

# Beautiful Savior July 2020 Newsletter

## A Gift to Enjoy

This year in our monthly articles we are considering favorite verses from the Bible.

This month's favorite Bible verse is: **Romans 6:23**

***"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."***

My first paycheck. \$100! A ONE with two zeroes behind it! It didn't matter that I spent a week pulling weeds with thistles in a 45-acre field. It didn't matter that I sweltered under a hot July sun. It didn't matter that I earned minimum wage. It had my name on it. I earned it.

There is another paycheck that I'm not so excited about. It comes in the form of guilt pricking my conscience far deeper than a thistle could ever penetrate my skin. Sometimes I see it when my temper flares hotter than the summer sun. I feel it when I know I should be more considerate, more caring, more loving toward others around me. So I work harder to do what's right and try harder to do better than before, but still, it never seems to be enough. And it isn't enough, because the Bible tells me the wages of my sin is death—and it's your paycheck, too.

But, thank the Lord, the Bible also tells us that God is not going to give us what we have earned with our sins. Instead, he gives us something we have not earned—eternal life. It's a gift that has been bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus and earned by his death on the cross.

That takes all the pressure off, doesn't it? Instead of the failures of our past, we can look to Jesus' perfect life of love. Instead of the pressures of tomorrow, we can look to the promise of eternal life that is already won for us by Jesus' dying and rising from the dead. As a result, life is not a burden, but a gift to enjoy always.

*\* The above article reprinted with permission from WELS Outreach resources*

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The following devotion was written by Rev. Nathan Nass who serves at St. Paul/San Pablo Lutheran Church in Green Bay, WI. It appeared in the June edition of “The Four Branches” published by our seminary and is reprinted with permission.

## Which Lives Matter?

So which lives matter? I never thought that question could be so complicated. When the “Black Lives Matter” protests erupted in the wake of George Floyd’s death, I said what I’ve always said. I wrote a devotion about God’s love for all people. To me, it seemed simple: “All Lives Matter!” How naïve I am.

The next day, a sportscaster in California was fired for tweeting something terribly offensive. Do you know what he tweeted? “All Lives Matter!” Huh. I was missing something. I’ve since learned that to many people, saying “All Lives Matter” is an offensive way to dismissively disparage people’s concerns about injustice in America. Does what you say really communicate what you think you’re saying?

So which lives matter? How can we guide our people on this sensitive issue? We can start by asking ourselves this: Does God say “All Lives Matter,” or does he say that your specific life matters? The answer, of course, is “Yes!” God does both! Doesn’t the clear biblical truth of objective and subjective justification help us in this delicate matter? Whom did Jesus die for? For all! For me!

At times, the Bible emphasizes that Jesus is the world’s Savior. “*For God so loved the world...*” (John 3:16). “*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). “*God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ...*” (2 Corinthians 5:19). There are times—many times—when you tell people that Jesus died for all. That objective truth drives away doubts. No one is excluded. All lives matter!

But I hope there are also times—many times—when you tell individuals that Jesus died for them. Think of how personally God delivers his gospel message: “*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem...*” (Isaiah 40:2). To the paralytic: “*Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven*” (Matthew 9:2). To the tax collector: “*I tell you that this man ... went home justified*” (Luke 18:14). To the sinful woman: “*I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much*” (Luke 7:47). Aren’t those powerfully personal statements from Jesus? What Jesus did for all, he did for me. That subjective truth drives away doubts too. I need that! Disabled lives matter. Tax collector lives matter. Prostitute lives matter. People needed to hear that!

In the face of abortion, a Christian says, “Unborn lives matter!” If someone responds, “No, all lives matter,” we’d say, “Yes, all lives matter, but that’s not the point that needs to be emphasized right now. Unborn lives matter!” In the face of racial injustice, a Christian says, “Black lives matter!” In the middle of a pandemic, a Christian says, “Elderly lives matter!” To that tormented soul, a Christian says, “Your life matters!” It’s very biblical to comfort hurting hearts with how much their life matters to God.

It takes pastoral wisdom to determine when it’s best to emphasize the universal grace of God and when it’s time to emphasize the personal grace God shows to individuals. So which lives matter? All lives matter. Black lives matter. Your life matters. May God grant us wisdom to clearly share his grace.

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**Recent Membership changes.** Zachary and Mackenzie Matzke transferred to Mt Calvary Lutheran Church in La Crosse, WI in June.

**Finances and Attendance.** With in-person worship starting, our online response has gone down but it is still higher than before the pandemic. The average attendance for June will be around 35 per Sunday. The finances for May were \$12,016 against a budgeted need of 12,594 (5 weeks). We are grateful that our members are remembering to send their offerings in during these times of online worship and as that continues, we will be able to meet our ministry needs.

The address for our church mail is: Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church  
PO Box 332  
Austin, MN 55912.

**Communion** – During **July** we will have **only one communion service** since Pastor will be on vacation on 7/12/2020. Communion will be offered at the 7/19/2020 service. If you are not attending in-person worship services and would like to arrange for private communion, please call Pastor Welke to set up a time.

**Guest Preacher** – On Sunday, 7/12/2020, Seminarian Abe Faugstad will be our guest preacher. Abe is a student at Bethany Lutheran Seminary in Mankato, MN.

**Women's Bible Study** – Women's Bible Study will take place on Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM. We just started the Book of Jonah. While you might know the story, there are many details to consider as we look at Jonah's ministry to the Assyrians. Come and join the discussion in July.

**July Voters' Meeting** – The quarterly voters' meeting is scheduled for July 26<sup>th</sup> after the worship service. Some items to discuss will be whether to keep communion on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month or to go back to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month. We also want to talk about a gift to help support our students at our synod schools who are training for the public ministry.

**Synod News** – Our synod's website is [wels.net](http://wels.net) and contains news, devotions and other interesting articles about things going on in our congregations and mission fields. Check it out.

**Synod President's Statement** – Our synod president, Rev Mark Schroeder, recently put out a statement on the George Floyd death. It is attached as part of this newsletter and is available at [wels.net](http://wels.net)