

Sermon Series: Front-page Faith—Lord of Life Lutheran Church—Westfield, IN—2/3/2002

Title: “The Great Escape”

Text: Proverbs 23: 20-21; 29-35 & 1 Corinthians 6: 12-14; 19-20

Introduction: Ills.: The Power of Addiction

Theme: Being a “*new creation*” in Christ Jesus a believer comes to realize that chemical and substance abuse and all forms of addictive behavior are the antithesis of the full life which Jesus comes to bring to us.

Why do we want to run away from life

- We realize all too quickly the hard, cold truth about life in a fallen world
 1. *Dysfunctional relationships*
 2. *Broken bodies*
 3. *Dead-ended jobs*
 4. *Circumstances* that are not-so-coincidentally destruction prone and violent
- We know all too well what we are really like
 1. *Fallible* (“*I don't do the good I want to do. Instead, I do the evil that I don't want to do.*” Romans 7:19)
 2. *Self-centered* (“*Someone may say, 'I'm allowed to do anything,' but not everything is helpful.*” 1 Corinth 6:12a)
 3. *Mortal* (“*All people are like grass, and all their beauty is like a flower of the field. The grass dries up and the flower drops off.*” 1 Peter 1: 24)

The danger of using “things” to help us escape

- Addictive life styles and actions become an opium to an exasperated life
 1. Definition of addiction: *addiction is characterized by a dependence upon a human activity (relationships, romance, sex, gambling, spending, indebtedness, power, work, television, jogging, etc) or chemical substance which numbs an individual to reality and most often becomes self-destroying of the person practicing it.*
 2. Tantalizing with mirages of physical and emotional highs which may be missing in many areas of that persons life
 3. **PRINT AND READ PROVERBS 23: 29-30**
 4. Promising a tomorrow but not being able to fulfill the day (**PRINT AND READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6: 12-13**)
- Jumping from one problem into another problem
 1. De-possessing us of our resources and blessings (**PRINT AND READ PROVERBS 23: 20-21**)
 2. Lulling us into conduct, behavior, and life-styles that, at the least, make us look silly and bring shame on us
 - a. **PRINT AND READ PROVERBS 23: 33-34**
 3. Getting us “hooked” into a destructive life cycles that we know are destructive
 - a. **Ills.: Self Destructive Habits**
 - b. **PRINT AND READ PROV 23: 35**

The solution to facing the trials of living

- Know what real living is and begin living it
 1. Avoiding those who would get you hooked into an addictive habit (*Prov. 23: 20-21*)
 - a. “*Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."*” 1 Cor. 15:33
 2. Choosing attitudes, conduct, words into your life which befit the temple which you are
 - a. **PRINT/READ 1 COR 6:19**
 - b. **Ills.: Yogurt commercial:** “*My body is a temple.*”—but whose?
- Know who your real master is and begin serving him
 1. Do you really want to be controlled by the next drink, the affair, the needle/pill, the job, the diet/food?
 2. “*I'm allowed to do anything, but I won't allow anything to gain control over my life. . You were bought for a price. So bring glory to God in the way you use your body.*” 1 Cor 6: 12, 20
 3. **Ills.: Lincoln free slaves**

- Know why ***real power*** is available to avoid the addiction or to stop it in its tracks
 1. ***Resurrection power***
 - a. “*God raised the Lord, and by his power God will also raise us.*” *1 Cor 6:14*
 - b. Your at your baptism when the Holy Spirit came to make you “his temple”
 2. ***God given will-power***
 - a. “*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.*” *Titus 2:11-12*

The Power of Addiction

This fall, for the first time in 47 years, the tuna are running only 30 miles off Cape Cod. And they are biting! All you need to catch one is a sharp hook and some bait. And the rewards for doing so are substantial. Rumor has it that Japanese buyers will pay \$50,000 for a nice bluefin. That’s why many would-be fishermen are ignoring Coast Guard warnings and heading out to sea in small boats. What these new fishermen don’t realize is the problem is not catching a tuna—the problem comes after they’re caught. On September 23, the *Christi Anne*, a 19-foot boat, capsized while doing battle with a tuna. That same day the 27-foot boat *Basic Instinct* suffered the same fate, while *Official Business*, a 28-footer, was swamped after it hooked onto a 600-pound tuna. The tuna pulled it underwater. These fishermen underestimated the power of the fish they were trying to catch. That is what temptation does to us. It takes us by surprise. It looks great on the surface. Only after we hook into it do we discover its strength. *Citation: Kent Edwards, South Hamilton, Massachusetts*

Self-destructive habits

While staying with my friends Tim and Jill Jones, I watched their hamster, Hammy, in his little cage. Hammy has a warm nest of cedar shavings to curl up in, a water bottle to drink from, and best of all, a wheel he can run inside of. He has everything a hamster could want or need. But Hammy refuses to run inside his running wheel. Instead, he has come up with what he thinks is a better idea. Hammy climbs up on TOP of the wheel, turns over on his back on the top of the wheel, and stretches out. Gradually the wheel starts to turn, and Hammy's entire body rolls with it, head first. The wheel picks up speed and spins faster and faster until CLUNK! Hammy's head smacks on the bottom of the cage. Hammy gets up, shakes himself, apparently hurt from the unexpected sharp blow on his head. But what does Hammy do? He climbs back up on top of the wheel, turns over, stretches himself out, and gets ready to clunk his head again. Why? Why would a hamster who has everything he needs disregard the wheel's proper use and do something that only hurts himself? And why, even after that, would he do it again? The bigger question is, why do humans, who are supposedly smarter than hamsters, sometimes do the same thing?

Lincoln Frees Slave

There is an old story that Abraham Lincoln went down to the slave block to buy a slave girl. As she looked at the white man bidding on her, she figured he was another white man going to buy her and then abuse her. He won the bid, and as he was walking away with his property, he said, "Young lady, you are free." She said, "***What does that mean?***" "*It means you are free.*" "***Does that mean,***" *she said, "that I can say whatever I want to say?"* Lincoln said, "*Yes, my dear, you can say whatever you want to say.*" "***Does that mean,***" *she said, "That I can be whatever I want to be?"* Lincoln said, "*Yes, you can be whatever you want to be.*" "***Does that mean I can go wherever I want to go?***" He said, "*Yes, you can go wherever you want to go.*" The girl, with tears streaming down her face, said, "***Then I will go with you.***"

Proverbs 23:20-35

²⁰Do not associate with those who drink too much wine, with those who eat too much meat, ²¹because both a drunk and a glutton will become poor. Drowsiness will dress a person in rags. . . .²⁹Who has trouble? Who has misery? Who has quarrels? Who has a complaint? Who has wounds for no reason? Who has bloodshot eyes?

³⁰Those who drink glass after glass of wine and mix it with everything. ³¹Do not look at wine because it is red, because it sparkles in the cup, because it goes down smoothly. ³²Later it bites like a snake and strikes like a poisonous snake. ³³Your eyes will see strange sights, and your mouth will say embarrassing things. ³⁴You will be like someone lying down in the middle of the sea or like someone lying down on top of a ship's mast, saying, ³⁵"They strike me, but I feel no pain. They beat me, but I'm not aware of it. Whenever I wake up, I'm going to look for another drink." [GW]

1 Cor. 6:12-20

¹²Someone may say, "I'm allowed to do anything," but not everything is helpful. I'm allowed to do anything, but I won't allow anything to gain control over my life. ¹³Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food, but God will put an end to both of them. However, the body is not for sexual sin but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. ¹⁴God raised the Lord, and by his power God will also raise us. . . .¹⁹Don't you know that your body is a temple that belongs to the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit, whom you received from God, lives in you. You don't belong to yourselves. ²⁰You were bought for a price. So bring glory to God in the way you use your body. [GW]