

Christ Lutheran Church

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

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March 2020

"I'M SORRY." How many times have we said those words? In our relationships with people, not only do we make innocent mistakes, which potentially inconvenience and hurt others; but we also say and do things that are morally wrong, by which we become guilty of hurting and offending another.

So we need to apologize. "I'm sorry." Those are some of the hardest words to say. It is a humbling experience, to admit our wrong and cast ourselves on the mercy of another. But it is also uplifting, when we hear the one we offended forgive us.

"I'm sorry." As Christians, those words are in our hearts and on our lips each day, in our relationship with God. It is part of living the life of repentance and faith, which God's Spirit has worked in us. Each day, convicted by the holy Law of God, we confess our sins in heartfelt sorrow and shame (contrition); and He comforts us by His Gospel, declaring us fully forgiven through the sacrifice His Son made for our sins on the cross.

James 4:10 says: *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."* This happens each day as we live in the power and promise of our Baptism. We confess this Scriptural truth in our *Catechism*:

What does such baptizing with water mean?

Such baptizing with water means that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts; and that a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes, Romans 6:4: "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that just as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Each day, we return to our Baptism by repentance. We humble ourselves before the Lord, confessing our sins, saying "I'm sorry." We drown our sinful nature with its desires in the waters of Baptism. We are buried with Christ in death to sin.

And the Lord lifts us up in His baptismal cleansing, washing away all our sin by the power of our Savior's blood. As surely as Christ Himself has risen from the dead, God has raised us up as His new creation in Christ. As His children by faith, born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5), He empowers us to walk in newness of life.

"I'm sorry." They are some of the hardest words to say. When it comes to human relationships, we do not always know how a person will respond.

But when it comes to our relationship with God, we already know how He responds, every time. He lifts us up in Christ: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9).

And now, as the baptized children of God, cleansed and uplifted by His boundless grace in Christ, we can share His uplifting words with those who have hurt and offended us: *"forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:32).

In His boundless grace,
Pastor Smith

Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into

Death

as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father

we too might walk in newness of

LIFE

An Ugly Mess or A Beautiful Design?

John 13:7 Jesus said: “You do not understand what I am doing now, but later you will understand.”

It was just hours before Jesus would be arrested, have to face a phony trial, and be brutally killed by crucifixion. He and His disciples were gathered together at the “Last Supper” in the upper room. Jesus then takes it upon Himself to get up from the table, take a towel and a basin of water, and then proceed to wash each of His disciples’ feet! This was a task that the lowliest servant would be assigned, and yet the master, the rabbi, the divine, miracle-working, Son of God Himself, takes this task upon Himself?! “*What in the world are you doing Jesus?!*” The apostle Peter tried to stop Jesus. “*NO Lord! You shall never wash my feet!*” To which Jesus then calmly responds: “*You do not understand what I am doing now, but later you will understand.*”

These words were fitting, not only to that foot-washing, but to all of the events that would take place in the following days. Peter and the disciples would be confused, dumbfounded, disappointed, and terrified. They would watch in horror as Jesus would be arrested, tortured, and crucified. They must have wondered at how things got so bad, so quickly. How did this turn out to be such an ugly mess?!

The story is told of a man who was visiting a fabric factory. The owner of the factory took the man out on the production floor and they stopped before a giant loom reaching from the floor to the ceiling. It was whirring and humming – with spindles spinning, and shuttles flying back and forth, and yet as the man looked at the fabric being made, all he could see was a jumble of threads and yarn, loose ends in a mish-mash of color. “*What an ugly mess! I think your machine must be broken. Who would want this fabric?!*” exclaimed the man to the factory owner. With a chuckle, the factory owner motioned to the man and said, “*You are not seeing it from the right side! Come over here and look!*” The two men then walked over to the other side of the machine and there the man saw the true nature of the fabric. It was a flowing, balanced, beautiful design! It was fabric of the highest quality. It was just that they had been seeing it from the wrong side. From the back you wouldn’t be able to understand what was being

formed – but when viewing it from the other side, you would see the beautiful design that was being produced.

This is similar to Jesus’ passion and death. From an earthly, human viewpoint, it all seemed like an ugly mess. But from God’s perspective and plan – from eternity’s viewpoint – this was the beautiful design for our salvation! This is also the case for us in our lives, with the challenges and difficulties we face. At times, from our viewpoint, we echo Peter’s sentiment in that upper room: “*What in the world are you doing Lord! This is all wrong – this is an ugly mess!*” When we begin to feel in such a way as this, the words that Jesus spoke to Peter also apply to us: “*You do not understand now, but you will later!*”

As we look at our own lives and situations, it might appear like the back side of that fabric. It might look like an ugly mess. But God sees our lives and the situations from the other side. He sees His own design and plan being produced in the lives of His people – and it is a thing of beauty! When we face those ugly messes in our lives, we have comfort in knowing that God has not forsaken or abandoned us. From our perspective, it might appear that way, but God has promised us: “*I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you*” (Hebrews 13:5). He has said: “*All things work together for the good of those who love God*” (Romans 8:28). Just as it was with Jesus’ own suffering and death, the things that appear from this side to be an ugly mess, will be, from God’s view, part of His beautiful design!

Be encouraged by this! Even though we might only see an ugly mess, we can trust that God is with us in our lives. He is working in spite of – and through – the ugliness to produce something beautiful! And we can look forward to that day when we will get to have that other perspective – from the “other side” – as we will have the viewpoint of Heaven for ourselves and then understand and see God’s beautiful design!

*(From the Evangelical Lutheran
Synod's Board for Home Outreach)*

Midweek Lenten Services

“Questions of the Cross”

**Wednesdays through April 1
Worship at 4:30 PM**

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>Lent 1</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	2	3 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Charles Brumble</i>	4  Lenten Service 4:30 PM	5	6 Jesus Cares Ministry 2:00 PM Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	7
8 <i>Lent 2 / Daylight Savings Time</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	9	10 Council Meeting 4:30 PM	11 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Grace Smith</i>  Lenten Service 4:30 PM	12 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Aydin Smith</i> Rogue River Place Outreach Event 2:00 PM	13 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	14
15 <i>Lent 3</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	16	17	18  Lenten Service 4:30 PM	19 <i>Spring begins</i> CLWMS Meeting 4:30 PM	20 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	21
22 <i>Lent 4</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	23	24 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Jackie Bednar</i>	25 <i>Annunciation</i> <i>of Our Lord</i>  Lenten Service 4:30 PM	26	27 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	28
29 <i>Lent 5</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	30	31	<p><i>“We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that just as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”</i></p> <p><i>Romans 6:4</i></p>			

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