

Sermon Series: “Names of the Passion”—Lord of Life, Westfield – Good Friday – March 21, 2008

Title: “Lord of Love”

Intro: Ills.: “that’s a child only his mother could love”

Text: 1 Tim. 1:12-17 – ¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. ¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Jesus’ love is bigger than any sin you and I commit

- We don’t deserve to be loved -- why it takes “mercy,” “grace,” and “love”(13/14)
 1. Often we focus on our sin/failure, and so believe God has stopped loving us
 - a. *Laws were added to increase the failure. But where sin increased, God's grace increased even more. Rom 5:20*
 2. Jesus is the only answer to despair as our “hyper-grace” supply (14)
- We are not capable undoing our sin (worst of sinners) that is why it takes God (15)
 1. Paul, the devil to the early Christian (13), becomes Apostle to Gentiles
 2. What have you done (do you even know) which seems so unforgivable or makes you an ‘enemy of the state?’
 - a. **Ills.: Transforming Forgiveness**

Jesus’ love makes no consequence of our sin insurmountable

- Not only redeeming our life but also our trials so they work to the purpose of our salvation
 1. *But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator . . ."Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. "For I am the LORD your God, "Since you are precious in My sight, Since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life. Isaiah 43:1-4*
 2. God does not promise to remove the consequence or trial but to hold us up so that we are not swallowed up by it
 3. *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39*
- Learning to trust his love in the aftermath of forgiveness
 1. *He has said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 2 Cor. 12:9*

Jesus’ love has a bigger plan than our own, individual salvation story

- God does not just have you in mind when he loved you into his grace through Jesus
1. **Ills.:** *Eight Hundred Pacos*
- God uses you and me (like Paul) as the poster child of his saving plan of grace (16)
- Praise be to God, the Father, for his indescribable gift of love in Jesus (17)

Transforming Forgiveness

It is recorded of a certain Chinese emperor that, upon learning that his enemies had started an insurrection in a distant province, he said to his officers:” Come, follow me, and we shall quickly destroy them.” On his arrival the rebels submitted to him, and all expected that he would take out his signaled revenge. Instead of this, the captives were treated with the utmost humanity. “How can you treat your avowed enemies this way?” cried his minister. Your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed, and yet you have pardoned them.” “I promised, to destroy my enemies,” the emperor said. “I have fulfilled my word, for, they are enemies no longer. I have made them into my friends.”

Eight Hundred Pacos

Ernest Hemingway wrote a story about a father and his teenage son. In the story, the relationship had become somewhat strained, and the teenage son ran away from home. His father began a journey in search of that rebellious son. Finally, in Madrid, Spain, in a last desperate attempt to find the boy, the father put an ad in the local newspaper. The ad read: "Dear Paco, Meet me in front of the newspaper office at noon. All is forgiven. I love you. Your father." The next day, in front of the newspaper office, eight hundred Pacos showed up. They were all seeking forgiveness. They were all seeking the love of their father. **George Munzing, "Living a Life of Integrity," Preaching Today, Tape No. 32.**