

Nbr. 34 – May, 2021

### **Speaking the Unspoken Blessing**

The Gospel according to St. Luke starts with Zacharias, the father of John the Baptizer, on duty as a priest in the temple. The angel Gabriel meets him there and tells him of the son he was about to have. When Zacharias proves doubtful about this, the Lord renders him silent until the child is born. So when Zacharias emerged from the temple that day, he did not speak the benediction. He couldn't.

What about this unspoken blessing? You might say it seems to hover in limbo through Luke.

Soon Jesus comes onto the scene. Would He give the blessing we have been waiting for?

Well, not at His birth! But not at His baptism years later, either. He did not speak it at the synagog in Nazareth, or even from the cross. Not until He rose from death and said that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached to all nations in His name does it come into view. "He raised His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was taken up to heaven" (Luke 24:50-51).

*See? WOW!* Jesus spoke the "unspoken blessing." He speaks it to us. He speaks it thru us.

### **Continuing Education this summer . . . near you**

Dr. R. Reed Lessing of Concordia University, St. Paul will teach "Overcoming Life's Sorrows," a study of Jeremiah. This Concordia Theological Seminary continuing education course, to be conducted on June 21-23 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Decatur, is filled with implications for evangelism. Tell the Good News in times of sorrow!

Teachers and laypeople are welcome to take this course, in addition to pastors. Contact Pastor Matthew Versemann at (217) 420-0586 or e-mail [pastorversemann@msn.com](mailto:pastorversemann@msn.com)

### **Recruiting Pastors and Other Church Workers**

A convocation on church worker recruitment, particularly that of pastors, will be held by the Shelby, Effingham, and Altamont Circuits at St. John Lutheran Church, Effingham from 3 to 6 p.m. on Pentecost Sunday, which is May 23.

Dr. Dale Meyer, President Emeritus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will be the featured speaker. Representatives of the seminaries, Concordia-Chicago, and Concordia-Wisconsin will be there, along with folks from LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces and Camp CILCA. Attendees will be able to choose among several interest sessions.

Register for this convocation by May 7 at [www.stjohnsLCMS.net](http://www.stjohnsLCMS.net)

Don't miss the promotional video at <https://youtu.be/gpHTOEcWpAU>

### **Prison Ministry Video**

The CID video "Prison MinisTRY: Will You TRY?" has just been released. It aims to interest pastors and others in helping with prison ministry.

There is a lot of evangelism work that can be done with those in prisons or jails throughout Central Illinois. This evangelistic frontier can all too easily be overlooked. Let's not overlook it!

In the new video, veteran CID Prison Chaplain Chuck Olander describes his own involvement with prison ministry. He also offers suggestions for bringing the Gospel to prisoners.

See the video from the CID website: <http://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-missions-prison.html>

If you have any questions about the video or about prison ministry opportunities, please contact Pastor Rod Blomquist, CID's new Prison Ministry Coordinator, by e-mailing [prisonministry@cidlcms.org](mailto:prisonministry@cidlcms.org)



Worth considering:

**All**

Have you noticed how many times the oft-termed “Great Commission” uses the word “all?”

Most readily may come to mind, “Go, make disciples of *all* nations,” *panta ta ethnee* in Greek. This expression refers to the nations in their entirety. Christ died for them all and rose again. All need to hear of Him. They ought to hear. This remains a huge responsibility for the church, one that can only lead us to confess our neglect and our need for God’s help. Jesus makes no exceptions about who should be baptized and taught.

They are to be taught to keep *all* things that Jesus commanded. This means every kind of thing, the various teachings He handed down. Chief of these is the Gospel message of salvation, yet all the articles of Christian doctrine are included. Paul acted accordingly in Ephesus. He recalled, “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Evangelism is not to leave people with a shrunk-down “mini-Gospel.” It begins the teaching of all things that Jesus commanded.

Audacious aims: *all* nations, *all* things! Maybe we could fudge the word a bit and say: “ALL-dacious.” How can the church dare to think so big?

Have you ever heard someone say, “Who died and made you king?” Well, leaving aside the reference to *king* for the moment . . . who died and gave us these “ALL-dacious” aims? Who died – and rose – and ascended – to do so? Who indeed?

Another *all* precedes those noted above. Before Matt. 28:19-20 came 28:18. Jesus said: “*All* authority” – every kind of authority – “in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” The One Who authorizes us is the Man Who is also God, the crucified and risen Lord. He makes us ALL-dacious!

**Why What You Just Read is Important**

Let me give you one reason, anyway, why the point of the item in the left-hand column of this

page stands out as important. It is a recent finding of the Barna research group.

Barna found that close to 50% of practicing Christians born between 1984 and 1998 indicated at least a measure of agreement with a surprising statement. The statement said something like this: people should *not* share their beliefs with anyone else in hopes that the other person would eventually share this same faith. Almost half of Christians in the millennial generation agreed!

Now, ironically, this very generation of Christians does seem to recognize the importance of sharing their faith, Barna reports. Furthermore, members of this generation feel that they are equipped to do this, more than their elders feel so equipped. Evidently, though, they still wonder whether they should actually go about doing it.

Do they – do we -- really have authority to do this? Indeed so, from the exalted Christ Himself! Moreover, Christ sweeps us up into His own great mission to seek and save the lost.

This becomes a point to be sure to make with younger Christians. Yet they are by no means the only ones who would benefit from hearing this.

It might be noted that Trinity Sunday falls on the last Sunday of May. Matthew 28:18-20 is not the Gospel lesson, not even in the 3-year lectionary this year. However, this passage could be quoted and commented upon, even as an aside, in a Trinity Sunday sermon or Bible class.

**Summer hiatus**

This will be the last See? **WOW!** issue until September. The Lord be with you this summer!

-- Ken Schurb [kschurb@cidlcms.org](mailto:kschurb@cidlcms.org)

