



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Messenger

“PROCLAIM CHRIST, MAKE DISCIPLES, SERVE THE LORD”

625 W. Gibson Road, Woodland, CA * Phone 530-662-1935 * February 2020

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Saints at St Paul's,

The other day my daughter Grayce missed her ride to school with Jill. Jill leaves early and that means dad will be asked to give her a ride. That would have been fine if I had not just got up and just started my morning routine. So now I need to be ready in 10 minutes to get Grayce there with her comfortable amount of time to settle into class. So 20 minutes later we are getting in the vehicle and I have an anxious 12 year old girl rushing me. I have often used my driving as an example of what not to do, and an example of my own struggle with habitual sin.

I was rushing, and Grayce was already on the edge of her seat. As if leaning forward and clutching her school bag, ready to spring from the car would somehow make this trip to school go quicker. I was trying to ease her worries and was trying my best to hurry. Honestly I never see police officers on the way to school. I have commented to Jill that I think they should because people tend to drive very fast on Sports Park Dr. and Matmor Rd. Well, today they did have a police car sitting there. Today I was the one rushing to get my child to school on time. He saw me before I saw him, and I did what I could to slow down, but it was too late. Here I am now almost in front of the school, being pulled over.

Grace jumps from the car determined to get to class and walk the half block to get there. Here I am with no way to defend my actions and concerned about the financial cost of my rushing. Then my heart sank when he said I was 20 miles over. Twenty is the magic number where cost and point on your record go up exponentially.

What happened next was amazing. He handed back my license and said he was trying to get people to slow down. He walked back to his car and I was not sure what just happened. I checked again to see that my license was indeed returned to me and in my hand. I didn't even realize he was letting me go with hardly a word.

That is Mercy, a kindness and compassion and not giving the punishment my sin deserves. It is Grace because I have no claim to justify myself. I am caught and without any way to make my situation right on my own. Romans 11:6 tells us: *And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.*

With this comes two other thoughts: This grace has brought from me a real gratitude and a change of heart. I want to not speed out of gratitude and joy because my sin was forgiven. Second thought, by *getting caught sinning* it had an embarrassing effect on my daughter. My sin became a struggle for her in front of school and friends.

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Pastor's Message continued

Counting the cost of sin often does not come to mind until we are confronted by it. Romans 6:18 reads: *You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.* Being a slave to righteousness makes sense when you have been made fully aware of your error. Overwhelming gratefulness and a desire not to shame the ones I love is a powerful motivator. *Go in peace, Serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!* That is how I feel.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor David Hardin