

Christ Lutheran Church

127 N. Spring St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601
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July 2021

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.”

(Jeremiah 17:7-8)

In this year of drought, there is a lot of concern about the availability of water. Different groups express deeply felt concerns. Without water, crops cannot grow. Without water, fish and wildlife suffer. Without water, livelihoods and ways of life are affected.

Water is essential to every form of life. How readily we have seen and felt this truth lately, with record hot summer temperatures. Without constant watering, our lawns turn brown. Without constant liquification, we may feel like we are wilting.

In the passage above, it pictures a tree that stands unaffected, even thriving in the midst of intense heat and drought. How is this possible? That tree is planted by the waters; it spreads out its roots by the river. Without this source, it would have wilted and died in fruitless decay. But with its roots tapped into the water of life it lifts its branches, green and full of life, yielding abundant fruit.

Here we have a picture of the great difference it makes as we live connected to our Lord Jesus by faith, rooted in His salvation and eternal life.

On our own as sinners, we would be like a tree in desert-like conditions without any source of water. Under the heat of temptation, who could stand and live? *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*; and *"the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Spiritually

speaking, we would be dead before God – our lives like withered and fruitless trees.

But by the grace of God, He has led us to the refreshing waters of His life-giving Gospel. He declares our sins forgiven for the sake of Jesus, who took them all away on the cross. By His Spirit, He has planted faith in our hearts and given us new life in Christ. In the waters of Baptism, God has washed our sins away; and in the power of Christ's resurrection, He has raised us up in newness of life.

Therefore: *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters."* Even when the heat comes, with all the temptations and trials we might face in life; and even when the drought comes, with all the shortages and hardships we might feel in this world; yet we remain rooted in Christ and the life He gives.

Jesus said in John 4:14: *"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."*

Come, drink freely of the life-giving water Jesus gives in the forgiveness, life and salvation He won for you. As a pipe brings water from the well, Jesus brings the salvation He won in His cross and resurrection to you in His means of grace, His Gospel in Word and Sacrament.

As we drink freely of His grace and salvation, we go forth refreshed in our soul. Indeed, even the midst of the most desert-like conditions, He makes our lives like that well-watered tree that lifts its branches, green and full of life, yielding abundant fruit to His glory.

In His refreshing grace,
Pastor Smith

Why Would Anyone Want to Believe in God?

July 2021

God is more controversial than anyone or anything else.

Does God exist? Or are there no gods? Or many gods? Should we trust the Bible, the Koran, the Book of Mormon, or our own feelings? No matter how a person answers, everyone has one thing in common: we all have an opinion about God.

Opinions, however, can only go so far. What people really desire is the truth—the truth about themselves and also the truth about God.

What Are the Characteristics of God?

Despite disagreements about religion, the simple fact is that nearly everyone knows the basic idea of what it means to be “God.”

God is **eternal**. He was not created. He has always existed, and always will.

God is **almighty**. He is not weaker than others, but stronger than everyone and everything.

God **made everything**. Only God is eternal. Only God is almighty. So, God must be the creator of everything. Of course, that would mean that God created us, too.

God is a **moral judge**. Some attitudes and behaviors are good. Others are wicked. God judges people on the basis of the distinction between good and evil.

That last part is frightening, isn't it? Who among us can claim to be always good and never wicked? Who among us can tell God, “I've been so good all of the time that there's nothing you can hold against me”? On the contrary, we cannot stop ourselves from knowing that we have done bad things and that God has good reason to judge us.

As we reflect on our memories of lying, cheating, and stealing—of gossiping, lusting, and telling rude jokes—of hurting others and even hurting ourselves—suddenly the thought occurs to us: we don't really like the idea that God exists, since we recognize that we justly deserve His wrath.

Plain as day, the most obvious characteristic of God is that He condemns us exactly because we deserve it. Not a pleasant thought at all!

Indeed, the reason there are so many religions in the world is that people invent ways to escape the terrifying realization that God's justice means our

punishment. Atheists dodge the issue by claiming God does not exist. Other religions lower God's moral standards so that people can pretend they are good enough to earn God's favor. But the truth is hard to shake: “all have sinned ... the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 3:23, 6:23)

Why Would a Sinner Want to Believe?

By nature, we do not want to believe in God—not fully, not the true God as revealed in the Bible.

There is only one good reason that anyone would ever want to believe in the true God. That reason is called “the Gospel.”

“Gospel” means good news, and the Bible's good news is that the true God is more than eternal, more than almighty, more than our creator, and more than our moral judge.

The true God also **loves** us and **forgives** us.

The true God's love for us resulted in the most amazing event in all of history: God bridged the gap between Himself and us by becoming fully human in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus led a perfect life, fulfilling God's moral law. Jesus suffered innocently, taking the punishment that was due us. After dying on the cross, Jesus rose back to life. His resurrection—the turning point of history—is God's guarantee that our sins are forgiven, our standing before God has been restored, and heaven awaits us when we die.

We do not know these things on our own. We would not even want to believe in God, since our sin makes us run from God in fear of wrath.

The Holy Spirit turns our hearts when we hear the good news about what Jesus has done for us. Faith fills the void that unbelief had carved out. We rejoice to discover in the Bible that God's mercy exceeds His justice, and that He fully and freely forgives us.

Dr. Ryan C. MacPherson is the director of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews, and professor of history, philosophy, and legal studies at Bethany Lutheran College (Mankato, MN).

Learn More:
www.els.org/apologetics

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters.”</i> <i>(Jeremiah 17:8)</i></p>				1	2	3
<p>4 Pentecost 6 Independence Day</p> <p>Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship with Communion 9:30 AM</p>	5	6	7	8	9	10 <i>Happy Birthday Micah Smith</i>
<p>11 Pentecost 7</p> <p>Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship 9:30 AM <i>(Baptism Affirmation and Reception for Ezra Gottfried Krause)</i></p>	12	13	14 <i>Happy Birthday Isaac Smith</i>	15	16 <i>Happy Birthday William Jay</i>	17
<p>18 Pentecost 8</p> <p>Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship with Communion 9:30 AM</p> <p><i>Happy Birthday Kara Bednar</i></p>	19	20 <i>Happy Birthday Pastor Smith</i>	21	22	23	24
<p>25 Pentecost 9</p> <p>Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship 9:30 AM</p>	26 <i>Happy Birthday Richard Howard</i> <i>Happy Birthday Randy Bednar</i>	27	28	29	30	31

**Christ Lutheran Church
127 North Spring Street
Klamath Falls, OR 97601**

July 2021 Newsletter

Upcoming Dates:

Friday–Saturday, September 24-25

Circuit 12 Women's Missionary Rally

at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Grants Pass, OR

Guest Speaker: Rev. Thomas Heyn (ELS Board for World Outreach Administrator)

Topic: “Divine Comfort in Affliction”

Saturday, October 30

Regional Reformation Service

at Christ Lutheran Church in Klamath Falls, OR

Guest Preacher: Rev. Roger Emmons (Redmond, OR)

We celebrate our Lutheran heritage, emphasizing God's unchanging truth in Scripture Alone, and salvation by God's gift of Grace Alone, received through Faith Alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ.