

Receiving and Giving God's Grace

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Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

The 6th Sunday after Pentecost (Pr 8B)
1 July, A.D. 2018
Lam 3.22-33; 2 Cor 8.1-9, 13-15; Mk 5.21-43

Introduction

Ephesians 2:1 (ESV)

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

Psalm 51:1-5 (ESV)

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

John 14:2 (ESV)

² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

Romans 3:23-24 (ESV)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Why do we bring our littlest children to Jesus? (cf. Lk 18.16; Lam 3.22)

CCT: Christ has graciously made us rich in everything that matters and calls us to live

Living Graciously as Christian Citizens

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out-- Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out-- Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out-- Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me--and there was no one left to speak for me—Rev. Martin Niemoller

When I returned from prison a year ago, I played along with this game [of passing along the packet of responsibility to someone else]. I came home, actually after all of the dangers of the previous weeks and the many disappointments, loaded with a lot of good conscience. I had in my pocket a certificate that I had been deprived of my liberty from July 1, 1937 to June 24, 1945 as a political prisoner and personal prisoner of the Fuhrer. Who is going to demonstrate to me that the guilt that is now being claimed of my people, has anything to do with me? Already I was standing in line and passed the packet on. I did that for quite a while, not a pleasant game, but a necessary game. Because if one holds on to the packet, it won't burn only one's fingers! And then one day something happened to me. One day I drove by near Dachau in my car. My wife was with me and said, "Couldn't I see your cell, where you were imprisoned for the past four years?" I said, "I'll see what can be done." And drove there and was allowed to enter the cell block and show my wife the cell. Then something happened. When we came out the American officer accompanying us led us along a wall. I had often walked along it. There was a large gate in it. I had never seen it open. This time it was open. I knew what was behind it, but entered anyway. I stood with my wife in front of the crematorium in Dachau, and on a tree in front of this building there was a white-painted board with black lettering. [...] There one could read: "Here in the years 1933- 1945 238,756 people¹³ were cremated." While I read it, not aloud, I noticed that my wife fainted and sank trembling into my arms. I had to support her and noticed how at that moment a cold shudder ran down my spine.

I think my wife fainted when she read the quarter-million number. That hadn't moved me. Because it didn't tell me anything new. What ran through me hot and cold at that moment was something else. That was the other two numbers: "1933-1945." I groped for my alibi and knew that the two numbers were the wanted poster of the living God for Pastor Niemoller. My alibi reached from July 1, 1937 to mid-1945. There stood: "1933-1945." Adam, where are you? Mensch, where were you? Yes, I know, from mid-1937 until the end you have an alibi. Here you're being asked: "Where were you from 1933 until July 1, 1937?" And I couldn't avoid this question any longer. In 1933 I was a free man. 1933-at that moment in the crematorium yard it occurred to me-yes 1933, that's right: Hermann Goring boasted publicly that he had gotten rid of the Communist danger. Since all Communists who were not under lock and key because of their crimes were now sitting behind the barbed wire of the newly established concentration camps. Adam, where are you? Hey, Martin Niemoller, where were you then? asked God with those two numbers.

And then it occurred to me: this whole thing had made no impression on me; somewhere in a corner of my heart I may have thought, at least later I did think: this is a cheap way to actually be rid of the danger of godlessness. But that these people, with no law, no criminal charges, no investigation, no sentence, no enforceable sentence, simply had their profession, their family, their lives taken from them, were deprived of their freedom, that they were God's question put to me, to which I in God's eyes should have answered, that did not occur to me. Back then I was a free man. Back then I had already given myself over to my true responsibility. And now the wanted poster was there, and I couldn't avoid this wanted poster any longer. And on that day, when we got home, I read the chapter Matthew 25 with new meaning: "I was hungry and you gave me noth-ing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink; I was sick and in prison and you did not come to me." As a Christian I could have known and should have known in 1933 that in each of these human brothers-may they be called Communists or whatever-God in Jesus Christ was asking me whether I wouldn't want to serve him.

What is Pastor Niemoller's point?

Some examples of not speaking up for others...

How would you respond to a possible scenario?

Conclusion

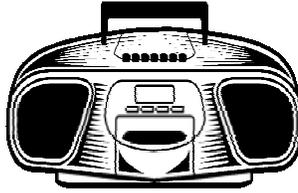
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What does "go in peace" imply? What does Pastor Niemoller's confession teach us?

Cheap grace and costly grace...

From Niemoller's speech "The Path to Freedom" on July 3, 1946 in Stuttgart, Germany. Translated by Harold Marcuse in "The Origin and Reception of Martin Niemoller's Quotation, "First they came for the communists ... " in *Remembering the Future: Armenia, Auschwitz, and Beyond*, Michael Berenbaum, ed. (Paragon House, 2015, 177-199), p.177. Cf. <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/niem.htm>

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Ethan Meyer Memorial Golf Outing



Join us at the Inaugural Ethan Meyer Memorial Golf Outing

August 3, 2018

Deertrak Golf Course

Registration: 11:30 am

Shotgun Start: 12:30 pm

Prizes and dinner to follow

Register at www.ethanmeyeropen.com

Ethan was taken from us at the far-too-young age of 45 after a courageous battle with Glioblastoma. Ethan left behind 3 step-daughters and his two young children - Gabby and Elijah - who will be the beneficiaries of the tournament proceeds. We will also be establishing a scholarship in Ethan's honor at Oconomowoc High School. Even though it wasn't his best thing, Ethan loved to golf. He organized a match-play outing for his friends each August and enjoyed playing with his dad whenever possible. Ethan would be delighted to know we were playing (and partying) in his honor - especially if it benefited his beloved kids.

Registration is only \$80 per golfer - which includes golf, cart, food and drink ticket and dinner. There will be prizes for the best - and worst - golfers as well as hole contests. We will also have an auction following the event. Sign up your foursome today!!

PLEASE NOTE: We are also looking for hole sponsorships (\$100 per hole) and donations for the silent auction. If you would like to sponsor or donate, please let us know!

THOSE WHO WISH TO JUST COME FOR THE MEAL—\$20