

**“For Us and With Us” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday
November 12, 2022**

- I. **Romans 8:31-39** – which was previously read
- II. **Holding hands seems pretty simple and straightforward...**
 - a. And yet, there is something powerful... and almost holy about holding someone else’s hand.
 - i. For example, a new parent holding the tiny hand of their newborn son or daughter;
 - ii. Or a teacher holding the hand of a little kindergarten student as they cross the parking lot;
 - iii. Maybe a young couple holding hands for the first time on a date;
 - iv. Perhaps a man and a woman, standing in front of their pastor on their wedding day, hand in hand;
 - v. Or an elderly man holding the hand of his beloved wife of many decades;
 - vi. Finally, envision a family holding the hand of their loved one as he or she passes from this life to eternal life.
- III. **Today is LWML Sunday.**
 - a. As you might know, “LWML” stands for “Lutheran Women’s Missionary League,” and the simple name is Lutheran Women in Mission.
 - b. It’s a support, or auxiliary organization of our Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and has members all throughout North America.
 - c. They support and sponsor mission efforts around the world through their offerings... or their mites, which are gathered in small boxes.
 - d. Since the early 1940’s – and even long before they were official – the LWML has been a witness to how God’s love is there to hold us tightly.
 - e. That’s why we picked this text in Romans today... because it’s all about the power and holiness of God’s love...that holds us tightly!
 - f. The outline for today’s sermon is all about Jesus being for us and with us:
 - i. First of all, because Jesus is for us and with us, we have no fear of condemnation...
 - ii. Secondly, because Jesus is for us and with us, we have no fear of separation...
 - iii. Finally, and because Jesus is for us and with us, we win... the victory is ours.
- IV. **Because Jesus is for us and with us, we have no fear of condemnation.**
 - a. Paul says, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32).
 - i. What things? Well, Paul means that God has done everything for our salvation.

- ii. God IS for us... and He proved it by giving up Jesus to save us.
- iii. Paul then says, "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us." (Romans 8:33-34)
- iv. Why did Jesus die? To pay for our sins!
- v. Why was He raised? Because the Father accepted this payment;
 - 1. In other words, the check has cleared! It didn't bounce... the funds were sufficient...He died so we could live.
- b. And now, Jesus is interceding for us, fully engaged in the battle for us.
 - i. I love the way that Corrie ten Boom said it: "There is no pit so deep, that God's love is not deeper still."
 - ii. Think about this personally, in your own life.
 - 1. Who of us in the past few months has been perfect?
 - 2. On the other hand, how many of us have said things we regret, or used a tone with someone we wish we could take back?
 - 3. In these past couple of years, have we broken people down through our words and assumed the worst?
 - 4. Have we ignored the needs of others instead of giving them a hand up?
 - a. Yes, me too. Yes, to all of the above.
 - iii. The law is convicting because the law shows us exactly where we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
 - iv. The pit is pretty deep...but God's love is deeper still.
 - v. Even though Satan wants to accuse and condemn you, the work of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection is enough – and that's why we have no fear of condemnation.
 - vi. Not only that... but don't have to fear separation either...

V. **Because Jesus is for us and with us, we have no fear of separation.**

- a. In your mind picture again, hands joined together.... and God will not let go of your hand!
- b. Paul asks... "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:35-39)
 - i. Notice what Paul does not say in this text.... He does not say that life will be free of challenges and difficult circumstances.
 - ii. He does not say that distress or danger will not happen.

1. Actually, he writes in great detail elsewhere (including 2 Corinthians) about his own experience in facing these challenges.
 - iii. We know this from our own experiences as well...as each of us could make a list of our own struggles in life.
 1. What would your list look like? What would you include? Who would you include?
 2. In many ways, you might feel like you have so much stacked against you... But even in the midst of the trouble... God calls you righteous (Rom. 8:33) and loved in Jesus (Rom. 8:39).
 - c. Our Lutheran Women in Mission have served many people over the years whose lives seemed out of control.
 - d. But God is always in control, and by filling us with His Holy Spirit, has chosen to use them and all of us to serve others in love... God is love.
 - e. With no fear of condemnation or separation, we come to our third point:
- VI. **Because Jesus is for us and with us, we have certainty of victory.**
- a. That victory is made yours personally through the gift of baptism. St. Paul says in Romans 6:4: “We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”
 - b. Baptism equals victory: victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil. We are more than conquerors; we are super-victorious!
 - c. One of my favorite hymns – and maybe one of yours – says this well:
 - d. “No strength of ours can match his might. We would be lost, rejected. But now a champion comes to fight, Whom God Himself elected. You ask who this may be? The Lord of hosts is He, Christ Jesus, mighty Lord, God’s only Son, adored. He holds the field victorious.” (LSB 657, v. 2)
 - e. Our victory is not secure because of our hold on Christ, but by His hold on us... we are more than conquerors because He holds tightly to us.
 - f. That’s why we can live every day, including today, confidently trusting in Jesus.
 - g. As a baptized child of God, remain in His Word.... Always remember your identity as a winner in Christ.... Rely on His grace.
 - h. How have you been saved? By grace through faith.
 - i. And finally, respond to His call. Like Isaiah the prophet, may we enthusiastically say: “Here am I! Send me.” (Isaiah 6:8b).
- VII. **Lutheran Women in Mission**, thank you...
- a. Thank you for your hearts and hands that have shared the Gospel with many around the world.
 - b. Thank you for responding to the call of Jesus.
 - c. Thank you for your example and encouragement to each of us.

d. May our God continue to hold us in His love, the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen ¹

¹ Based on the LWML Sunday sermon by Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson, 2022