



From the Heart of Your Shepherd

Parking Lot Theology: Winning the Argument or Saving the Soul

I was climbing back into the cab of the truck when she approached me, her dress flats clicking on the hot asphalt between the Discount Tire and the corner laundromat. The rumble of the diesel was drowning out her words, so I leaned out the window and inquired, “Yes, Ma’am, how can I help you?” But, come to find out, it wasn’t a question of what I could do for her, but what she could do for me. For she was a woman on a mission, a witness for Jehovah, the iconic pamphlets in hand. And she was eager to introduce me to a life in which I would find hope in this world.

I listened politely as she explained how hard day-to-day existence can be, how many global problems there are, how there are true answers to life’s difficult questions, and that God was the key to understanding it all. I took the pamphlets from her and slid them on the dashboard. My eyes took in the time—fantastic, already running way behind schedule. She was looking up and smiling, waiting for me to say something, anything, in response. I confess that my first impulse was simply to thank her and drive on to the next delivery. After all, there were places I needed to be; customers were waiting on their freight. But, overcome with a uncommon sense of compassion, I took the truck out of gear, set the brakes, killed the engine, looked her in the eye and said, “I’m sorry, Ma’am, but I can’t accept what you say is true, for you and I, unfortunately, we believe in two different gods.”

And so it began, a brief but honest discussion between two believers, of two opposing faiths, about things that really matter. We talked about the crucifixion. We talked about the Trinity. The divine nature of Jesus. Whether the Holy Spirit is a power or a Person. She talked, I talked, and we listened to each other. Whether my words made any impact on her or not, I’ll probably never know. She was a random stranger, and the likelihood of our paths ever crossing again is very remote. But as we talked, reciting Bible verses here and there, comparing and contrasting our distinctive confessions, I began to realize something about myself.

When I was in my mid-twenties, newly ordained into the ministry, when I had a theological disagreement with someone, my main objective was to win the argument. Whether the issue was large or small, pertaining to a chief doctrine of the Christian faith or some minor point of the church’s non-binding tradition, the opponent was someone to be converted to the right answer. They believed $2 + 2 = 5$, and I was there to show them it was really 4. Or they believed $2 + 2 = 4$, but my 4 was a little better than theirs. And, let it be said, there’s nothing wrong with that, especially if the discussion is about a subject to which God’s word gives a clear answer.

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Mission Statement

The mission of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran is to strengthen and support our members in their Christian faith through God’s Word, the Sacraments, education, prayer and fellowship; thereby preparing them to be witnesses of the Gospel in our community and the world, so that all who believe shall receive the gift of eternal life.

What was so often missing in those discussions over God's answer, however, was a genuine concern for the person with whom I was talking. What mattered most was the correct belief, not the person believing or rejecting it. My objective was to save the truth, to defend correct doctrine, but more times than not I was so zealous in my endeavor that I forgot that the truth was there to save the person, and the correct doctrine actually led lost souls into a relationship with the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

While listening to the woman reveal that she does not believe in the Trinity, and thus does not believe in the one true God, I experienced nothing short of sorrow for her—not anger because she rejected the truth; not arrogance because I had the right answer and she didn't; not a desire to win the gold in this theological debate. And that sorrow, joined with compassion, affected the manner in which I spoke with her. For when there is love for the truth, joined with love for the person, the tone of the discussion, and often the outcome, are vastly different than when naked zeal drives the debate.

From a blog entitled "Flying Scroll" by Chad Bird

I am a member of a conservative church body. In a few days, when it meets in convention, there will be matters up for debate, some minor and some major. Every time someone steps to the microphone to speak his or her mind, or gathers with a group of peers to talk about issues, what a difference it would make if love was in control of the tongue instead of pride or anger or party lines or political correctness or any of another host of possibilities. Would that in the church, those who love orthodoxy, always love the people to whom orthodoxy is God's gracious, saving gift. For, as someone once said, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." God grant that love bridle my tongue, and the tongues of my brothers and sisters in Christ, that when the truth is spoken, it is always spoken with a keen awareness that the listener is one for whom God himself was willing to die.

*Sincerely In Christ,
Pastor Grams+*



3rd Annual Rummage, Craft and Bake Sale Update

Do you know where your friends and neighbors will be August 3rd & 4th? At the St. Paul Rummage, Craft, and Bake Sale that's where!! Come along and you'll find one of a kind bargains, bakery you can't resist and enjoy a hot pretzel Saturday and plate lunch for only \$5 on Sunday. Sign up for a chance to win a quilt. See you there!!

St. Paul Charger News

Summer is quickly coming to an end. At St. Paul we have been busily preparing for the up-coming school year and are excited to start our 129th year of Christian Education. Our theme for the year is based on Philippians 2:5 which reads: Your attitude should be like that of Christ Jesus. We look forward to an exciting year of learning, serving, and growing.

Upcoming Events:

Teachers Report August 15
Back to School Night August 27 (5:00pm-7:00pm)

Registration for the 2013-2014 School Year

Registration for the 2013-2014 school year is still open. Please spread the word about our amazing school. Any questions about our 4K or elementary/middle school programs can be directed to Mrs. Kline at dkline@stpaullux.org or by calling the school office.

Hot Lunch Program Lead Position

St. Paul School is looking for a Lunch Coordinator the 2013-2014 school year. Hours needed are from 11:15am-12:30pm. This is a paid position. If interested please contact Mrs. Kline at 845-2095

School Signs

St. Paul Lutheran School offers a quality Christian education to children in 4K – 8th grade. To help promote this, yard signs have been created for advertisement purposes. If you would like to help promote our school and are willing to display a sign in your yard, they are available either in the meeting room at church or in the school office. Thank you for your support.

Vacation Bible School -- Athens

This year's Vacation Bible School was a GREAT success. Thank you to all of the children and families who participated and volunteered to make this year's event run so smoothly. The theme throughout the week was centered on God's love – God loves us all, God loves us and takes care of us, God loves us when others don't, God loves us and sent His son Jesus, and God loves us and wants us to share His love. What a powerful message to be sending to our children, and one we all should follow. "Just as I have loved you, you should love each other." John 13:34.

Staff for the 2013=2014 School Year

PK4	Mrs. Tiffany Dart and Mrs. Beth Budnik
Kindergarten	Mrs. Sherry Byrne
1-2 Grade	Ms. Heidi Schneider
3-5 Grade	Ms. Ruth Bernau
6-8 Grade	Mr. Ben Phelps
Principal	Mrs. Debbie Kline



Stewardship News & Views

End-of-life concerns affect us all. People in our families and in our congregations face terminal illness, pain and suffering, questions about purpose, decisions about beginning or withdrawing treatment, and whether or not to make such decisions in advance. We all “live with dying.”

Join us September 7th for Christian Stewardship at Life’s End

“The Dog Days of August”

Major league baseball players sometimes refer to August as the “*dog days of summer.*” August does seem to be one of those months that you simply want to get through. In the wheat growing regions of our country from Texas up to Canada the crops have been harvested and the fields are bare except for stubble and straw. The days are hot and dry accompanied with winds. It’s enough to make people long for September when things start all over again. ***“If we can just get through August then things will get back to normal.”***

Living and working as God’s stewards can sometimes feel like the “*dog days of August.*” Managing all of life and life’s resources seems like a never-ending job. And it is because we are stewards from birth to death. We are tempted to think of ourselves as owners rather than stewards or managers. But God is the true Owner of all things and He has entrusted to us a portion of that which belongs to Him with the expectation that we will manage those gifts wisely for His purposes. That can seem like chasing the wind—always managing and never owning. But for us as God’s children and stewards it is not so much an obligation as it is a privilege.

In life we normally want to get ahead and in that process may sacrifice our health and family in chasing after more and more. Jesus taught us that life is not a matter of accumulating material things but is rather the seeking first of His kingdom and His righteousness. Then, since our Heavenly Father knows what we need, He will provide it so we can be content and confident. St. Paul learned that truth well and gave us some wise counsel in Philippians 3:11b-12: ***“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”***

St. Paul knew that God is the Owner and Giver of life and everything associated with life. In most cases God blesses us beyond measure. However, He does not give us more than we can handle. When Jesus told the parable of the three stewards He indicated that the master gave each one a different amount to manage according to the individual steward’s ability (Matthew 25:15). Likewise, God gives us only as much as we can manage for His purposes. So when we think about the wise management of time, abilities, money, relationships and all the other things in life, we can do so without worry or the feeling that life as God’s stewards is like enduring the “*dog days of August.*” Because Jesus redeemed us to be God’s children we can live each day and work each day in a free and joyful way confident of the truth that we ***“can do everything through Christ who gives us strength.”*** (Philippians 4:13) Don’t just endure the “*dog days of August*” but make the most of each day as God’s redeemed stewards.

Courtesy of LCMS.org

Pastor Grams, Bonnie Lannbrecht, Lon Fager, Paul Janda



Holy Humor

It was show and tell in class and the theme was "My Religion". Three students stood up at the front of the class. The first said, "I'm Jewish, and this is my prayer hat." The second student said, "I'm Catholic and this is my rosary." The third student said, "I'm Lutheran, and this is my casserole."

Lena, New Hampshire

Faculty/Staff Contact Info

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3rd & 4th Grade: Ruth Bernau: rbernau@stpaullux.org
6th, 7th, & 8th Grade: Ben Phelps: bphelps@stpaullux.org
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Arlene Gruetzmacher –920-845-5048
Prayer Chain: Tina Peterson –920-836-5137



Flag Folding Ceremony

DVD's are available of the church service. Call the church office at 920-845-2095 and one of our volunteers will deliver it to you.

Need a ride to church? Please notify the church office for a ride to and from church services.

Newsletter Deadline: the 21st of the month.

Join us on Facebook: Search for St. Paul Lutheran Church and School and **LIKE** us today!