

6/29/08

**The Prayer of the Day** Almighty God, work in us by Your Holy Spirit so that we may gladly hear Your Word proclaimed among us and follow its directing; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**      **Jeremiah 28:5-9**

*(The true prophet may not always be the one you want to listen to.)*

5 Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. 6 He said, "Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the LORD's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. 7 Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people:

8 From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. 9 But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true."

**THE EPISTLE LESSON**      **Romans 7:1-13**      *(God Sets us free for new life.)*

1 Do you not know, brothers-- for I am speaking to men who know the law-- that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?

2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. 3 So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. 4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. 6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.

9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. 10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. 11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. 12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. 13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the

commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

### THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 10:34-42 (*God's peace separates us from evil.*)

34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- 36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' 37 **"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**

**39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.** 40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.

41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

INTRO - On Tuesday, April 8, 2008, President Bush awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously to Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Michael Monsoor. President Bush said, ““On Saint Michael's Day -- September 29, 2006 -- Michael Monsoor would make the ultimate sacrifice. Mike and two teammates had taken position on the outcropping of a rooftop when an insurgent grenade bounced off Mike's chest and landed on the roof. Mike had a clear chance to escape, but he realized that the other two SEALs did not. In that terrible moment, he had two options -- to save himself, or to save his friends. For Mike, this was no choice at all. He threw himself onto the grenade, and absorbed the blast with his body. One of the survivors puts it this way: "Mikey looked death in the face that day and said, 'You cannot take my brothers. I will go in their stead.'”

Why did Petty Officer Monsoor sacrifice his life? He not only believed it was the right thing, he cared for his fellow service men, and believed it was worth his life to save theirs.

I. Today Jesus calls for sacrifice.

A. Jesus says that following Him means trials and losses in this sinful world.

1. Following Jesus even means sacrificing family love if we have to in order to follow Jesus.

2. Following Jesus even means Sacrificing our own lives, picking up our crosses for the Lord.

B. Why would we want to sacrifice to follow Jesus?

1. **39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

2. Ultimately, the sacrifice for Jesus is worth the loss in order to gain eternal life.

3. Jesus is not sugar coating being a Christian. At times following Jesus can be tough and painful, as we live for the righteous Savior in a sinful world.

II. I remember talking to a person here in Palmer at a public event when I found out they didn't belong to a Church, and had never belonged. In talking to them it seemed they probably did not believe in Jesus. I invited them to church to learn about Jesus and God's love, and they said, “But, if I came to church, if I became a Christian, I would have to give up having fun.” This person not only wasn't willing to sacrifice their life, they weren't even willing to sacrifice some fun. (Though, truthfully, the real joy of life is found in following Jesus.)

A. Jesus says if we are not willing to sacrifice, we really aren't worthy of being his disciple. **37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**

B. Personally, I don't have to point to a non-Christian.

1. My own life is not always one of sacrifice.

2. I am not worthy to follow Jesus as His disciple.

III. Petty Officer Monsoor sacrificed for men who were with him on a team. But, God goes the extra mile and then some.

A. According to Jesus, if we sacrifice our lives, we gain them. That is a worthwhile sacrifice. But, Jesus laid down His life for people who had failed Him, for people who had chosen themselves rather than sacrificing for Jesus. Jesus chose to suffer and die for people who might even choose not to follow Him.

1. Jesus died on the cross for sinners like you and me.
2. He had nothing to gain for Himself, just to save us.
3. Jesus, the Son of God, deemed people who had failed Him worthy of His suffering and His dying for our sins. Now that is real sacrifice, real love.

B. If we follow Jesus, we not only gain our lives, but we get to follow one who loved and sacrificed for us even when we didn't deserve it.

1. Scripture even speaks amazement at such sacrifice.
  2. Romans 5:7 says, **“Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.”**
- Romans 5:8 continues, **“But God demonstrates His own love for this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

C. But the real verse I want you to consider concerning sacrifice is John 15:13. This happened to be the theme verse for Vacation Bible School this week. I expect the children know it. Jesus Himself commended such sacrifice of love.

**“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”**

1. Jesus laid down His life for us, He is our forever friend”, according to the kids.
2. So, can you give of your time, your energy, your resources, your prayers, your commitment, your energy to serve the one who sacrificed His life for you even when you rejected Him?
3. Jesus warns us in today's lesson that following Him requires sacrifice.
4. But Jesus makes the first sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice for us first.

CONCLUSION - Let me share with you a sacrifice that was a little less dramatic than that of Petty Officer Monsoor. But, the sacrifice was done for the Lord. This week about 30-40 adults and youth gave up rest time, family time, sports time, personal time to staff and run VBS. These aren't perfect Christians, but they know that Jesus saved them, and they knew the children needed to learn this. So they organized, set up, taught, cooked, and did what it took to follow Jesus.

Jesus gave his life for you. Can you pick up your cross and follow Him?

Sacrifice

Thanks - VBS

Grieving - Mervyn Jones

III

Kristin Kopperud

Dave Miranda

Paul Ziegler

Pat Mills

Glen Price

Military      Eric and Katie Hermon  
                    Luke Falkenburg

Lord's Supper