

Sermon followed by Service – Aug. 17, 2025 - 1 Corinthians 1:2-9

Did you feel it? Did you feel the slap? If you didn't feel the slap, did you notice me getting slapped? It hurt. But then, did you feel, did you see the smile?

What am I talking about? I'm talking about getting slapped with one of these [a Bible], not slapped by the book itself, but slapped by the words in the book. Have you ever sat down with your Bible and felt slapped by what you read or heard? And then the more you listened, the more you read, you couldn't help but smile?

That's what our lesson did to me; it's what our lesson does for me. What do I mean? I was reading Paul: "**I always thank my God for you**" And whap, Paul slapped me. I don't always do that, do I? I don't always thank God for us. Just last week during Family Bible Hour, I let out a complaint: "What's wrong with us that we can't RSVP?" "We have two new teachers, gifts from God, God's answers to our prayers ... we have new members wanting to be part of our St. John family! Thank you, Lord! So why?" And our family at Family Bible Hour ... they were such good family to me; they slapped me upside the head with a smile - "Look how many did RSVP; look how many are coming. The weekend before school starts, people are busy. It's a miracle, a work of God, that anybody is coming." I needed that. And they were right. In our busy world, in our distracting world, with the way our world consumes and then spits out hearts and souls, with the way we let our world consume us, it's a miracle, a work of God, when anyone wants to be part of what God is doing. So I thank God for you. I thank God for Matthew, and Celia with Zack and Claire. I thank God for Bob and Pam. I thank God for all for you - not just for being here right now, but for your partnership in ministry in so many different ways. I thank God for you.

Paul slapped me, and it hurt. But the more I looked at what Paul wrote, the more I listened to Paul, the more I smiled. Did you hear what Paul said about me, about you, about us? We are the **“church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called holy.”** We’ve heard that before - haven’t we? - perhaps so many times it goes in one ear and out the other. But for the Corinthians, Paul knew it would be something special. The Corinthians knew their reputation as Corinthians; they knew where they came from in this world. You know that water that came up out of the drains in basements across Milwaukee last weekend - stinky, slimy, toxic with poo ... for so many that was the Corinthian way of life and love - stinky, slimy, toxic and soul destructive. And yet they liked to think of themselves as smarter and stronger, and to put others down and in their place. If they had, if they could, they used what they had to look out for themselves and they did what they wanted to please themselves. If they didn’t have, if they couldn’t, they felt worthless and were stepped on as worthless. In their world, living free meant living for self. In their world, image and presentation were so much more important than truth. I could go on, but did you notice? Did you notice how the Corinthian world back then was so much like our world today? A world Paul showed to be dying and damned ... and those living the life of that world would be dying and damned.

But what did Paul get to tell the congregation at Corinth? What did they get to hear? God didn’t consider them to be part of the Corinthian world; God didn’t see them as part of the world to be damned. Instead, God saw them as his church, as his people, people called and gathered out of the world to be together with him [God]. Instead of being part of this dying and damned world, they were sanctified, saved and set apart from the stink pit, saved and set apart from the burn pile. They were washed clean of this world’s filth; set apart as saved and special - as holy.

Think of what that would mean for someone feeling shamed and guilty - trashed by the world and trashed by themselves. Think of what it would mean for someone feeling stepped on and small, worthless and pointless. Think of what it would mean for people who see their sin before God. Instead of shameful and guilty, instead of worthless and pointless, instead of godless, hopeless, helpless, and damned - they were ... we are the called and gathered, the church of God himself. They were and we are set apart from the world, set apart from our past; they were and we are washed, clean, forgiven. They were and we are set apart as saved by God and special to God - as holy. Doesn't that put a smile on your face?

Now we might wonder: "How? Why?" Did you notice where Paul points us? Nine times in nine verses, 8 times in our lesson - in a world supercharged on self, Paul super-charges his message with Jesus; five times Paul points to Jesus as Lord. When you think of Jesus as Lord, what comes to mind? Christ as King with power and authority, not just over us, but for us. How do we know not just "over us" but "for us"? Almost right after our lesson, Paul points to the cross - Christ crucified. Christ as King and Christ crucified don't seem to fit together, until what? God adds Easter. With Easter, Christ crucified means our sins are paid for; with Easter, Christ crucified means you are forgiven! And with Easter, we see the crucified Christ as Lord has power and authority not just over us, but for us. He broke and he holds power over sin and Satan; he broke and he holds power over death. Jesus as Lord holds power over everything that could be against us. And Jesus as Lord holds power over everything God has for us. What does that mean for us? As Lord, Jesus has the power and authority - he has what it takes - to make life right for us - and that's his promise.

How? What do I want? A snap of the finger. A snap of the finger and we're all healthy. Another snap of the finger and we're all tight with God and tight with each other. Another snap of the finger and everything I say and do, everything we say and do, is always right and always good for the people God gives us. And then another snap of the finger and we all wake up in heaven.

Paul doesn't promise that - does he? - and so we sometimes miss what Jesus does have for us. In our lesson, Paul sees and promises that Jesus had already given the Corinthian congregation everything they needed. Jesus had already "enriched" them in every way. In the future, he would make them strong. On the last day, he would find them blameless and ready for heaven. And in the meantime, what? With Easter, "our labor in the Lord will not be in vain."

We have that same Jesus. As individuals, as a congregation, He has enriched us in so many wonderful ways; he has blessed us with so many spiritual gifts. Not only has Jesus saved us and set us apart as his people, forgiven and dearly loved, but he's also given us what it takes to live as his people, to be his church, to be his salt and light in a world that so desperately needs him. In other words, not only has Jesus blessed us to be his for heaven, but Jesus has blessed you to be his blessing to his church, a blessing to the world - all the way to heaven. I don't know about you, but that has me smiling. Amen.

August 16 & 17, 2025

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we see a brokenness and emptiness that shows our world's need (and our own need) for a new start.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we are given a New Start ... and we rejoice that we get to share God's New Start with his Church and his world around us.

OPENING HYMN

"God Is Here! As We Your People"

Hymn 858

God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace.
Here are table, font, and pulpit; here the cross has central place.
Here, in honesty of preaching, here, in silence as in speech,
here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
here, as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of Church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt,
keep us faithful to the gospel; help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication, all we have to give, receive;
we who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

INVOCATION

I rejoiced with those who said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord."

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty!
Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

TIME OF THE CHURCH

Teach me, Lord, the way of your decrees,
that I may follow it to the end.

Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.

Faith comes from hearing the message,
and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you have committed to your church the task of making disciples of all nations. Enlighten with your wisdom those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, we may worship and serve you from generation to generation; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

1 Corinthians 1:2–9; 15:58

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 78C

Refrain



Your Word, O LORD, is a lamp for my feet
and a light un - to my path.

Tone



My people, hear my / teaching; listen to the words / of my mouth.
I will utter hidden things, things / from of old—
things our ancestors have / told us.

We will not hide them from their de- / scendants;
we will tell the next gener- / ation
the praiseworthy deeds / of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders / he has done. *Refrain*

He decreed statutes for / Jacob and established the law in / Israel,
which he commanded our / ancestors to teach their / children,

so the next generation would know them, even the children yet / to be born,
and they in turn would tell their / children.

Then they would put their / trust in God
and would not forget his deeds but would keep / his commands.

Glory be to the Father and / to the Son

**and to the Holy / Spirit, as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain**



Two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the words "Your Word, O LORD, is a lamp for my feet". The second staff continues with "and a light un - to my path." The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some notes beamed together. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

1 Peter 2:9

Alleluia. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who
called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 7:24–27

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Cling Tightly to the Word of God”

Hymn 707

Cling tightly to the Word of God and Christ’s disciple be,
for then, beloved, you will know the truth that sets you free,
the truth that sets you free.

Recall in faith the precious gift of your baptismal day,
when you were joined to Jesus’ death that washed your sins away,
that washed your sins away.

For just as God raised up his Son from death by his great might,
so too, in Christ, we now may live as children of the light,
as children of the light.

Be strong! Stand firm! Come, walk the path that saints before you trod,
with ready feet to bring good news of Christ, the peace of God,
of Christ, the peace of God.

Know that his body and his blood will feed your hungry soul
like manna in life’s wilderness, until you reach your goal,
until you reach your goal.

Now fix your eyes on Jesus Christ; “Come, follow me,” says he.
“Deny yourself, take up your cross; come, lose your life for me,
come, lose your life for me.”

SERMON

1 Corinthians 1:2-9; 15:58

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

INSTALLATION OF OUR NEW TEACHERS (SUNDAY)

Mrs. Celia Tucek – 5th & 6th Grade Teacher

Mr. Matthew Curtis – 7th & 8th Grade Teacher

M: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said to his Church: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

A Christian school is one way we carry out our Lord's command as we let children come to him and do not hinder them, but rather nurture them with the life-giving word of God. We do this trusting God's promise: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."

Exhortation to the Teachers-Elect

M: Dear sister and brother in Christ, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church has called you to serve as teachers. You have been prepared for this ministry by careful instruction in the Word of God so that you carry out your duties in conformity with that Word.

As ambassadors of Christ you are to teach the pure doctrine of God's Word, to instruct the young in the way of salvation, and always to have in your heart the spiritual welfare of every soul under your care.

You are to devote yourself to the meditation and study of the Scriptures. You are to be examples to others in godliness and Christian living, putting no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that the ministry will not be discredited.

You are to speak the truth in love, as the apostle Peter reminds us: "Love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever."

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your heart to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

The ability to carry out this calling is not in us, but comes alone from God, as St. Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians: “Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.”

The Holy Spirit, who himself has called you to this ministry, will be with you.

Promises by our New Called Workers

M: In keeping with the word and will of the Lord, you are about to be installed into your callings at St. John Lutheran Church and School. I ask you, in the presence of God and this congregation:

Are you fully determined to carry out his work according to the grace which God will give?

R: I am.

M: Do you believe that the canonical books of the Old and New Testament are the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

R: I do.

M: Do you accept the three Ecumenical Creeds—the Apostles’, the Nicene, and the Athanasian—as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and do you reject all the errors which they condemn?

R: I do.

M: Do you solemnly promise that all your teaching and ministry will conform to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions?

R: I do.

M: Will you give faithful witness to Christ in the world that God's love may be known in all that you do and say?

R: I will, and I ask God to help me.

M: Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

Exhortation to the Congregation

M: Brothers and sisters in Christ, you have heard the solemn promise given by the servants you have called. I urge you, therefore, to receive them with joy and to keep in mind always what the Word of God expects of you as members of this congregation:

Work together with them for our Lord's kingdom so that by your works of service and sharing the Good News of Jesus the Body of Christ might be built up.

Help them by your word and example in teaching the young, remembering how the Scriptures urge you to bring up your children in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Pray for them continually, that their ministry among you may be greatly blessed and that they may have a cheerful spirit in all their duties.

Provide also for their physical needs, for the Lord says, "The worker deserves his wages."

Honor and love them, as the apostle Peter urges, "Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."

Promises by the Congregation

M: I now ask you, in the presence of God:

Are you willing to receive them as servants of Christ? Will you show them love and honor, and support them with your gifts and prayer? If so, answer: we will, and we ask God to help us.

C: We will, and we ask God to help us.

M: The almighty and merciful God strengthen and assist you always.

M: Students of St. John School, Jesus our Savior has promised eternal life to those who trust in him. Show your love to Jesus by cheerfully obeying your teachers and principal, so that you benefit from their instruction, especially as they teach you God's saving Word. Give them honor and respect, so that their work will be a joy for them and an eternal blessing to you.

Installation

Celia Tucek, I install you as Teacher at St. John Lutheran School in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew Curtis, I install you as Teacher at St. John Lutheran School in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

M: Almighty God, fountain of all wisdom, we praise and thank you for your goodness in giving us a Lutheran school. Continue to bless our labors here, so that your Word may dwell richly in us and in our children and that your name may be glorified. Give the Holy Spirit to Celia and Matthew, and equip them with heavenly wisdom and strength, that they may lead our children to you, and despite any discouragements faithfully carry out the duties of their calling.

Move our students to godliness and obedience and cause them to grow through their instruction in your Word, so that they may serve you throughout their life and finally inherit eternal life. Help us at all times to regard our teachers as those whom you have sent, so that we support them in their ministry and pray and work for the welfare of our school. Hear us for Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

M: Go, then, take up the work to which you have been called.

The Lord bless you and make you a blessing to many, that you may bear fruit, and that your fruit may remain to eternal life.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He sends the Holy Spirit to testify that we are his children and to strengthen us when we are weak.

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *Sanctus* (No Introduction) - Sung

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory. You are my God and I will exalt you. I will give you thanks for you have become my salvation. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei* (No Introduction) – Sung

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's Head"

Hymn 861

Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's head, you are her one foundation;
in you she trusts, before you bows, and waits for your salvation.
Built on this rock secure, your Church shall endure
though all the world decay and all things pass away.
O hear, O hear us, Jesus!

O Lord, let this your little flock, your name alone confessing,
continue in your loving care, true unity possessing.
Your sacraments, O Lord, and your saving Word
to us e'er pure retain; grant that they may remain
our only strength and comfort.

Help us to serve you evermore with hearts both pure and lowly;
and may your Word, that light divine, shine on in splendor holy
that we repentance show, in faith ever grow;
the pow'r of sin destroy and evils that annoy.
O make us faithful Christians.

And for your gospel let us dare to sacrifice all treasure;
teach us to bear your blessèd cross, to find in you all pleasure.
O grant us steadfastness in joy and distress.
Lord, for your mercy's sake, let us by grace partake
of endless joy and glory.

CLOSING PRAYER

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“O Church, Arise”

Hymn 870 vs. 1, 4

O Church, arise and put your armor on; hear the call of Christ our captain.
For now the weak can say that they are strong
in the strength that God has given.

With shield of faith and belt of truth we'll stand against the devil's lies;
an army bold whose battle cry is love, reaching out to those in darkness.

So Spirit come, put strength in ev'ry stride, give grace for ev'ry hurdle,
that we may run with faith to win the prize of a servant good and faithful.
As saints of old still line the way, retelling triumphs of his grace,
we hear their calls and hunger for the day
when with Christ we stand in glory.

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About Our New Teachers

We welcome Matthew Curtis as our new 7th & 8th grade teacher. Matthew moved to the area in July and is currently renting an apartment in Waukegan. He was born and raised near Atlanta, GA. He is the youngest of five children. He has some experience with being a called worker in our school system since he has a brother and a sister that are currently teaching in our WELS schools. His mother is also a preschool teacher at our WELS church in Sharpsburg, GA.



After being homeschooled for the elementary grades, he attended an area public school for his middle and high school years. He has just completed four years of training at our synod's school (MLC) in New Ulm, MN, and he comes to us with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education degree and a state teaching license. He has training experience with middle/upper elementary grades and even did student teaching at the Kindergarten level.



Back in January, Mrs. Celia Tucek accepted our call to teach in our 5th & 6th-grade classroom. Last year Celia served at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and School in Downers Grove. That school closed at the end of the school year, so being called to St. John ended up being a blessing to them and us.

Zach works as a golf pro in Glenview, and daughter, Claire, was recently added to the family on July 9. Celia has been in the classroom getting things organized. Keith Kopcynski will be subbing in the classroom for the first several weeks of school as Celia finishes her maternity leave. She is planning to fully take over the classroom on September 8.

Celia, Zach, and Claire are looking to move to Round Lake Beach in the coming weeks. May the Lord guide them during this time of transition and bless all her efforts as she begins her work at St. John.