

1 Corinthians 7:29-35
"Free From the Cares of the World"
Third Sunday after the Epiphany

January 21, 2018
First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Intro]

Millions of Americans walk into airports every day. They arrive at the airport to either board a plane to somewhere or to pick up a loved one.

While waiting for the plane to board or to pick up your loved one, it is hard not to notice the bank of television screens at our nation's airports.

As we wait, we are inundated with the news, or what the news calls the news.

We see debate, arguing and name-calling, but not much of what is truly happening in our world. They focus on one topic of crisis and go over that same topic of crisis over and over again – from 4 a.m. until midnight. All the cable news cares about is their hope that we will be sucked in to what they are opining about. And many of us do. We get sucked in and we begin to worry about that single topic. But, eventually that topic takes the backburner for the next "breaking news topic of crisis" and we begin to worry about that issue.

You see, the news media wants its viewers to be consumed in the affairs that they care about.

Then we come to our homes, where we turn on our television sets. Are we inundating ourselves in our own homes with these topics of crisis?

Now, I'm not saying to turn off the news altogether, but instead to watch the news in moderation, so you do not begin to worry about things not worth worrying about.

As a former journalist, this is even hard for me, but I find myself happier when I don't hear the constant bickering of opinions that is being masqueraded as news.

[Time is Short]

In this morning's epistle lesson, the Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus Christ's return is coming. And for this hope of return, we should live as if Christ is imminently going to make His return.

Paul writes, "***The appointed time has grown very short***" (1 Cor. 7:29).

Paul is saying that Christians should live as people who are always aware that they may have to leave this world at any moment. As Christian believers, we should focus on eternal essentials. We should not let our lives be dominated by the world and its values.

When we realize that our time is short, we often have a changed perspective. We begin to focus on sacred things, rather than worldly things.

So, feel free to turn off the news for a time to focus on what truly matters – Jesus Christ.

[Christ Matters Most]

As you heard the epistle being read earlier, did you wonder what Paul was writing about with his statement on marriage? So, what is Paul saying?

Paul writes, "***From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it***" (1 Cor. 7:29b-31a).

No husbands, no wives? No mourning? No rejoicing? Buy as though they had nothing?

Paul here is reminding us of what really matters most – the return of Jesus Christ. Every worldly thing will pass away. Everything in the world is temporary. Paul is saying to not be consumed with the affairs of this life – for there is a better life to come through Jesus.

Martin Luther even touches on this in his famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" in the final stanza:

“And take they our life, Goods, fame, child, and wife, Though these all be gone, Our victory has been won; The Kingdom ours remaineth.” (LSB 656)

No matter what, the Triune God is there with us. Through thick and thin, He is there. Rich or poor, He is there. Christ will never forsake us.

[First Priority]

For this, God wants us to be free from anxieties. He wants us to be unconcerned with the world. He wants us to be without care with the world. He wants us to be worry free with the world.

Instead, God wants us to be focused on the things of the Lord and how to please the Lord.

However in today’s fallen world, husbands and wives tend to focus upon each other, rather than God.

Now, it is good and God pleasing to love your spouse. We should devote ourselves to our spouse. The marriage of a man and woman is a relationship that is founded upon Jesus Christ and that the man and wife are always there for each other.

A healthy marriage thrives on attending the needs and wishes of one’s spouse, but Jesus also set down priorities in this regard saying, ***“Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me”*** (Matthew 10:37).

The priority has been set. God made note of His demands with the First Commandment: ***“You shall have no other gods.”*** For which Luther writes, “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.”

Paul again states the reason to devote yourselves to Jesus Christ saying, ***“I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord”*** (1 Cor. 7:35).

This is for our own benefit. Yes, we are to continue to love and respect our husband or wife. But, at the same time, we are to put God first. God is the first priority.

God created the heavens and the earth for Him. Not for us.

[Life is Very Good]

God created life for His benefit and He saw that it was very good. For every child is a gift from God.

Since the United States' Supreme Court ruled in favor of legalizing abortion nationwide on January 22, 1973, the Church has cried out: "*Lord have mercy! Christ have mercy! Lord have mercy!*"

The Church has cried out to God to have mercy on those children and their mothers and/or fathers who have chosen to end the lives of their babies for worldly desires, or for pleasing the boyfriend or girlfriend, or for pleasing the husband or wife, instead of accepting this gift from God.

Even Norma McCorvey, the "Roe" in Roe v. Wade changed her views when she became a Christian in 1995. Since that time, she became active in the pro-life movement.

This past week, millions of people marched nationwide in support of life in hopes that one day the silent holocaust will come to an end. The good news is that Christ died for every sin and when we repent and ask God for forgiveness, He is there with open arms saying, "*I forgive you, now go and sin no more.*"

[Order of Creation]

God also created everything in good order. This good order is described by God in the first three chapters of Genesis.

Here is where God tells us of His order of creation. The Lord formed the man of dust from the ground (Genesis 2:7). Then God created a helper – Eve – for the man – Adam. God said, "***It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him***" (Genesis 2:18).

Here is where God creates and establishes marriage between one man and one woman. "***Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh***" (Genesis 2:24).

But in time, this marriage had its first argument, because of sin. The devil disguised as a serpent convinces Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit and so she does. Eve then gives that fruit to Adam and he eats.

Then God shows up knowing what had just happened and confronts Adam and Eve. Immediately, Adam blames Eve, but God will have none of that.

Adam said, “*The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate*” (Genesis 3:12).

You see, Adam was attempting to pass the blame to Eve, but God gave Adam Eve to be his helper.

To put it simply, Adam is ultimately responsible, because he is the head of his household. According to God, the head and the helper are not interchangeable. To be the head means he is responsible and accountable to what his helper does.

This order of creation relates to everything. This relates to the wider culture.

Now, a woman may take the reins on many issues in the marriage, such as finances and child disciplining or to whatever she is better at accomplishing, but it is the man who is ultimately responsible. The man is responsible for every decision, but his wife can give her input. This is the order of creation.

For us today, we may think, this is pretty backwards. After all, today’s world is all about equality. But this is God’s design. This is God promoting good order. This is God promoting family.

[The Son of God Submitted To His Father]

After all, Jesus Christ submitted to the will of His Father through His life, death and resurrection that gave us forgiveness of sins, opened eternal life and gave us salvation by grace through faith in Him and His promises. In a similar way, the wife submits to her husband and their children submit to their parents, because it is the husband and the parents who will do anything for each other.

Through submitting your undivided devotion to the Lord, you are following the will of God. You are following the order of creation. You are becoming more holy in your sanctified life.

We live this way, because of what Christ had done for us once and for all time. He sacrificed Himself for us, because of His love for us. Jesus Christ died hanging on the cross for us. He died of asphyxiation as he hung crucified lifeless on the cross after being beaten and stabbed. But it was not over. Three days later Christ also rose to life for us to prove He is the Son of God.

Because of Christ's death and resurrection, our faith is not in vain. In fact, our faith is strengthened each time we remember our baptism each Divine Service and partake of the Sacrament.

Through Christ alone, we are free from all anxieties. We are free from the cares of this world. For everything has been accomplished for us by our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.