

Life Sunday & Lutheran Schools Week Sunday
Sunday, January 21, 2018

1 Corinthians 6:19b-20, **“You are not your own, for you have been bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”**

Dear Christians and especially today, our DLS students. We are thankful that you are here today to glorify God with your bodies as you sing and play the chimes.

Friday was the 45th annual March for Life in Washington D.C. Tens of thousands of our fellow citizens gathered in the streets of the capitol to affirm life and to speak out against abortion. DLS had its own little March for Life. Our students and teachers stood outside our school, in plain sight of our community, and bore witness to the fact that every human being, no matter how young, how old, how sick or disabled or impaired, is a precious gift of God to be cherished and protected and cared for.

President Trump, in his remarks at the March for Life said the same thing. He said, “...you believe that every life is sacred, that every child is a precious gift from God.” Yes, we do. Each of you is a precious gift of God. Each of you has worth and value apart from what you can or cannot do, simply because you exist. Your lives too are to be cherished and protected and care for.

But today we want to ask the question, “Why?” Why is every human being precious? Why is every human life to be cherished and protected and cared for? Why do each of us here and every other human person have inherent worth and value?

Most often we answer that question this way, “Every human being is precious because every human being has been made by God. Every human life is to be cherished and protected and cared for because every human life is cherished, protected, and cared for by God. Every human person has inherent worth and value because every human person is God’s handiwork, created in His own image.”

We believe that and we teach that to our students here at DLS. They are taught to say, along with Luther, **“I believe that God has made ME; that He has given ME MY body and soul, eyes, ears, and all MY members; MY reason and all MY senses and still takes care of them.”**

That is true. The Bible tells us so. We chanted the words of Psalm 139 earlier, words that say that very thing, **“For You (LORD) formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well.”**

But St. Paul gives us another reason why we should view every human being as precious; why we should cherish and protect and care for every human life; why we should see every human person as having inherent value and worth.

St. Paul writes to the Corinthians and us, **“You are not your own, for you have been bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”** God gave us and every human being life. But sin, which entered the world through Adam, has doomed us to die. Because of the sin that lurks in our nature and expresses itself through our bodies, what God formed and knit together in the womb is now subject to death and decay.

We here at Trinity and at DLS know that all too well. Even now we are mourning the death of Brian Clem, the custodian at Trinity and the DLS Trinity campus, a fellow member of Trinity congregation, and a brother in Christ. Tomorrow some of our DLS students will once again gather in this sanctuary to worship and to sing as we remember God’s grace and goodness to Brian and to us all.

But St. Paul reminds us that the same God who created us bought us back to Himself. These bodies and souls that were lost to sin have been reclaimed by God, purchased by Him to be His own once again and forevermore. These bodies and souls that were doomed to eternal death now have the hope of everlasting life. But buying us back, purchasing us to be His again, forgiving our sins and giving us new and eternal life came at a great price to God. It cost Him His own precious Son—Jesus.

St. Paul writes to the Galatians, **“But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law to redeem—to buy back—those who were under the Law.”** Our students are taught to say with Luther that Jesus **“has redeemed ME, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won ME from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil. Not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.”**

Every human being is precious because every human being, including you, has been loved by God and bought by Christ. Every human life is to be cherished and protected and cared for because Jesus cherished every human life more than His own. He willingly went to the cross and gave His life in exchange for every human life—including yours. Every human person has value and worth because Jesus gladly bore all our sin in His sinless body and poured out His holy, precious blood to win forgiveness and life for you and me and every human person. That’s why the theme for Lutheran Schools week is “It’s All about Jesus.” Because it is!

The Corinthians, to whom St. Paul writes, had a problem. Now that they were Christians, now that they were “spiritual,” they thought their bodies no longer mattered. They thought that they were free to do whatever they wanted to do with their bodies—including sin! They thought they were free to live in sexual immorality. Who cares about the body? It’s the soul that counts!

You and I fall into that same trap. At the Women’s March in Washington D.C. yesterday one participant carried a poster that read, “Our bodies! Our Minds! Our Power!” There’s the problem. We think we belong to ourselves. We want to do with our bodies what we want to do. And often times, what we want to do with our bodies is sin.

But God cares about the body. God cares about your body. God cares about how we, His people, live our lives in our bodies! God the Father created you, the entire you, body and soul. Jesus, by His cross and empty tomb, bought you, the entire you, body and soul. Now, having washed you clean of sin in Holy Baptism, having made your body a temple of the Holy Spirit, God calls you to glorify Him in your body—in the things you do with your body; in the way you live in your body.

And so, St. Paul tells the Corinthians and us not to live in sexual immorality, but to flee from it! It's called keeping the 6th Commandment. Luther explains it this way, **“We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do and husband and wife love and honor each other.”**

But glorifying God in our bodies is more than just keeping the 6th Commandment, fleeing from sexual immorality, and honoring marriage. It means using our bodies, our physical labors, and the resources generated by those labors to help and support our neighbor in every physical need. It means clothing our neighbor's naked body, giving food and drink to our neighbor's hungry and thirsty body, providing shelter for our neighbor's homeless body. It means visiting and caring for the bodies of our sick, elderly, and disabled neighbors—including those neighbors that our culture would have us euthanize or neglect. It means defending the lives of the unborn from abortion and supporting and encouraging young mothers and families who have chosen to keep and care for their children. It means bearing and caring for our own children within the estate of marriage—all 15-21 of them, right 7th & 8th graders?

It means using our mouths to speak comfort and forgiveness to families and individuals who are overcome with guilt and shame from the decision to abort a child or euthanize a loved one. It means using our mouths to assure repentant neighbors who have plunged headlong into sexual immorality that Jesus, in His body, died and rose again for them too; to purchase and win them from ALL sin, from death, and from the power of the devil. It means using our mouths to speak the purifying word of the Gospel to those who feel unclean, unlovable, and unforgivable because of some sin they've committed or some sin that has been committed against them.

It means walking beside them to the baptismal font where they can be washed clean of sin, be made alive together with Christ, and be raised to newness of life in Him. It means bringing them eventually to the communion rail where they eat and drink with their own mouths, the very body and blood of Jesus that He gave and poured out on the cross and by which He glorified His Father and saved us sinners.

Your life is precious. So is your neighbor's. You have been created by God. You have been bought by Jesus with a price. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit. You are not our own! You belong to God! And one day, your body with which you glorify God now, will be raised from the dead to live before God and glorify Him forever.

In Jesus' name
Amen