identity in Christ in our world today. Be safe in your travels this summer, but don't forget the importance of hearing God's Word in Church.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Stewardship Newsletter Article: June 2018

By Rev. Jason Braaten

Immanuel Lutheran Church – Tuscola, Ill.

“There are three conversions necessary to every man: the head, the heart, and the purse.” Attributed to Luther, though yet to be located in his vast writings, this statement echoes what Jesus taught about hearts and treasures. He said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21; Luke 12:34).

But which conversion comes first? I submit that the order is this: first the head, then the purse, then the heart. Let me explain.

Our Lord Jesus Christ dwelt among us to save us. He took on our flesh, fulfilled the demands of the law in our place, became sin for us, and suffered torture and death on our behalf, in order that we would be free from sin, death, and hell. He gives us what He accomplished through Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper.

And so, He doesn't just do it for us but gives it to us, makes what He did ours by making us His. Thus, we are called by His name: Christians. We have a new life in Him.

Through the preaching of Law and Gospel, God grants us repentance, a changing of our minds. It is a conversion of the mind. We are called to turn away from our sins and turn toward Him for forgiveness, life, and salvation. For when God calls us away from something, He is, at the same time, calling us to something.

And thus, He calls us to a new life, with new deeds. This is the conversion of the purse. Jesus said that “it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24). “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Notice that our hearts follow our treasures, not the other way around. As Christians, God calls us to invest our treasures in His Kingdom to ensure that the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered. He calls us to share all good things with the one who teaches us the doctrines of Christ. He calls us to be generous in giving to the church, for it is more blessed to give than to receive.

So where is your treasure? If it is not invested in the kingdom of God, then the only response is repentance—a conversion of the heart—and to begin doing just that. And as our Lord promised, where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

This is not to say that you earn your way into heaven. It is simply to say that as Christians, those who have been made to be temples of the Holy Spirit, who have been given a new life in Christ, who are dead to sin and now alive in Him, we are, actually, to live — think (conversion of the mind), do (conversion of the purse), and be (conversion of the heart) — a new life in Him.

And when you fail, know that God in Christ loves and forgives you and still calls you away from that and to Himself.

Serving this June:

Elders: Larry Miller & Tim Rincker
Ushers: 8:00 am: Mark Uphoff 10:30 am: Randy Ervin & Alex Shepard
Altar Guild: Libby VanHoveln & Luara ZuHone
Acolytes: ***Please see the 3-month acolyte listing on the ledge*

Birthdays:

1- Gail Traub	15- Harvey Janssen, Lucas Shepard
2- Katherine Hyland, Jodi Tomer	16- Grace Lee, Terry Bartels, Cole Larson
3- Hillary Love, Ava Gass, Bradford Rau	17- Michael Lange, Frank Edwards
4- Stephen Woelber, Stephen Janssen	19- Rebecca Banning
5- Monte Overton	20- Toni Peadro
6- Andrea Kleiboeker, Jennifer Smith, Trevor Arnholt, Brandon Peadro	21- Caden Wirth, Vaughn Prince
7- Meredith Danley, Lauren Enerski	23- Erin Lawler
8- Kurtis Rankin	24- Clinton Hoenes, Sandy McMillan, Tyler Arnholt, Nina Curry
9- Maxwell Wetzel, Laura Pointon	25- Mary ZuHone
10- Frances Bareither	26- Mark Ewald, Roger Tice, Bryson Lucier
11- Tyler Welton, Randall Rhoads	27- Martha Spencer
12- Arthur ZuHone, Brenda Eisel	29- Isaac Jacobsen
13- Pat Hills, Rick Shepard	30- Jeremy Harlin, Andrew Wetzel
14- Phyllis Schultz, Shirley Kolbus	

Anniversaries:

Carole & Joe Wilson	June 1, 1985	Melvin & Stacy Pierce	June 18, 2005
Morris & Katie Miller	June 4, 1983	Derald & Sara Doehring	June 19, 1960
Erik & Libby VanHoveln	June 5, 2004	Jack & Janet Harper	June 21, 1969
Greg & Kim Mauck	June 5, 1993	Kevin & Jenny Lange	June 21, 2002
John & Laura Dixon	June 7, 2008	Scott & Kallie Harris	June 22, 2013
Jeffrey & Kelly Allee	June 12, 1993	Dennis & Georgia Burtard	June 24, 1971
Courtney & Michael Martin	June 14, 2003	Chip & Tammy Eads	June 25, 1988
Robert & Sherri Arnholt	June 15, 1985	Henry & Evadine Harrington	June 25, 1961
Bill & Deb Havlik	June 16, 1990	Michael & Dina Gass	June 27, 2014
Richard & Clara Woelber	June 17, 1953	Eugene & Phylilis Schultz	June 28, 1959
Alan & Brenda Severson	June 17, 1979		

Prayer Requests:

Those In Need of Comfort, Health, & Recovery (Recently Added)

Art ZuHone
Maxine Oeltjen
Paul Morrison – Father of Barb Kirts
Ruth Jubelt - Jane Roth's Mother
Alydia Brylowski – Friend of the DuFrain's

Corinne Thomley
Bill Moran

Dale Trimberger
Bonnie Kenney
Bob Hagen – Brother in Law of Margaret Hagen
Lydia Fenton – Relative of the Wetzel & Severson Family

For those Serving Our Nation:

John Mauck (Okinawa)

Those Who Need Our Ongoing Prayers:

Ava Gass
Howard Diepholz
Roland Dahnke
Toni Hesse
Oliver Countryman
Auggie Doehring – Brother of Derald Doehring
Kathy Beaver – Friend of Joyce Zschau
Dan Johnson Jr. – Son of Dan & Virginia Johnson
Judy Yott – Aunt of Pastor Jacobsen
Dan Kruger – Brother of Pat Wetzel
Bob Pierce – Father of Tina Smith
Rose Weber – Mother of Julie Gass

Paul Welton
John Kendall
Bob Zschau
Chuck Cookson
Pastor Paul Garchow

Norma Schussler
William Kroening
Alan Phelps
Carolyn Phillips
Richard Grice
Ken Maleske – Father of Kris Maleske
Carol McDaniel – Sister of Doug Blume & Nancy Gass
Mac McFadden – Friend of the Welton's
Camden Hancock – Friend of the Welton's
Vida Bruss – Sister of Mark Ewald
Ken Maleske – Father of Kris Maleske
Kevin Shaffer – Husband of Lynn Shaffer (St. John's 2nd Grade Teacher)

Book of the Month:



Faithfully Connected: Integrating Biblical Principles in a Digital World

by Boche, Benjamin ; Hollatz, Jacob

Overview

We know what it means to be a good citizen. We follow the law, obey local regulations, and listen to governmental authorities. From a young age, children learn how to be good citizens of their city, state, and country.

But there is a new kind of citizenship—digital citizenship: the appropriate and responsible use of technology. Now, educators and parents have the responsibility of teaching children how to be God's faithful people in a digital world.

News, Events, and Announcements:

Voter's Meeting: There will be a voter's meeting on Monday, June 11 at 7:00 pm.

Parish Nurse: This notice is to let the congregation know that I am retiring as Parish Nurse at St. John's. The last 13 years has been a profound experience that I will never forget. If any nurse is interested, you can contact me for more information on the position at 234-8227. God Bless, Joyce Zschau.

Scrip: Summer order schedule has begun. The order weeks are as follows:
June 4, June 18, July 2, July 16, July 30, August 13. Weekly orders will resume August 20.

NEW School Job Openings: St. John's School is now taking applications for:

- Middle school teacher with a concentration in math (A math degree is not necessary.)
- Part-time Spanish teacher