

Life Sunday Sermon 2016

1 Peter 1:1-2 “By God’s Mercy, We are Given Life!”

Pastor Kevin Olson, Bethel Lutheran Church (CLBA), Joice, Iowa

www.lutheransforlife.org

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you” (1 Peter 1:1-2).

God is our maker, our sanctifier, and our Savior. He gives us meaning and life. At least once each day, if not many times a day, it is good to step back and consider what is really important. Our lives are crammed full of countless micro-matters—things like passwords (with both upper case and lower case letters as well as a few numbers thrown in for security!), keys, budgets, schedules, text messages, doctor appointments, car maintenance, shopping, cooking and eating, laundry—you understand what I’m saying. We are so busy doing all of the micro nitty-gritty matters of life that it is easy to dismiss and not appreciate the big things that matter the most. Sometimes it seems like nearly everyone is in peril of living out their lives with blinders on, seeing and thinking about only the “here and now” or “What do I have to do next just to get through this crazy day?”

The Apostle Peter wrote the first epistle bearing his name for the express purpose of encouraging new Christians to think about the big—macro—spiritual matters of life. New Christians of the first century found themselves pushed out of Jerusalem and pushed out of the land of Israel, and they wound up living many miles away in areas north, east, and west of their native home.

It was not pleasant for them to find themselves away from the only home that they had known and loved, becoming “exiles” in the mass dispersion that took place at that time. If there

Life Sunday Sermon 2016

1 Peter 1:1-2 “By God’s Mercy, We are Given Life!”

Pastor Kevin Olson, Bethel Lutheran Church (CLBA), Joice, Iowa

www.lutheransforlife.org

ever was a time to meditate on the really essential matters of life, Christians of the first century were very much in need of thinking and meditating on the things that were truly important.

Speaking as one with great authority, that is, one who had personally walked and talked with Jesus, Peter writes with bold, sweeping spiritual truths. Truths such as, the Father knew all about each of us long before we knew Him, in fact, even before we were formed in our mother’s womb. Clearly, God knows us intimately and with foreknowledge. As the prophet Jeremiah writes concerning his own relationship to God: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). God our great Creator knew all about Jeremiah before he came into this world, and He likewise knows and loves you very much! “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth,” King Solomon counsels (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Consider often how worthy our Creator God is of your worship, awe, and meditation.

Second, Peter continues by pointing out that it is the Spirit, who, with God’s Word, brings about true faith, and then He sustains and strengthens our faith. In addition, it is the Lord Himself who causes us to do good works and brings about holiness, a holiness and accompanying true sorrow for sin that is simply not possible through efforts solely of our own.

Sanctification is of God, and even our ability to love others and love God is permanently bonded to the fact that “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). On this day, let us give thanks to God for the vital work of the Spirit in our lives and the divine life that He brings. All life ultimately comes solely from God, both our physical and our spiritual life!

Third, the apostle reminds us that it is election in the Savior that permits us to be born again to a living and authentic hope.

Life Sunday Sermon 2016

1 Peter 1:1-2 “By God’s Mercy, We are Given Life!”

Pastor Kevin Olson, Bethel Lutheran Church (CLBA), Joice, Iowa

www.lutheransforlife.org

Just as Jesus is Himself the “faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead” (Revelation 1:5), so also we have been set free from our sins by faith and trust in Him. Just as He was resurrected on Easter morning, so also will all those who are in Him be raised to eternal life. Where Jesus is, there is life, and life in abundance: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26). And, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b).

How good on this day to consider the big—macro—important matters of life and not just think about the less important matters! God is our Maker, God is our Sanctifier, and God is our Savior. It is God who gives life; it is God who gives meaning, clarity, hope, and direction in our journey through life. “The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance” (Psalm 16:5-6). May God’s grace and peace multiply in abundant surplus to you! By God’s great mercy and kindness, we are given life!