

# Make Church a Part of Your Life

## WEEKLY SERMONETTE

### "The Free Gift"

By Pastor Rick Rostek, Immanuel Lutheran Church

Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Therefore, forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation are a free gift from God through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is great news! Salvation doesn't depend on us but on God and His Son Jesus.

So if this is true, why does Jesus issue a stern warning such as, "And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire" Mark (9:43). He would go on to say similar things about one's feet and eyes. If our salvation comes through faith in Jesus, why would Jesus care if we fall into sin?

It's true that we won't be saved through our

good works because we will never be perfect. But when Jesus speaks in such drastic terms, He shows the seriousness and power of sin. We regularly commit sins of one sort or another, and generally we realize that

we have done so and seek to turn from our wrong ways. But some sins are so alluring, so inviting, so captivating that we don't want to turn from them. When that happens, we are effectively telling God that we know best

and He doesn't. Such arrogance can then lead to unbelief. Without faith, we are lost eternally.

So when Jesus recommends cutting off one's hand or foot in order to combat sin (and note that Jesus deliberately overstates the case for effect; He's not advocating self-mutilation), He's showing just how serious and dangerous sin can be. At the same time, He is calling people back to faith, that they would put their trust in the only true God and not the gods of this world.

In faith, we enjoy the free gift of God that is offered to all people. Jesus' death was not just for a particular ethnic group or people, but was for all people everywhere for all time. This is the wonderful news we have in Jesus Christ and the blessed hope we have by faith. Believe in Jesus, and have the free gift of eternal salvation!

## RICHES

Christopher Columbus was a most determined individual - he was looking for riches to honor the King and Queen of Spain. Beyond riches, he wanted to fulfill a religious quest and bring Christianity to unknown parts of the world. Though Columbus did not realize either goal, he ultimately found "riches" beyond measure when he landed on our shores. If he had given up, we might not be living in this land of opportunity!

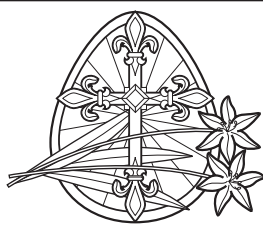
God has plans for us when we have faith in Him and seek to discover His will for our lives. We must not become discouraged when we do not meet our goals, for our Creator guides us to greater rewards when we follow Him. We read in Hebrews 10:35-36... "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised."

Won't you worship this week? When you discover your faith in God, your rewards will be priceless.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Corinthians 11:17-34	Psalms 7	Psalms 9	Psalms 85	Amos 1:13	Amos 5:1-27	Zephaniah 3:1-20

Scriptures Selected by The American Bible Society  
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