

# Christ Lutheran Church

127 N. Spring St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601

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August 2018

A prison inmate sits with his face in his hands, weeping. Some time ago he committed murder. Now it bothers him. "I just can't get over what I've done. My guilt locks me up in a worse prison than this one. Every day I see images of what I did, and I hate myself. I wish I could die." A friend sits on the other side of the bars. What is he to say?

Have you ever felt just terrible about something wrong you've done, even hating yourself for it? How do we find a pardon from our prison of nagging guilt? Where do we find a fresh start?

The question is important for each of us as we consider that, not only have we wronged others, but most importantly, we have offended God. Even if we can hide our guilt from other people and human justice, we cannot hide from God.

There are many ways people try to deal with guilt, but only one really works. Consider some common kinds of counsel people may give that guilt-ridden inmate in prison:

1. Encourage excuses: "Your circumstances in life drove you do it: the people around you, your difficult situation. You couldn't help it. That person hurt you."
2. Encourage denial: "You haven't done anything bad. It was just a mistake. There's no right and wrong but what you believe. Guilt is just a feeling time will mend. You're basically good."
3. Encourage distraction: "You need to get busy with the things of life. Pursue your interests. Fill your schedule. Be an overachiever. You won't have time to think about guilt."
4. Encourage perfectionism: "You have to clean up your life. Here's a list of things you must do. If you try hard enough, do more good than bad, you'll make up for your guilt. Then God may accept you."
5. Encourage self-praise: "You've done better than a lot of people. You're not as bad as that person over there. Just think of all the good you've done in life. You're nearly a saint!"

These are common ways of treating guilt. They all turn a person inward, to their own goodness and strength. But none of them actually removes guilt – any more than covering up a cancerous growth with a bandage removes the cancer. God alone has a way to set us free from our prison of guilt.

A true friend speaks the truth in love: "Friend, as you admit, you are guilty for what you have done and deserve punishment. Even the wrong attitudes of our hearts make us guilty – even hating a person in our hearts is like murder to God (1 John 3:15). But here is the good news: He loved us sinners enough to send His own Son to be punished in our place, to win our pardon and give us eternal life (John 3:16). You and I can never become good enough to deserve this. It is purely His gift. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:7-9).

When we are weighed down by our guilt, God's pardon is what counts above all else. When that prison inmate knew that God forgave and loved him, true healing and change began. He began to forgive and love himself and others rightly. Other inmates noticed a change. They saw a free spirit, a joyful and loving spirit – the Spirit of Christ in him. As a brand new child of God in Christ, he had so much to live for, so much to share!

In Christ's forgiving love, Pastor Smith

## Empty Life? God Wants to Fulfill It!

**“You know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, not with things that pass away, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot.” 1 Peter 1:18-19**

The celebrity world has been shocked recently with the deaths of fashion mogul, Kate Spade, and also celebrity chef and TV personality, Anthony Bourdain. Especially saddening is the fact that both of these individuals took their own lives. For regular people it is easy to look at such individuals and wonder how they could ever be unhappy. *“Don’t they have everything?! Great wealth, prestige, rubbing shoulders with and influencing the movers and shakers of our society?! Why would they do that?!”*

This puts things in perspective for us when we are tempted to think, *“If only I had...”* Even with more money, better looks, greater popularity, or anything else, people still find themselves to be completely miserable and hurting. The solution isn’t more *stuff*. A fulfilling and happy life does not depend on wealth or status. As we see with these celebrities and others, who appear to have it all, many still feel as if they have a completely empty life—that it is worthless and meaningless!

How sad this is! What a trap the devil lays for us, thinking that silver and gold, the things of this world—what the King James Version of the Bible labels as *“Mammon”*—will fulfill us! Turns out that even a wealth of worldly things will still leave people feeling empty, alone, and of little value.

Do not put your hope or your trust in *stuff*! Do not let your heart be carried away by the god of *“Mammon”*! Instead, take to heart the encouragement that Peter offers when he says: *We were “redeemed from our empty way of life.” (1 Peter 1:18)* God has ransomed us—bought us back—from our guilt, sin, and shame. God has

intervened so that death and the devil no longer have any say or control over us!

God has come that we might find true fulfillment and find value in our lives. He fills us with something far more precious than any amount of gold or silver, or any other earthly thing. He fills us with His Love. It was because of Love for YOU that God the Son, Jesus Christ, sacrificed His own blood. Our Savior Jesus was willing to sacrifice Himself on the cross so that we might be filled with the peace of God! And because of this peace,

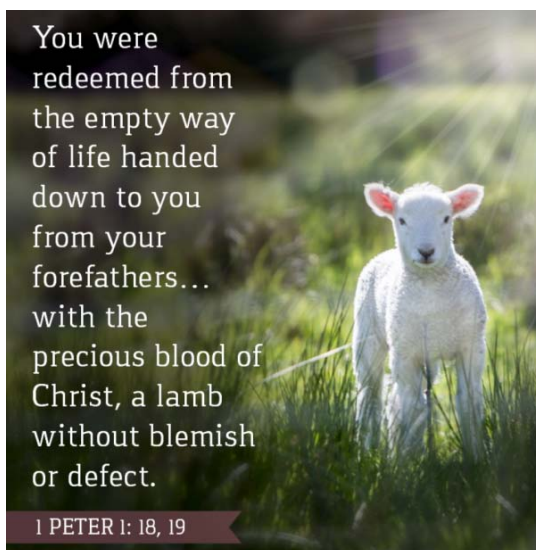
we can have absolute confidence that God is at our side—He has promised to never *“leave us or forsake us”* (Hebrews 13:5). He reassures us that we are tremendously valuable and loved by Him!

As we face challenging times, when we feel down and are struggling, God has promised to be at our side. He invites us to cling to His love and to the promises that we find in His Word—the Bible, and in our Baptisms and as we receive

the Lord’s Supper. In challenging and difficult times, He especially points us ahead to the promise of eternal life in Heaven that He has waiting for us!

Sadly, many people struggle with an *“empty way of life.”* Such a struggle even leads some to harm themselves. When we face such struggles in our lives, find comfort and refuge in knowing that through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection our lives are not empty or worthless. They are valuable and precious, filled with God’s Love—and will be, forever.

*(A newsletter of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod’s Board for Home Outreach)*



You were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers... with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 PETER 1: 18, 19

# August 2018 Christ Lutheran Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him.”</i> <i>Psalm 62:1</i></p>						
<b>5</b> Pentecost 11  <b>Worship</b> 9:30 AM	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>  <i>Happy Birthday Colton Harrington</i>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>  <i>Happy Birthday Donivon Gerhardt</i>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Pentecost 12  <b>Worship with Communion</b> 9:30 AM <b>Sunday School &amp; Bible Class</b> 10:45 AM <b>Worship at Crystal Terrace</b> 1:00 PM	<b>13</b>  <i>Happy Birthday McKenna Hunter</i>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>  <i>Happy Anniversary Dale &amp; Bobbie Hauck</i>  <i>Happy Anniversary Clark &amp; Rita Pederson</i>	<b>16</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <b>Church Rummage Sale</b>                          8:00 AM – 2:00 PM                     </div>	
<b>19</b> Pentecost 13  <b>Worship with Communion</b> 9:30 AM <b>Worship at Crystal Terrace</b> 1:00 PM	<b>20</b>  <i>Happy Anniversary Robert &amp; Sara Shepard</i>	<b>21</b>  <i>Happy Birthday Alaina Otto</i>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  <i>Happy Birthday Michael Harrington</i>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Pentecost 14  <b>Worship</b> 9:30 AM <b>Worship at Crystal Terrace</b> 1:00 PM	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>  CLWMS Activity at Rogue River Place 2:30 PM	<b>31</b>	

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