



TSJ Newsletter

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August 2023

Longing for Peace by Pastor Riley

Two artists set out to paint the perfect picture of peace. The first painted a calm lake, high upon a mountain side. The lake was smooth as glass, no wind, no bird flying overhead. The scene was pristine and tranquil. It was his idea of peace. The second artist painted a raging waterfall with a mighty tree hanging off the side of the falls just out of reach of its spray. On the branch of the tree was a sparrow sitting calm and unworried in its nest. Both artists agreed the second painting was the better depiction of peace.

Peace is a heavenly gift, so precious that the world longs for it. Nothing on earth is valued higher than peace. Nations roar, citizens march and protest for peace. Nations will strive at all cost to retain, or regain peace. Evil must be punished and removed to have peace. Governments are established with police and military to do just that. That is the way of the world. Peace in the land leads to security, prosperity, and the general well-being of the citizens. Nations that are able to eat and drink in peace are indeed blessed. But there is peace far greater and more blessed than world peace.

True peace is rest in the midst of unrest. A still and quiet heart, not at the time when there is no misfortune but in the very midst of it, at times when outwardly there is nothing but discord. Worldly peace consists of removing the evil that is creating the unrest; whether it is during war, poverty, or sickness. Christian or spiritual peace works just the opposite. Enemies, sickness, poverty, sin, devil, and death remain; yet, peace is in the heart in the midst of misfortune. The world peace reasons that taking away the evil is the way to achieve peace. But Christ does not give such peace. He lets the evil remain, yet gives peace amidst the evil. So one finds life in the midst of death, and in the midst of conflict there is peace. It is a peace that exceeds our human reason.

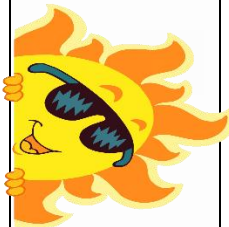
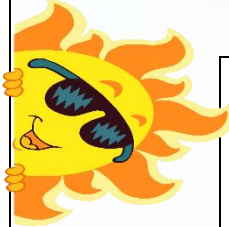
This is the peace Martin Luther found when reading the book of Romans and change the course of history and the eternal destination of many. It is the peace Luther longed for, for he knew he was a sinner to which there was no escape. Judgment was deserved. Death is its penalty. God's righteousness is needed. Something Luther could never achieve. There was no peace for Luther. Then, there it was "the righteous will live by faith." By Faith...by faith...by faith – Jesus at the cross paid Luther's penalty, He dies his death, Luther's judgment rendered to Christ. Christ became the Sinner with no escape and forsaken by the Father. "It is finished." – all this to bring Luther - and you - peace.

The night before Jesus was nailed to the cross by His enemies He said these words to His disciples and says them to you: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart I have overcome the world."

In the world - tribulation; in Christ – peace. True peace cannot be apprehended by human reason, merit, or effort. True peace comes from Christ and Him crucified. Peace be with you.

August Birthdays

- 2 Carolann Warren
- 3 Ardis Kleinert
- 4 Steve Ancel, Jr.
Russell Gakstatter
Todd Brandmair
- 5 Richelle Ryers
Tom Hitsman
Autumn Wilson
- 6 Erin Sweeney
Laney Hanson
- 8 Kathie Meyer
Jack Brandmair
- 9 Sue Corrian
- 10 Scott Cianek
Rick Houghtaling
Olivia Houghtaling
- 11 Keith Marker
Tonya Zube
- 12 Justin Bli
Jan Wagner
- 13 Tim Bezold, Jr.
Quinn Kleinert
Brayden Hopp
Barry Lupcke
- 16 Keith Korthals
Noah Roe
- 17 Jim Bli, Jr.
- 18 Ainsley Caspers
- 19 Ron Caspers, Jr.
Cora Kozcenasz
- 20 Raegan Dinsmoore
- 22 Paul Roe
Mark Roe
Matthew Roe
Emilee Chase
- 23 Cole Bollon
Chad Oltman
- 24 Mila Gallagher
- 25 Isabel Dues
- 26 Ann Schultz
Bruce Lupcke
Richard Mielens
- 29 Evelyn Dinsmoore
Roy VanDenBoom
- 30 Todd Vallender
Tyler Day
Parker Zaucha
Amber Meyer



Those Who Serve in August

The weekend of August 5/6

Elder: Russ Dinsmore

Usher: Phil Bublitz

Reader:

Greeters: Sat: Larry & Sharon Schumacher
Sun: Howard & Janet Meyer

Altar Guild: Jan Gohr/Susan Potter

The weekend of August 12/13

Elder: Jim Kleinert

Usher: Jeff Schulz

Reader: Jim Kleinert

Greeters: Sat: Kim Morton/Tootie Pavlawk
Sun: Fred & Nancy VanOchten

Altar Guild: Cindy Lupcke/Gloria Gollin

The weekend of August 19/20

Elder: Bill Schumacher

Usher: Tina Chase

Reader: Bill Schumacher

Greeters: Sat: Denise Fielbrandt
Sun: Dave & Kathy Bachman

Altar Guild: Cindy Lupcke/Gloria Gollin

The weekend of August 26/27

Elder: Rick Houghtaling

Usher:

Reader: Rick Houghtaling

Greeters: Sat: Bev Hitsman
Sun: Dan & Ame Dues

Altar Guild: Diane Erndt/Bev Hitsman

The weekend of September 2/3

Elder: Russ Dinsmore

Usher: Phil Bublitz

Reader:

Greeters: Sat: Larry & Sharon Schumacher
Sun: Howard & Janet Meyer

Altar Guild: Jan Gohr/Susan Potter

A Theologian of the Cross vs. A Theologian of Glory: By Gene Edward Veith

Mother Teresa was a living saint, according to the popular mind, compassionately caring for the sick and dying and projecting a love that brought cynical secularists to their knees. After her death, the Vatican put her on a fast track to sainthood. But then a book on her life published some of her personal writings that showed Mother Teresa was wracked with spiritual depression and a sense that God had abandoned her.

The atheist Christopher Hitchens, who had earlier written a book attacking Mother Teresa for her pro-life views, crowed at the news. See, he wrote in Newsweek, she didn't believe in this Christianity stuff at all. But even many who admired her were flabbergasted that this saintly woman who talked so much about serving Christ had such trouble feeling his presence. Maybe she wasn't a saint after all.

For me, though, the news of Mother Teresa's dark night of the soul made me think that maybe she really was a saint. Not in the Roman Catholic sense of a spiritual superhero. But in the biblical sense of a sinner whose hope is in Christ and not in herself. She did not follow her feelings, trust in her good works, or enjoy mystical experiences. Rather, she walked by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

Luther was like that. He was subject to titanic glooms, times of spiritual struggle, terror, and despair. But Luther said that these inner trials drove him to trust the Word of God, not his feelings, and to cling not to his experiences but to the objective cross of Jesus Christ.

In writing about these matters, Luther identified what would become our contemporary culture's blind spot when it comes to spiritual matters. He distinguished between what he called a "theology of glory" and "the theology of the cross."

A theology of glory expects total success, finding all the answers, winning all the battles, and living happily ever after. The theology of glory is all about my strength, my power, and my works. A theologian of glory expects his church to be perfect and always to grow. If a theologian of glory gets sick, he expects God to heal him.

And if theologian of glory experiences failure and weakness, if his church has problems and if he is not healed, then he is often utterly confused, questioning the sufficiency of his faith and sometimes questioning the very existence of God.

But, Luther pointed out, when God chose to save us, He did not follow the way of glory. He did not come as a great hero-king, defeating his enemies and establishing a mighty

kingdom on earth. Rather, He came as a baby laid in an animal trough, a man of sorrows with no place to lay His head. And He saved us by the weakness and shame of dying on a cross. Those who follow Him will have crosses of their own: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

Not that we have to suffer for our own sins. But faith in the Gospel, putting our trust in what Christ accomplished for us on His cross, entails acknowledging our own weakness, the failure of our own works, the complete rejection of our glory.

And as we find ourselves in the cross of Jesus, we can find Him in the far lesser crosses that we have to bear. When Christians suffer, according to Luther, Christ is with us in our suffering. Spiritual depression can drive us closer to Him, who knows better than anyone what it feels like to be wracked with physical pain, to be abandoned and rejected by those He loved, to be forsaken by His Father.

In Luther's terms, Christ is "hidden" in our sufferings. If a child is hiding in the room, we do not see him, but he is nevertheless there. Similarly, in our sufferings, we do not perceive the hidden Christ, but He is nevertheless truly present, to be apprehended by faith.

To be sure, after the cross, Christ was glorified. God raised Him from the dead, and He ascended to God's right hand. And Christ will come again "in glory" to judge the living and the dead. And we too are raised to new life. We too will be glorified in the eternal life to come, where we really will experience victory, have all of our problems washed away, and enjoy complete understanding.

But our access to that glory is through the cross. "To God alone be glory," we say. Notice how the critical word in those Reformation slogans is "alone" (sola). God does have glory in Himself. But we do not.

Even in the secular spheres, contemporary Americans are mad after the theology of glory, expecting success on the job, perfect families, and either self-help remedies or government action to solve all our problems. But Americans today cannot handle suffering. We would rather die than suffer. We would rather be killed than suffer.

But the truth of Christianity is evident in that everyone does, in fact, have problems, struggles, and sufferings. And this can be their point of contact for Christ, who on the cross not only "was wounded for our transgressions" but also "has borne our griefs" and "carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4-5).

Great Lakes Loons Baseball Game – Friday, August 11, 2023. vs West Michigan Whitecaps @ 7:05 PM. Post-Game fireworks show and Family Feast night (\$2 hot dogs, \$1 potato chips, \$1 soft drinks, and \$1 ice cream sandwiches). Tickets are \$12.50 each. Sign-up sheet is on the table or contact Ame Dues (989-450-6168) or Bev Hitsman (989-450-4807).



Vacation Bible School
Is canceled – due to
lack of
Volunteers and
participants!



Pastries with Pastor
Come and enjoy some
pastries after church on
August 20th! Visit with Pastor
and our wonderful members
here at Trinity-St. James.