

Life Sunday 2014 – L.I.F.E – Living In Faith Everyday

Sermon Title: LIFE: Live In Faith Everyday!

Based on 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Author: Rev. Craig Michaelson, Faith Community Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, Nevada

Lord of LIFE, we pray that, by the power of Your Spirit, You would help us to *Live In Faith Everyday*. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

*Live In Faith Everyday*. It's easier said than done! It's one thing to have saving faith in Jesus as a gift of God's Spirit. It's another thing to live that faith everyday in trust and obedience to our Lord. There are strong forces working against us as we strive to *Live In Faith Everyday*. They are those old, familiar foes: the devil, the world, and our sinful nature. But they are constantly coming up with new ways to try to disrupt our lives and make it hard for us to *Live In Faith Everyday*. And they do it by redefining the meaning of L.I.F.E.

One redefinition of L.I.F.E. is this: *Live In Freedom Everyday*. It seems anything goes in our society now—especially in the realm of sexuality. The message we constantly hear is that we can have sex whenever we want and with whomever we want. Gay or straight. Young or old. Married or single. It doesn't matter. You are free to have sex whenever you want with whomever you want! Anything goes! Everything's o.k.! And to make sure you know it's o.k., our society constantly parades a bunch of athletes and politicians and actors in front of the cameras to assure you that you can *Live In Freedom Everyday*. And if anyone tells you otherwise, well, they are just being intolerant, old-fashioned, and close-minded.

Such a redefinition of L.I.F.E. leads to another redefinition of L.I.F.E.: *Live In Fear Everyday*. When moral chaos and confusion reign in a society, the result is fear. When all moral boundaries are gone, the result is fear. Young people fear they will miss out on something, or not be accepted, unless they go along with the crowd. Parents fear what will happen to their children if they do go along with the crowd!

Sadly, many give into their fear of missing out, or being left out, and they dive into the cesspool of sexual chaos. And they don't have to swim long before they realize some new fears: pregnancy, sexual disease, guilt, and shame, to name a few. And suddenly, L.I.F.E. takes on a whole new meaning: *Live In Failure Everyday*.

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And when that's what L.I.F.E. becomes, the natural response is to try to cover up our failure. It can happen to anyone. King David, a "man after God's own heart," went down that path with Bathsheba. Remember what happened?

It was spring time, the time when most kings went off to war with their armies. But King David stayed behind. We don't know why he stayed behind, but the account that follows may indicate his reason:

**"It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, 'Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?' So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, 'I am pregnant'"** (2 Samuel 11:2-5).

When King David saw Bathsheba, suddenly L.I.F.E. took on new meaning. King David saw this as an opportunity to exercise some sexual freedom. And he feared that if he didn't, he would miss out on something special. So he took advantage of the situation, of Bathsheba (although she didn't resist), and of her husband's absence, to enjoy the pleasure of the moment.

But that pleasure of the moment became King David's failure of a lifetime. What would he do? He immediately made plans to cover up his failure, and the guilt and shame it produced.

In King David's mind, this would be an easy cover-up. All he had to do was give Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, a break from his military service. Let him come home on leave for a while to spend some time with his wife. Then, when she begins to show, everyone, including Uriah, will assume that this is their child.

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But King David underestimated Uriah. Uriah loved his wife, but he also had an obligation to his country and his fellow soldiers. And he didn't feel right being home while his friends were in harm's way. Try as he did, King David couldn't get Uriah to spend the night with his wife.

So King David came up with another plan. He would send Uriah to the front lines, pull back support, and have him killed. Then, when Bathsheba's pregnancy became obvious, no one would know that Uriah wasn't the father.

King David had an innocent person killed in order to cover up his moral failure. And he thought in choosing to do that, he would be able to cover up the guilt and shame of his act. But his cover up didn't work. In fact, the guilt and shame increased.

Many today try to follow King David's example. But in this case, the innocent person who is killed is the baby in the womb. In an effort to cover up our guilt and shame from our moral failure, we have killed tens of millions of innocent victims. But the cover up doesn't work. The guilt and shame increase.

Listen to King David's words in Psalm 32:

**“For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer”** (Psalm 32:3-4).

King David's cover up didn't work. The weight of the guilt and shame crushed him emotionally, physically, and spiritually. We've all been there at times. We know how heavy that weight of guilt and shame can be. And on our own, there is nothing we can do to remove it.

Only God can remove the guilt and the shame. And that's what He wants to do! He doesn't want us to be crushed under the weight of our sin, and the guilt and shame that come with it. He doesn't want us to cover up our sin, because it doesn't work. He still sees it and it separates us from the kind of relationship He wants with us.

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God wants us to live in the freedom of His forgiveness! Instead of trying to cover up our sin, He wants us to confess our sin to Him so He can cover it with His forgiveness. And when we do, and when He does, what a wonderful blessing it is! Listen to these words from King David:

**“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit”**

(Psalm 32:1-2).

Instead of being burdened by the weight of his sin, King David was blessed with the wonder of God’s forgiveness! How did that happen? Listen to what he says:

**“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.’ And you forgave the guilt of my sin”** (Psalm 32:5 NIV).

King David confessed his sin. God covered his sin with forgiveness. Not only that, God forgave the *guilt* of his sin!

Guilt can be a good thing, when it is of divine origin. As in the case of King David, God’s Word through the prophet Samuel led King David to feel guilty over his sin and its consequences, and to confess that sin to God. David’s guilt was replaced by God’s grace. That’s good guilt.

But there’s another kind of guilt that keeps many people trapped. This guilt is of demonic origin. It’s the kind of guilt that Satan wants us to carry around every day, like a heavy trash bag, so we are constantly reminded of our past. And if Satan can keep reminding us and accusing us of our failure, then he can keep us carrying guilt over sins that we have already confessed and that God has already forgiven. And when that happens, it’s as if God’s forgiveness is rendered useless in our lives.

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We don't have to carry that kind of guilt. When we confess our sin, God removes the *guilt* of our sin. Jesus took all of our trash to the cross and nailed it there. We don't need to take it back and carry it around as a reminder. There's a better way to live!

We can *Live In Forgiveness Everyday!* It doesn't matter where we have been. It doesn't matter what we have done. It's in the past! Because we have God's forgiveness, we don't have to be paralyzed by our past.

We don't belong to our past. We belong to Him. And He has a great future in store for us! So we can live in the freedom of His forgiveness! We can *Live In Faith Everyday* because we are God's forgiven children!

God's Spirit guided Saint Paul's words to describe what it means to live as His children. In his first letter to the Christians in Corinth, we hear these words:

**“Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body”** (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

God's Word reminds us that our bodies are holy ground. They are sacred space. God's desire is that our bodies would be used for the pursuit of His holy purposes.

And why wouldn't we want to use our bodies in this way? God created our bodies in our mothers' wombs. Jesus redeemed our bodies on the cross. And the Holy Spirit dwells in our bodies through faith. God is the owner, and we are the tenants of our bodies. And because of His goodness and grace, we live rent free in them, now, and for all eternity.

If we are so special to God that He would create our bodies, redeem our bodies from sin, and dwell in our bodies through His Spirit, wouldn't we want to use our bodies in ways that please Him?

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That’s what Joseph wanted to do—he wanted to use his body in a way that pleased God. If there was ever a person who had to *Live in Faith Everyday*, it was Joseph! Forsaken by his family, sold into slavery, seduced by sensuality, it was Joseph. It’s not just our society that struggles with constant sexual temptation.

Imagine being in Joseph’s sandals.

**“Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, ‘Lie with me.’ But he refused and said to his master's wife, ‘Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?’”** (Genesis 39:6b-9)

Joseph was obviously a handsome man. And Potiphar’s wife thought he would be easy pickings. What servant boy wouldn’t accept such an offer from such a notable woman? Especially when the offers continued to come!

You would expect that such an invitation would cause Joseph’s male ego to go crazy. But it didn’t. It couldn’t. Joseph belonged to God. And in the face of temptation, he chose to *Live In Faith Everyday*. He chose to be faithful to his Heavenly Master, and to his earthly master. He realized that to do otherwise would be to commit a great sin and wickedness against his God.

Joseph did the good thing. He did the godly thing. That doesn’t guarantee that the world will accept it and appreciate it. Although Joseph was faithful to God, he ended up the victim of false charges and injustice.

But by God’s grace, he continued to *Live In Faith Everyday*. And God blessed him in everything he did. And in the end, because God helped him to *Live In Faith Everyday*, Joseph was able to speak these amazing words concerning what his brothers and others had done to him:

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**“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50:20, NIV).**

By God’s grace, Joseph was empowered to *Live In Faith Everyday*. And his life of trust and obedience was blessed by God. As children of our Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we have also been created, redeemed, and sanctified to *Live In Faith Everyday* by living lives of trust and obedience. And as we do, we will be used by God to show the world there is a better way—His way!

So, *Live In Faith Everyday*, for Jesus’ sake, and the world’s sake! Amen!