

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church – Oconomowoc
Epiphany 5 – February 5, 2017
“Nothing But Christ Crucified”
1 Corinthians 2:1-12
Rev. John Kelling, Emeritus

*Use this insert for home study of the text for today,
and for personal assessment of your faith*

Our world is a busy place with many distractions and false promises. Even the Christian can be easily led astray by what others are doing in the name of religion. But we Lutheran Christians focus on the one true promise and hope only the real God could give—Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for the sake of all sinful mankind. It's in His crucifixion and nothing else where our sins are forgiven and the true hope and promise of eternal life is ours by faith. That is the Christian's life and the Church's mission.

- 1) The season of Epiphany gives us an opportunity to look at the mission of Jesus Christ from His Baptism to His Transfiguration. ***If someone asked you who Jesus was and what His “mission” was, how would you respond?***
- 2) Our Lutheran faith and teachings are centered in the cross and resurrection of Christ. ***How would you describe to friends the link between the cross and Christ's resurrection?***
- 3) For the world around us, the Word and purpose behind the cross are “folly” (meaningless) to them. People have a hard time believing God the Father would let His Son die in such a horrible way, and then for the sins of someone else—not His own. This question separates Christianity from all other religions, and is the basis for “works righteousness” in other faiths (I have to do something for my salvation). ***How would you explain why God the Father allowed Jesus to do this?***
- 4) Most of the time, the best way to communicate something difficult to others is to speak in simple words they can understand. But even then, when talking about faith and belief, one has to go beyond the “seeing” and “proof” and accept blindly. It's hard to bring the cross and empty tomb back to reality. ***How have you come to accept and believe what God says?***

- 5) The message of the cross is a powerful (and visible) statement of God's plan for human salvation. In the cross, we too, are condemned in our sin. Christ hung there for US, and paid the ultimate price for US! *“The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 10:45)* ***Why is that so comforting and reassuring for us in this sinful world?***
- 6) As Christians, we understand God's plan for us. He gives us the “wisdom” to see what others call “folly”. In doing so, our personal purpose and life are different from others—“for me to live is Christ...” It's in how we live and speak that lets others see “wisdom” in action. We become instruments of God to bring peace, love and hope in this dying world. Actions can speak louder than words! ***How can you let your “light shine before men” so that others can see Jesus in you?***



“The Old Rugged Cross”

On a hill far away, stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross, where the dearest and best,
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Refrain: *So I'll cherish the old rugged cross till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross and exchange it some day for a crown.*

O, that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God, left His glory above,
To bear it to dark Calvary. ***Refrain***

In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see;
For t'was on that old cross, Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me. ***Refrain***

To the old rugged cross, I will ever be true,
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me some day, to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I'll share. ***Refrain***

- To God Be the Glory -