

Cross



Words

Monthly Newsletter of Cross Ev. Lutheran Church

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How can I be happy when I'm crying?

*"Blessed are those who mourn."
Matthew 5:4*



Be happy while you're crying? I don't think so. Most tears come because of sorrow. People usually cry because something important to them has gone horribly wrong. But Jesus says that Christians are happy even when they're crying.

To understand what Jesus is saying, one must first understand why Christians cry. Christians cry for many of the same reasons everyone else cries. They cry at funerals. They cry when someone has been cruel to them. They cry when they hear a very sad story.

Christians can cry when they realize how horribly they have hurt someone. The burden of guilt weighs heavily on their hearts and brings them to tears. Christians can cry when they think of bad things

they have done. They know that they deserve nothing from God but a punishment that never ends.

So where is the happiness?

Happiness is in knowing that while we deserve only the worst from God, he has given us only the best. When we mourn because of guilt, our Savior dries our moist eyes. When hearts are heavy with sadness, Jesus puts his hand under our chins and lifts our eyes to see his cross, where he made all of our guilt and all of the sorrow connected to that guilt his own. Jesus looks at you and me and says, "Be at peace. Your guilt is gone."

Christians still cry, but Christians find comfort in the midst of their tears. This comfort is for you too.

It is a comfort that brings calm in the face of all kinds of tears. Jesus gives you the peace of knowing that death does not mean defeat. Jesus assures you that being mistreated by others does not mean God has abandoned you. Jesus fills you with the sure hope that all the hurt and evil in this world is not the end of everything.

Can there be happiness even when you are crying?
Yes, because Jesus is your comfort.

What is devotional symbolism?



For almost two thousand years the Christian church has used educational symbols to inspire and educate the laity, which was especially important when most people were illiterate. The church has also used symbols to enhance and aid the practices of a faith life; these devotional symbols are most often connected with the rituals of worship. A church experience is rich in meaning when both educational and devotional symbolisms are employed and understood.

Wisely the Lutheran church has retained a healthy degree of liturgy and symbolism. Following the time of Luther's reformation, a misguided, pietistic zeal swept through many of the new Protestant churches. During this iconoclasm, some protesters destroyed cherished images and religious art. In addition, zealous reformers abandoned the historic liturgy and carried theological "correction" of traditions too far. Thanks be to God that traditional meanings embedded in good liturgical practices have survived in our day, even against the renewed iconoclasm of contemporary culture. At one time the church bell was rung early every morning to remind the waking Christian of his new life through Baptism—a devotionally symbolic reminder that the new man should daily come forth and grow in grace. Now the peal of a church bell may call believers to worship before a service is held.

A Lutheran church has an altar because the altar is a devotionally symbolic reminder of how the sacrifices and intercessions of the Old Testament were satisfied by the life and saving works of our Lord Jesus Christ. With this understanding in mind, you can see why the bread and the wine of Holy Communion are placed on the altar. You can also see why a cross or a symbol of the Lamb of God belongs on or above every altar.

Likewise, altar candles and vestments have symbolic meanings, as do actions such as which way the pastor faces when he is performing the liturgy. We stand for parts of the liturgy and we bow our heads—both are symbolic gestures.

God did not provide specific directions for our forms and practices of worship, as he did for his people in the Old Testament. So, many of our rites and practices fall into the category of adiaphora, those things which God has neither commanded nor forbidden. The principles of Christian decision-making should apply to symbol usage, and we ought to consider the time-honored wisdom of our forefathers.

Thomas Albert Stafford, an expert on church symbolism, writes that all symbols are subject to these virtues: reverence, simplicity, and sincerity. The devotional symbols we use have survived because they are reverent, simple, and sincere. Before we introduce new devotional symbols, we should make sure they "dress" the church in a manner that reveres the church's Bridegroom. Remember, as our Lord's bride, the church should be dressed appropriately.

God's Goals for Your Roles

by Pastor Mark Jeske

Good Fathers Show Their Children How to Work

One of the features of life in families that suffer from intergenerational poverty is that the kids have no close family role models of people who have graduated from school and who go to work on time every day. God loves work. He does it all day every day himself, and he designed his creatures to work, too. God had Adam working all day on his creation day even before he introduced him to his beautiful wife Eve.

There were men in the early Christian church who were setting a poor example by their laziness and excuses. St. Paul had a better way: Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands...so your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody (I Thessalonians 4:11).

Employers love employees with a strong work ethic. So do wives. And children desperately need to see a man in action in their lives who earns his bread, keeps his word, does good work, takes pride in his home, and knows how to finish a job.

Did you hear the one about ...

A minister was asked to inform a man with a heart condition that he had just inherited a million dollars. Everyone was afraid the shock would give him a heart attack.

So the minister went to the man's house and said, "Joe, what would you do if you inherited a million dollars?"

And Joe said, "Well, pastor, I think I would give half of it to the church."

At which the pastor fell over dead.

Wednesday Lent Service Schedule

We Preach Christ Crucified!

Mar 3, 7:00pm - Midweek 3 More Precious Than LifePhilippians 3:7-11	Pastor Bob Hellmann
Mar 10, 7:00pm - Midweek 4 Justified by Grace Alone Through Faith Alone.....Romans 3:21-26	Pastor Mike Barlow
Mar 17, 7:00pm - Midweek 5 Peace With God Through Our Lord Jesus ChristRomans 5:1-11	Pastor Steve Smith
Mar 24, 7:00pm - Midweek 6 The Reason to Endure.....Hebrews 12:1-3	Pastor Paul Marggraf

NOTES: For convenience and fellowship, various groups within the congregation will again be serving a supper before each Wednesday Lenten service, 5:30-6:30pm. All are invited to attend