

# NEW BEGINNINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth after Pentecost – June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (11:11 am)

## WHY JESUS?

Psalm 81:1-10  
Lamentations 3:22-33  
2 Corinthians 8:1-9, 13-15  
Mark 5:21-43

### ***The Lord Jesus Is Faithful, and in Mercy He Raises You Up from Death to Life***

The Lord is faithful. His steadfast love never ceases, and *"his mercies never come to an end"* (Lam. 3:22-23). To keep us in repentance and to make our faith grow, He causes grief for a while, but He does not cast off forever; in due time, *"he will have compassion"* (Lam. 3:31-33). Therefore, *"hope in him,"* and *"wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD,"* for *"the LORD is good to those who wait for him"* (Lam. 3:24-26). That is what the woman did who had *"a discharge of blood,"* and also the ruler whose daughter was *"at the point of death."* Each waited on the mercy of the Lord Jesus, and each received His saving help (Mark 5:21-28). The woman had suffered much for 12 years, and the ruler's daughter had already died before Jesus arrived. Yet at the right time, the woman was immediately *"healed of her disease,"* and the little girl *"got up and began walking"* (Mark 5:29, 42). Such is *"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,"* who humbled Himself unto the extreme poverty of death *"so that you by his poverty might become rich,"* even unto life everlasting (2 Cor. 8:9).

Relationships are exciting! They are the most important aspect of our lives our relationships with our parents, boy or girlfriend, husband or wife, children, grand children, friends, coworkers, and so on.

Christianity is first and foremost about relationships rather than rules. It is about the most important relationship of all—our relationship with the God who made us. Jesus said that the first and greatest commandment is to **love God**. The second is to **love our neighbor**. So, it is also about our relationships with other people.

### **WHY DO WE NEED JESUS?**

You and I were created to live in a relationship with God. Until we find that relationship, something will always be missing in our lives. As a result, we are often aware of a gap.

People try to fill this emptiness in various ways. Some try to close the gap with money that does not satisfy them. Some rich people usually say at the end of their life, "Millions do not always add up to what a man needs out of life."

Others try drugs, alcohol or sexual promiscuity. Many of them usually say after these moments: "These things provide instant gratification, but they leave you feeling emptiness again."

There may not be anything wrong with these in themselves, but they do not SATISFY that hunger deep inside every human being. Even the closest human relationships, wonderful though they are, do not in themselves satisfy this "emptiness deep inside."  
**Nothing will fill this gap except the relationship with God for which we were made.**

At some point, everyone asks questions like, "*What am I doing on Earth?*" or "*What is the point of life?*" or "*Is there any purpose in life?*". Until we are living in a relationship with God, we will never find the true meaning and purpose of life. Other things may provide passing satisfaction, but it does not last. Only in a relationship with our Creator we find the true meaning and purpose of our lives.

We don't like to talk about DEATH, but the fact is that we will all die. Yet the Bible says. "**He has also set eternity in the hearts of men**" (*Ecclesiastes 3:11*). Most people don't want to die. We long to survive beyond death. Only in Jesus Christ do we find eternal life, for our relationship with God, which starts now, survives death and goes on into eternity.

If we are honest, we would have to admit that we all do things that we know are wrong. Sometimes we do things for which we are deeply ashamed. More than that, there is a self-centeredness about our lives which spoils them. Jesus said, "**What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.'** For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, and slander. Arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'" (*Mark 7:20-23*).

Our greatest need is for forgiveness. Just as a man who has cancer needs a doctor whether he realizes it or not, so we need forgiveness whether we realize it or not. Just as with cancer, the man who recognizes his need is far better off than the person who is lulled into a false sense of security.

By His death on the cross, Jesus made it possible for us to be forgiven and brought back into a relationship with God. In this way He supplied the answer to our deepest need.

*Why should we bother with Christianity?* The simple answer is that - because it is true. If Christianity is not true, we are wasting our time. If it is true, then it must be of vital importance to every human being.

### **BUT HOW DO WE KNOW IT'S TRUE?**

We can test the claims of Christianity because it is a historical faith. It is based on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our faith is based on firm historical evidence.

### **WHO IS JESUS? (FACTS)**

Jesus is the most remarkable man who ever lived. He is the centrepiece of our civilization. After all, we call what happened before Him BC (before Christ) and what happened after Him AD (After Christ)!

Jesus was and is the Son of God. Some people think He is just a "good religious teacher." However, that suggestion does not fit with the facts.

### ***His Character***

Many non-Christians regard Jesus as the supreme example of a selfless life. The Russian author Dostoevsky said, "I believe there is no one lovelier, deeper, more sympathetic and more perfect than Jesus. I say to myself, with jealous love, that not only is there no one else like him but there could never be anyone like him."

As C. S. Lewis put it in *Surprised by Joy*, "It seems obvious that he was neither a lunatic nor a fiend; and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I accept the view that he was and is God. God has landed on this enemy-occupied world in human form."

### ***His Conquest of Death***

The evidence for the physical resurrection is very strong indeed. When the disciples went to the tomb, they found the grave clothes had collapsed, and Jesus' body was gone. In the next six weeks, He was seen by over 550 people on eleven different occasions. The disciples' lives were transformed, and the Christian church was born and grew at a dynamic rate. These facts are that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead and thus confirm that He was, and is, the Son of God.

### ***Why Did He Come to Earth?***

Jesus is the only man who has ever chosen to be born, and He is one of the few who has chosen to die. He said that the entire reason for His coming was to die for us. ***"The Son of Man [came] ... to give his life as a ransom for many"*** (Mark 10:45).

From what we know of crucifixion, it was one of the cruellest forms of death known to man. Cicero, a first-century Roman statesman, described it as the most cruel and hideous of tortures. Jesus would have been flogged with a whip of several strands of leather weighted with pieces of metal and bone. He was left to hang for hours of excruciating pain. Yet the New Testament makes it clear that there is nothing worse for Jesus than the physical and emotional pain—that was the spiritual anguish of being separated from God as He carried all our sins.

### ***WHY DID HE DIE?***

Jesus said He died for us. The word "for" means "instead of" He did it because He loves us and does not want us to have to pay the penalty for all the things that we have done wrong. On the cross, He was effectively saying, "I will take all those wrong things on myself."

He did it for you and He did it for me. If you or I had been the only person in the world, He would have done it for us. The apostle Paul wrote of "***the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me***" (Gal. 2:20). It was out the word "ransom" comes from the slave market. A kind man might buy a slave and set him or her free-but first he had to pay the ransom price. Jesus paid, by His blood on the cross, the ransom price to set us free.

### ***FREEDOM FROM WHAT?***

Freedom from Guilt. Whether we feel guilty or not, we are all guilty before God because of the many times we have broken His laws in thought, word, or deed. Just as when someone commits a crime there is a penalty to be paid, so there is a penalty for breaking God's spiritual laws. "***The wage of sin is death***" (Romans 6:23). The result of the things we do wrong is spiritual death - being cut off from God forever. We all deserve to suffer that penalty. On the cross, Jesus took the penalty in our place so that we could be totally forgiven, and our guilt could be taken away.

### ***... Freedom from Addiction***

The things that we do wrong are like an addiction. Jesus said, "***Everyone who sins is a slave to sin***" (John 8:34).

Jesus died to set us free from that slavery. On the cross, the power of this addiction was broken. Although we may still fall from time to time, the power of this addiction is broken when Jesus sets us free. That is why Jesus went on to say, "***If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed***" (John 8:36).

### ***... Freedom from Fear***

Jesus came "***so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death that is, the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death***" (Hebrews 2:14, 15). We need no longer fear death. Death is not the end for those whom Jesus has set free. Rather, it is the gateway to heaven, where we will be free from even the presence of sin. When Jesus set us free from the fear of death, He also set us free from all other fears.

### ***FREEDOM FOR WHAT?***

Jesus is no longer physically on earth, but He has not left us alone. He has sent His Holy Spirit to be with us. When His Spirit comes to live within us, He gives us new freedom.

### ***... Freedom to Know God***

The things that we do wrong cause a barrier between us and God- Your iniquities have separated you from your God" (Isaiah 59:2). When Jesus died on the cross, He removed the barrier that was between us and God. As a result. He has made it possible for us to have a relationship with our Creator. We become His sons and daughters. "The Spirit assures us of this relationship, and He helps us to get to know God better. He helps us to pray and to understand God's Word (the Bible).

### **... Freedom to Love**

"We love because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). As we look at the Cross we understand God's love for us. When the Spirit of God Comes to live within us, we experience that love. As we do so we receive a new love for God and for other people. We are set free to live a life of love, a life centred around loving and serving Jesus and loving and serving other people, rather than a life centred around ourselves.

### **... Freedom to Change**

People sometimes say, "You are what you are. You can't change." The good news is that with the help of the Spirit, we can change. The Holy Spirit gives us the freedom to live the sort of lives that, deep down, we have always wanted to live. The apostle Paul tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22). When we ask the Spirit of God to come and live within us, these wonderful characteristics begin to grow in our lives.

### ***WHY NOT?***

So, God offers us forgiveness and freedom in Christ Jesus and His Spirit to live within us. All this is a gift from God.

We all need to be forgiven. Without forgiveness, we are in serious trouble. For God is not only our loving Father, He is also a righteous judge. Either we accept what Jesus has done for us on the cross, or else one day we will pay the just penalty ourselves for the things we have done wrong.

### ***THERE IS TOO MUCH***

To Give up?! Sometimes, God puts His finger on something in our lives that we know is wrong and that we will need to give up if we want to enjoy this relationship with God through Jesus. But we need to remember: " God loves us". He only asks us to give up things that do us harm. If my children were playing with a carving knife I would tell them to stop because I want to ruin their fun, but because I don't want them to get hurt. "What we give up is nothing compared to what we receive".

## **THERE MUST BE A CATCH**

Sometimes, people find it hard to accept that there is anything that is free in this life. They think it all sounds too easy. Therefore, they think there must be some hidden trap or catch. However, what they fail to realize is that, although it is free for us, it was not free for Jesus. He paid dearly for it with His blood. It is easy for us. But it was not easy for Him. This is the reason that we praise and adore Jesus Christ all the time in our services, in our families and our lives.

Is very common thought that **we are not good enough**. None of us is good enough. Nor can we ever make ourselves good enough for God. But that is why Jesus came. He made it possible for God to accept us in Jesus just as we are, whatever we have done, and however much of a mess we have made of our lives.

## **TELL SOMEONE**

When we receive a marvelous gift like this gospel, appear in our heart a willing to share in many ways. Tell someone what God is and what God did and do for you if the opportunity appears. Often it is only when you tell someone else that it becomes a reality to you.

## **READ THE BBLE**

Still connect with the source of faith. Read the bible. Once we have received Jesus and put our trust in Him, we become children of God (John 1:12). He is our heavenly Father. Like any father. He wants us to have a close relationship with Him. We develop this relationship as we listen to Him (primarily through the Bible) and as we speak to Him in prayer.

The Bible is the Word of God, and you might find it helpful to begin by reading a few verses of Mark or Luke's Gospel (the first and second book of the New Testament) every day. Ask God to speak to you as you read.

## **A LIVELY CHURCH**

Church is essentially a gathering of Christians who get together to worship God, to hear what God is saying for them, to encourage one another, and to make friends. It is a very exciting place to be - the church! Welcome!

In Jesus name! Amen.