

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor A.E. Schultz
July 6, 2014
4th Sunday after Pentecost A.
Romans 5:6-11**



⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

War and Peace! It happens all the time – war and peace! 700 years ago – Tuesday – plus a week – there was a terrible battle at a place called Bannockburn! Did you know that – the battle of Bannockburn? It was part of the Wars of Scottish Independence. At the very beginning a celebrated single combat took place. Between Robert the Bruce – who had seized the Scottish throne and Henry de Bohun. So Bob was on the side of the Scottish and Henry on the side of the English. Henry charged at Bruce and when the two passed side by side – Bruce split Henry's head with his axe like it was a cantaloupe! *That really tears it* – they said. It was a terrible place for a battle – what with bogs and peaty soil. There were soldiers with long bows – waves of arrows raining down. There was heavy cavalry – soldiers with heavy armor on themselves and on their horses. There was light cavalry – very quick to attack and very quick to maneuver! There were huge swords and spears. There were infantry – foot soldiers bristling with pikes – the crudest spears with axe sharpened ends. There were slingers with stones.

Most battles back then lasted but a few hours – one or two hours – and everyone was exhausted – and soldiers were everywhere – wounded and worse. This battle lasted two days. The death and destruction were horrible. The English – who greatly outnumbered the Scottish – 2 or 3 to 1 – were crushed – suffering a humiliating defeat! Did you know that? Probably not! A battle fought back in the year 1314 – in Scotland – who knew? There have been countless battles – countless wars – countless armies that have fought and died in the last 700 years. It would all be horrible – scary and discouraging – were it not for the fact that Jesus won the ultimate battle over sin and death! Today God's Word encourages us:

Rejoice In Jesus' Peace!

- 1. Sin destroys peace**
- 2. Jesus maintains peace in our ♥s**

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on – is part of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. We said before – for some 17 weeks we are reading from the letter to the Romans. Our Publishing House has printed no less than 10 books on the ILCW Series A,B,C Pericopes – the

readings appointed for Sunday services. The text study for next week says it would be a good idea to read the whole letter to the Romans. There are just 16 chapters to Romans. It is essential Law and Gospel—sin and grace. It is exceedingly practical. In the days we live—with so much talk about Gay marriage—Romans chapters 1 and 2 talk about God’s plan from the beginning—from Creation! The Lutheran Study Bible has both footnotes and a devotional article to talk about homosexuality. It would be a blessing to read our Bible—to better understand this very complex issue—and to better share God’s Word with gentleness—and great patience. Jesus told the men who wanted to throw stones at the woman caught in the act of adultery—“Let him who is without sin throw the first stone.” And Jesus *also* said, “Go and sin no more!” God’s Word is Law and Gospel—rightly discerned!

The 4th Sunday of Advent—the repentant season of Advent—the Sunday before Christmas we read from Romans. The 1st and 2nd and 4th and 5th Sundays in the repentant season of Lent we read from Romans. Romans chapter 8—**“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.”** V.1,18,19 ESV. We read Romans chapter 3, **“For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”** V.22b Romans chapter 4 We like Abraham believe the Gospel promises of God: **“It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”** V. 24

Today God’s Word says, **“*6* You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”** *At just the right time...* Timing is everything! We say that at my house all the time—*timing is everything!* At just the right time—means according to God’s time! God’s time is very often not our time! It has been said Jesus was born in a backward land at a backward time! When baby Jesus was born—he was born in a stable. He was placed in an animal’s feed box. He was announced by angels to shepherds who smelled like sweat and sheep and goats when they came to worship Him! Jesus picked fishermen and a tax collector and a political zealot to be his students. Jesus lived in a day without the Internet—no smart phones—no selfies—no Facebook—no Twitter—no airplanes—no flat screen High-def anything! Jesus was born at just the right time to save us. **When we were still powerless. How powerless? Dead in trespasses and sin.** There was nothing we could do to save ourselves. That’s when Jesus died on the cross to redeem us! Jesus **died for the ungodly! We—powerless—ungodly!** We don’t like to admit being powerless. Truth be told we like to think of ourselves as having power. We like to think of ourselves as—smart? I went to school—I went to college—I went to technical school—I was an apprentice—I have years and years of experience! I’m smart! I know a guy who was really good at *Scrabble!* When he was in the hospital and I would come to visit him—he would say, “You *have* to play Scrabble with me!” And he would use a Q and a Z and get triple letter score and triple word score—and get like 800 points on one word! Who’s smart now—Mr. Book Learning?! Or I can play cards. Watch me shuffle! And the cards go in and out and back and forth and so? Or I can play golf—whack—and it’s 8 miles down the fairway! Or I can shoot targets—bang, bang, bang, bang! Or I have a lawn better than a golf-course or flowers or I can do that thing with a frying pan full of food or what? We like to think we are smart! Or we are really financially secure. I know someone with a perfect credit score—*perfect!* Or I’m like Michael Jordan in his prime—with this miniscule body fat! I can do this rock hanging—one hand hold myself—climbing up a sheer cliff—American Ninja Warrior!

There is something we can do better than anybody we know – so don't tell me I'm powerless! But we are. Spiritually powerless to save our self. Only Jesus could do that – and He did!

⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Die to save someone else? **Very rarely.** Take for example the sinking of the *Costa Concordia*. She went too close to the Island and ran over something – probably a huge sharp rock. She sank. Captain Francesco is charged with not helping some 300 passengers – some of them incapacitated – in wheel chairs and such. Captain Francesco is charged with not being the last to leave the ship. It seems he made sure he got off the ship---many of the passengers – not so much! The South Korean Ferry named the *Sewol* capsized. It seems she turned so suddenly and sharply she went under. Almost the whole crew survived. Almost 300 passengers – many of the high school students were trapped below deck and drowned in the very cold waters. The Captain has been charged with murder. He too was not the last to leave the ship. It seems he too was looking out for himself. **Very rarely will anyone die** for someone else. **But for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.** Chief Thomas Buntrock was the Chief of Police of Mequon. A man committed an armed robbery. He took hostages – a daddy and his infant daughter. Chief Buntrock took the place of the hostages. He ended up being shot accidentally – fatally – because that's what police officers do all the time. I wonder when people turn on Buntrock Avenue – a short little road – up and down a couple of times into Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary – do they know? Do they understand? Do they realize the sacrifice Chief Buntrock made to save 2 lives? Do we appreciate Jesus' sacrifice to save us – when we wake up Monday mornings and say, "I don't want to get up!" "I don't want to go to work!" "Summer vacation is boring!" Do we appreciate Jesus' sacrifice to save us – or do you argue with your spouse or talk back to your parents – or fight with your brothers and sisters? Do we share our faith at every opportunity – or do we act as if it's each man for themselves? **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us.**

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! There is armed conflict going on all around the world. I think it is almost impossible to imagine what it must be like to have rockets – military missiles – fired into your home – made with such massive reinforced concrete – that damage may be done to the outside of your home – but the inside is literally a bomb shelter – where you are safe – even in case of a direct hit!? There is civil war in Somalia – people driving through the streets in Jeeps and Hummers with high caliber guns mounted on top – 10 and 11 and 12 year old boys being forced to join armies that are more like gangs – going to war for warlords. There is war in Sudan and in Darfur. Could we even find those places on a map? Places where people are literally starving to death – eating tree bark and soil – so that at least for a few moments it feels like something is in their tummy – infants and toddlers with sunken eyes – where you can count all their ribs. In the midst of all this violence and bloodshed that shows no sign of stopping – we have peace. We have peace with our Heavenly Father for Jesus' sake. When we were God's enemies – self serving self-righteous people – Jesus loved us still. Jesus loved us enough to die for us. In a world where people are so quick to become angry – to quarrel and argue and say things that are painful and hurtful – Jesus' unconditional forgiving love never fails. We have peace with God for Jesus' sake. Amen!

To God alone all glory! *Rev. Anthony E. Schultz*