

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church**  
**Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz**  
**May 6, 2018**  
**Confirmation Sunday**  
**John 14:15-21 EHV.**



<sup>15</sup>"If you love me, hold on to my commands. <sup>16</sup>I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>He is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see him or know him. You know him because he stays with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>"I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup>In a little while the world will see me no longer, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup>In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>The one who has my commands and holds on to them is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I too will love him and show myself to him."

Children of our Heavenly Father, precious in His sight for Jesus' sake – especially you who are being confirmed:

This Sunday is Confirmation Sunday. Once a year by the grace of God – we have a whole bunch of folding chairs up front. There are stickers – reserved seating. Reserved by casting lots – for Moms and Dads and Grandmas and Grandpas and Sponsors to sit up front. By the grace of God we have 13 confirmands this year. Half of them were born the second half of 2003 and half of them were born the first half of 2004. Does that seem like a long time ago? The year of our Lord 2003 began on a Wednesday. Down in Illinois 167 prisoners on death row had their sentences commuted by the Governor because it was found that some had been pounded until they confessed! The Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated during reentry over Texas and all seven astronauts on board lost their lives. We invaded Iraq and Sadaam Hussein was captured. The Human Genome Project was completed with 99% of the human genome sequenced to 99.99% accuracy. The Civil War began in Darfur – and refugees are still starving there today. There were six nation talks because there was concern about the North Korean nuclear weapons program. There was an earth quake in Iran with a maximum Mercalli intensity of IX – *violent* – and 30,000 people perish! Did you remember all that? It was in the last part of the year of our Lord 2003 – that half of the young people sitting in front of you were born. In some ways it was different. In many ways it was painfully the same. King Solomon's words – inspired by the Holy Spirit ring true. **Meaningless!** **Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless! There is nothing under the Sun!** We live in a world terminally infected with **the wages of sin which is death.** We have hope in the Gospel of Christ crucified and risen – in Jesus' blood and in His blood alone. Today as we celebrate yet another confirmation class we rejoice in the fact:

**Jesus Loves Me, This I Know!**

I. He promises to care for me

II. He promises to be with me

Following the WELS Wartburg Project Series A. Pericopes – we have read from the Gospel of the disciple Jesus loved – Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter and 6 more Sundays through Pentecost. Last Sunday – familiar words Jesus spoke on the way from the upper room through the city wall and through the Kidron Valley – the Brook Kidron – to the Garden of Gethsemane – where Jesus would pray with such earnestness – in such anguish that he would sweat blood dark sweat! Remember last Sunday when the Acapella Choir sang? Remember the sermon? Jesus said, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God – believe also in Me. In My Father’s House are many mansions. If it were not true I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me – that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going so how can we know the way? You know what Jesus said. “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life!”**

<sup>15</sup>**“If you love me, hold on to my commands.** There has never been a language more precise than Greek! I sometimes think we are pretty careless when it comes to the word love! I love Jesus! I love Grandma! I love Bailey! I love spaghetti! I love rock n roll. I love to sit in the driveway and listen to Van Halen (“I might as well jump!” and Bon Jovi “Right now!” and Def Leperd “Love bites!” with a drummer with only one arm! The Greek language has a word for the love of a husband and a wife! The Greek language has a different word for the love of a best friend! I have lots of best friends! I am looking forward to seeing some of my best friends who are in Heaven! I am looking forward to meeting my Grandpa Edward Rudolph Schultz and my Grandpa Elroy Louis Lamke. I have a picture of Grandpa Lamke hugging sheep! The word here for *If you love me* – is agape! That is a unique concept in Greek. Agape love is unconditional giving forgiving love – which has nothing to do with the worthiness of the object of that love! Unconditional giving forgiving love! It’s the love for the father welcoming the Prodigal – the *wasteful* son. It’s the wrap your arms around the Prodigal son who had squandered – wasted his inheritance on wild living – feasting – “hugs and kisses” and worse – then when he was reduced to feeding hogs and longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating he realized slaves in his Father’s household had it better than he did – he returned home saying, “Father, I have sinned against Heaven and against you and am no longer worthy to be called your son...” The Father said, “Put a ring on his finger – kill the fatted calf for this son of mine was dead and now he is alive – was lost and now he is found!” That’s agape love – unconditional giving forgiving love!

Jesus said, <sup>15</sup>**“If you love me, hold on to my commands.”** If we love Jesus – really really love Him we will act like it! We learn commandments in TLS Preschool – 3K and 4K and Kindergarten. **You shall have no other gods. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God. Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy! Honor your Father and Mother that it may be well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. You shall not murder – you shall not commit adultery – you shall not steal – you shall not give false testimony against your neighbor – no envy – no wanting what you can’t or shouldn’t have!**

In a nutshell – **love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. Love your neighbor as yourself! Love one another. Everyone will know that we are Jesus’ students and followers and imitators if we love one another!** If the United States goes down the tubes like *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* it will not be because of a caravan of people from Guatemala and Honduras and Venezuela and Mexico. It will not be because of the pudgy dictator in North Korea – it will not be because of the former KGB Agent living among the onion tops of Moscow and it will not be because the Chinese are taking apart all our High Tech “things and stuff” – to steal our intellectual property! It will be because we in the most blessed nation on the face of the earth in the history of the world – have failed to love Jesus and failed to hold on to his commands! Hold on to Jesus? The good news is Jesus will always hold on to us! Jesus will hold on to you!

**<sup>16</sup>I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>He is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see him or know him. You know him because he stays with you and will be in you.** This Thursday will be Ascension – the day Jesus went back up to Heaven. Before He did Jesus said, **“Go and make disciples of all nations – baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit – teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always – to the very end of the age! The Counselor – the Paraclete – the Holy Spirit** is the only one who can show us – through God’s Word how to live in this world infected by sin. The world you are inheriting from your moms and dads who inherited their world from grandpa and grandma is a dangerous world. When I was confirmed – our Police Chief was Hispanic. We called him Big Joe – Big Joe Binastro. Big Joe would park his squad car outside school – so we walked past him walking home. Big Joe would say – behave or I’m gonna have to come down hard on you. We said, “Don’t worry Big Joe. We’ll be good!” Do you know the name of Watertown’s Police Chief? When I grew up – about 1 hour west of Chicago – in a little town called West Chicago – if we were naughty people would say, “That kid is gonna end up in Joliet” – a very dark and terrible prison! We need to lives that give glory to Jesus. We need to listen to the Holy Spirit when he speaks to us through God’s Word

**Jesus said: <sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup>In a little while the world will see me no longer, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup>In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.** Have you ever hugged an orphan? Have you ever visited an orphanage – where little people live – just 2 or 3 or 4 year old orphans? Such little people live with some 30 or 40 or 50 other little orphans. They sleep on air mattresses – in rooms that are not as nice as our 2 and 3 and 4 car garages! The bugs and the mice and the rats and the snakes crawl through doorways without doors and window frames that have no screens – no windows. They wear oversized T-shirts – that are not their own – just theirs today – to *borrow*. If you hold an orphan in your arms they will wrap their arms around your neck. If it’s time for you to leave – you say – you have to get down – I have to go – they hug your neck tighter. Stand up and think gravity will make them let go – they don’t! You have to pry their hands loose – and they let go. And they don’t make a sound. They just sit there – and tears run down their cheeks – and they look at you like – if you can’t

even hold me – if you must go – then go! It’s almost impossible to hold an orphan who has one meal a day – a literal Frisbee of beans and rice and a sandwich bag of clean warm water to drink – and turn around and feel sorry for yourself! We are so spoiled! So spoiled with things and stuff. We are so spoiled with the Gospel so readily available! We have padded pews and wall to wall carpet and stereo sound and 6 year old children with smart phones – 2 year olds who know how to work I-pads – and cars with heated steering wheels and flat screen hi-def cable TV and GPS – turn here and Face Book and texting and if I could just lose 10 pounds! We need to read our Bible – search the Scriptures – study God’s Word and have family devotions and go to high school where we have Pastors for teachers and it’s not against the law to pray! We need to date people who love Jesus like we do – to make our marriages strong – to not abuse opioids in Watertown. Do you know there are some 46 liquor licenses in Watertown – down from a record 54 – but rising?! We are doing battle every day against Satan himself. He is bent on the eternal destruction of our immortal souls. We have this comfort and hope. Jesus will not leave us as orphans. Jesus will be with you every day – until we are with Him forever in Heaven!

Literally half of this confirmation class was born in the first half of 2004. 2004 was a leap year – starting on a Thursday. The United Nations declares 2004 the year of Rice. The international year to commemorate the struggle against slavery and the abolition of slavery – lofty goals. Queen Elizabeth smashed a bottle of champagne against the bow of the RMS Queen Mary2 – the largest ocean liner ever built. Remember the Titanic? Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide – a former Priest was overthrown in a coup d’état. Bombs killed Muslims in Iraq. Bombs were set off in a train station in Madrid and almost 200 people were killed. Sadaam was put on trial for war crimes and *crimes against humanity*. Soviet Union passports are no longer legal identification. The Summer Olympics were held in Athens, Greece. The painting called the Scream – like the kid in Home Alone was stolen by armed robbers. More people were killed by bombers than you could count and somebody built a hypersonic Scramjet reached a velocity of about 7,000 mph or Mach 9.6 in an unmanned experimental flight. Some new stuff – against mostly the same. The wages of sin remain death – and literally millions of people died. The only way to Heaven remains the † of Christ and the empty Easter tomb. It is only by the grace of God that we gather here today – to rejoice in the fact that we know we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone – found in Scripture alone. We are saved in Christ alone. Today and every day of your life – remember to be faithful – forever saying, “**Thank you, Jesus!**” Amen!

To God alone all glory!

