

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358

Sermon Series on the Book of 2 Corinthians
Week 2
July 19, 2020



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- **Prelude “More Like the Master; Kum Ba Yah; My Lord Knows the Way; Jesus Christ is the Way; Walking with Jesus” Roxanne Groff**

- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

- **Welcome** **Pr Mel**

* **HYMN OF PRAISE**

I Lay My Sins on Jesus



1 I lay my sins on Je - sus, the spot - less Lamb of God;
 2 I lay my wants on Je - sus; all full - ness dwells in him;
 3 I rest my soul on Je - sus, this wea - ry soul of mine;



he bears them all and frees us from the ac - curs - ed load.
 he heals all my dis - eas - es; my soul he does re - deem.
 his right hand me em - brac - es; I on his breast re - cline.



I bring my guilt to Je - sus to wash my crim - son stains
 I lay my griefs on Je - sus, my bur - dens and my cares;
 I love the name of Je - sus, Im - man - uel, Christ, the Lord;



clean in his blood most pre - cious till not a spot re - mains.
 he from them all re - leas - es; he all my sor - rows shares.
 like fra - grance on the breez - es his name a - broad is poured.

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808–1889
 Music: MUNICH, *Neu-vermehrtes Gesangbuch*, Meiningen, 1693

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- Please be seated

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Loving God,

C: When our path becomes difficult, we do not always turn to you. We look for an easy way out. We escape in avoidance and addiction. We forget your promises and seek what does not satisfy. Forgive us and bring us back into the strength of your Spirit.

P: God is generous and loving and forgiving. Hear and believe that your sins are washed away and that new life is yours through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

*** GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Gracious God, You call us to show the same forgiveness to others which you have shown to us. Enlarge our hearts to accept those who have wronged us, and grant us all your Spirit of healing and compassion, for the sake of Jesus Christ,

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

2 Corinthians 2:1-10

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from 2 Corinthians, Chapter 2.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

2 So I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. ²For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? ³And I wrote as I did, so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice; for I am confident about all of you, that my joy would be the joy of all of you. ⁴For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

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⁵But if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but to some extent—not to exaggerate it—to all of you. ⁶This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person; ⁷so now instead you should forgive and console him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸So I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹I wrote for this reason: to test you and to know whether you are obedient in everything. ¹⁰Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Praise To You, O Christ** (*Spoken*)

• **SERMON**

Pr Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who came to forgive our sin, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Last week we began our sermon series on this book of Second Corinthians and I told you about some references to other visits by Paul and other letters Paul had written that have been lost in time, but that are mentioned in this letter we call Second Corinthians. In today's reading we have both a reference to Paul's visit and that letter of tears I spoke of last week. We also get a bit of a clue as to the trouble Paul faced during that whole period and what he thinks the Corinthian Church should do about it.

Paul grieved that his beloved church at Corinth had followed another person's interpretation of Christianity rather than the Gospel he had preached and taught while he was with them. There was division in the Church and Paul had tried to help them return to the Gospel he had taught, but to no avail, at least at

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first... His efforts were obstructed by an unnamed person who had apparently been called out and identified. How fortunate for the Corinthian Church to know the source of their conflict. Rarely is the actual source responsible for spreading drama and conflict among the Church family easily identified and even rarer is the source dealt with in a kind, but effective manner. In this case we don't know what the person said or did, but we know what Paul asked the Corinthians to do.

Paul writes to his beloved congregation asking them to reaffirm their love for him—to forgive him. Isn't that the basic principle of our faith? Forgiveness... Last week I said the Church at its best is God's house of love. This week we learn a little more about what that means and how it works out on the ground, in action within a community of faith. The Church isn't just God's House of Love in name only, but in actual words and deeds too. I don't believe you can be a House of Love without also being a House of Forgiveness. Paul was so concerned about this unnamed person and how his Christian brothers and sisters would treat him that he took the time and great expense to write to them about the situation. Imagine back then the effort to get a written letter from one city to another. Paul dictated to a scribe and sealed the letter. He gave it to a trusted companion to hand carry from Macedonia all the way to Corinth, a distance of some 250 or more miles. There were no text messages, emails, or tweets. These kind of personal letters were hand

carries and read aloud by the person delivering the letter in front of the entire congregation. That's the importance Paul placed on keeping good relationships within the Church. Paul was concerned that if the congregation shunned this man or treated him cruelly there could be a danger of suicide.

The Air Force and the military in general, have a problem with suicide. The rates of suicide are much higher for active duty members and veterans than in the civilian population. When I was an investigator on the Inspector General's staff, we had a policy that after interviewing anyone during one of our investigations, whether they were the target, suspect, or just a witness, we never released them unless their First Sergeant or Commander came to be with them. There were too many times when a person knew we were closing in on discovering the truth and they were going to be in trouble and so, rather than facing the consequences, they would commit suicide. The thought is that by handing them off to a member of their own squadron or unit they would be less likely have the opportunity to take their own lives. The reality is that even back in their own unit, many times, the person under investigation was shunned. Even among their own brothers and sisters in arms they still had no place to turn for love or acceptance. They were, or at least felt like they were, outcasts. Nobody wanted to be associated with the person who was in trouble. As a result, they were treated as less than whole, less

than a human being. So, even after a successful hand off to the First Sergeant or Commander the person still felt there was nowhere to go and no one to turn to. Far too often this scenario still to this day results in a suicide or attempted suicide.

Paul seeks to find a way for even known troublemakers to be reconnected to a loving community because all the way back to biblical times, every life matters. The Church can't be whole or complete without every soul, every brother and every sister being made an indispensable part. Even the parts we would rather be rid of from time to time are parts that make us a complete and whole community...

I've also seen how this works out in a Christian Community. Many years ago, long before I went to seminary there was a couple who were very active in the congregation we started to attend when we moved into this town. They helped out in the feeding ministry, the wife sang in the choir, they never missed a Sunday or a Wednesday worship. When we joined the church, they quickly befriended us and being new, we rather enjoyed the attention they lavished on us. Unfortunately, we were unaware this couple was actually very needy and after they got to know you, they began to take advantage of your friendship. They didn't have boundaries and refused any attempt to establish them. Over time we began to see how destructive this couple was to the harmony of the entire community. We tried everything we knew how to help them learn appropriate behaviors, but they couldn't seem to fit

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in. After several years this couple was finally asked to leave the congregation by the lead pastor. I still wonder what, if anything we or the congregation could have done differently that might have healed their relationship with the congregation. This couple had been forgiven over and over, yet they continued to undermine the ministries and mission of the congregation. At what point does a congregation just say enough is enough...

As I look back on that situation, I realize the bigger problem was that nobody ever recognized the bigger issue. Yes, this couple was disruptive, but how you react during and after the disruption makes a difference. That congregation mostly ignored the issues. They all knew how these two people were, yet they allowed new members to be drawn into their web of drama. I'm not saying someone should have alerted us or warned us not to become friends with them, but a healthy congregation, like a healthy human body must have a strong immune system. Apparently, this couple had been acting in this manner for quite some time before we ever moved into town. Why hadn't they been referred to counselling or been rebuked by the council long before we arrived on the scene? Just like in cancer patients, many times if you catch problems when they're small you can usually treat the disease before it becomes terminal. Perhaps intervention at a much earlier point might have been able to keep this couple in the community,

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but I know for certain ignoring their behavior until it was completely out of control led to their excommunication from that congregation.

I can say that during my time here at Trinity we've weathered a few storms together. Although we're not perfect when it comes to the manner in which we deal with drama and conflict, Trinity does have an exceptionally good immune system and this congregation is able to for the most part address conflict before it becomes relationship ending.

Forgiveness is always difficult. Sometimes when we're offended, we act like small children and threaten to take our toys and go home. That might make you feel better for a while, but it fractures or totally ends the relationship. Learning to forgive takes those fractured relationships and makes them whole again. It restores the one who offended back to equality and makes the community complete. Forgiveness doesn't mean we ignore continued bad behavior, but rather we work to include everyone where their gifts can be used to God's Glory while teaching and showing what real love and forgiveness can be. Forgiveness doesn't mean no consequences. That's cheap grace. Real forgiveness helps the offender overcome their error and teaches them another way. Real forgiveness doesn't just say, "Oh, that's all right." And moves on. That's sticking your head in the sand and taking a coward's way out. Real forgiveness is always inclusive and always

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instructive; teaching and showing the one in error in great love, how to improve. They may never be perfect, in fact, they will never be perfect, but they, and we, can all improve and do better today than we did yesterday. As long as sinful humans make up the Church, there will always be a need for forgiveness. Think of it as your Christian job security and don't forget to thank God for all those times when you needed to be forgiven too... You are their Christian job security too...

May God continue to make us better at forgiving one another. May each of us find the love to forgive that one person who just rubs you the wrong way. May God bless even our feeble efforts to forgive for the sake of the Gospel we proclaim. May this house be known as God's House of Love and Forgiveness. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

*** APOSTLES' CREED**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need...

A brief silence.

L: When we harm our relationships everyone suffers and your heart is grieved, O Lord. Give us courage and mercy to repent where we have wronged others and to forgive others where they have wronged us. Forgiving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Strengthen and protect victims of abuse and mistreatment, that they might eventually be able to release the chains of their past and live in the freedom that you have promised through your Spirit. Forgiving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: The damage we have done to our planet we have also done to ourselves, creator God, in the form of diminishing resources, polluted air and water. Have mercy on our foolishness and give us wisdom to be better stewards of this gift you have given to us called the earth. Forgiving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We isolate ourselves in many ways, from the community and from you, Lord. Many people feel alone and desperate, with no place to go and no one to turn. May your Church be a safe place for those who need to know that no matter what they have done or failed to do, you still love them. Let us be your house

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of forgiveness. May your healing power restore us to wholeness of body and soul by your reconciling Spirit. We lift up these sisters and brothers for your special blessing today... ... Forgiving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We thank you for all who have walked this earth with us, and who are no longer with us physically. Preserve us in the hope of seeing them again in your heavenly kingdom and keep us close in spirit until that day. Forgiving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: We know that you have heard us, O God: the prayers which we speak aloud and those which we are not able to utter. Gather all of our concerns and keep our loved ones in your care, for the sake of our savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

(The Sharing of the Peace that began when the congregation arrived is now shared with the Pastor at this time...)

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

• OFFERING

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

P: We offer these gifts not out of guilt for our misdeeds, but out of generosity towards the children whom you love. Accept and bless them in the spirit by which they are given, moving us to focus more on others than ourselves, for the sake of your kingdom on earth,

C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the "tie that Binds us together", let us pray as Jesus taught...

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

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• **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* **SENDING BLESSING**

P: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love.

C: **Amen.**

* **SENDING HYMN** **“Just As I Am”**

- 1 Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd’st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 2 Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 5 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come,
- 6 Just as I am; thy love unknown
has broken ev’ry barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ’s Love.

C: **Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!**

Postlude **“He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”** **Roxanne Groff**

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Lector	N/A
Acolyte	N/A
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Greeters	Dean Thompson
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
FaceBook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Monitor moles and freckles for changes in color and size

MIND: Go to a craft class

SPIRIT: Visit a shut-in



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This Week @ Trinity – July 19 thru July 26, 2020

Sun, July 19

10:30 am Worship Service

Tues, July 21

NewsLetter
DEADLINE

Fri, July 24

3:30 pm FISH Pantry @ 400 Markwith, Greenville OH

Sun, July 26

10:30 am Worship Service

Newsletter Deadline is this Tuesday, July 21st. Please send all news items to secretary@pitsburgtlc.org to be included in the August issue!



Scripture readings for next Sunday, July 26th
2 Corinthians 4:1-18

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**HOLY COMMUNION IS COMING
SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2020**



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