



Connections:



King of kings Lutheran Church

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Refined By Fire

As many of you are aware, our garage and shed recently burned down after neighborhood fireworks went awry on July 4th. While the loss of property and storage space is regrettable, we were relieved to know no one was hurt and the items are covered through insurance. It was natural after seeing the damage of the fire to marvel and reflect upon the power of such an elemental force of nature.

Fire, like other basic elements (water, wind) has both the power to bring life and death. Fire can destroy buildings, forests, and human life, and tends to be something that many of us fear. Yet fire is also the source of life; we use fire to cook, heat our homes, and power most everything we do. Fire in and of itself is neither negative nor positive.

In scripture we see the same pattern emerge. There are many instances where the image of fire is used to describe the final judgment or eternal punishment for evildoers; not exactly a positive connotation. There is also a biblical theme of fire being used as a purifying agent. Fire burns away impurities and allows true beauty to be seen. In Peter's letter to the church we see this theme of purifying fire addressing those who are being persecuted for their faith.

In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1 Peter 1:6-7

To those who were suffering because of their faith, Peter's encourages the church to embrace rather than run away from the ordeals they were being put through. To have our faith tested by fire means that when life becomes difficult, when we endure suffering, pain and trauma our faith is revealed for what it is. It is easy to have faith in times of blessing, but true faith emerges in the fires of life. When we rely upon God to get us through difficult circumstances our faith grows. When we find ways to see opportunities for growth in personal tragedies and tumult, we are refined like gold in fire. Sometimes it takes the moments in life we would never choose to reveal to us who we really are, and what life is really about.

The purification of our faith requires fire. We all have impurities; we all have areas in life which require change and transformation. Sometimes we must endure fire so we can see life with more clarity, sometimes we must endure pain in order to grow. I pray that we all might take encouragement from Peter's words and see opportunities to grow and strengthen our faith in times of difficulty. May we rely upon the Lord to deliver us from the fires of life, and let our lives be examples that shine as the light of Christ.

God's Peace, Pastor Ben

August 2010

Special points of interest:

- Ice Cream Social
Fri., August 6th
7:00 p.m.
* concludes VBS



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Backyard BBQ and Music Series continues ...

Who: All are welcome, especially neighbors and friends.

What: Join us for a night of great food, live music, and outdoor games and fun.

Where: The Backyard of King of kings Lutheran Church

Why: Great food, music, fun in the summer ... why not!

When: Saturday night from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Bring: Your own lawn chairs and beverage.

August 14 Pig Roast

Music by: Andrew Robinson: Acoustic Rock

We are reaching out to our neighbors near the church and inviting them to join us for this fun-filled summer series. Please plan on attending and invite friends and family to join us.

Last Chance For Vacation Bible School

'High Seas Expedition', this summer's VBS at King of kings, sets sail **August 2nd - 6th**. Get ready to splash and make waves through God's Word as we transform our church for this incredible journey.

We have various areas where you can volunteer.

Please visit the website to see the many volunteer opportunities available and sign up today.

Don't forget to register your children for VBS at the website as well.



www.groupvbspro.com/vbs/ez/kok

Back to School Celebration at 'Pump It Up'

We will be having a kids Back to School Celebration at PUMP IT UP on Weds., August 25th from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. It is a free event, but you're welcome to stay longer and

purchase pizza if you'd like.

Please RSVP to the church office if you'd like to go.

It'll be a fun time ... join us!



Youth & Children's Programs resume in September

Sunday School
(preschool - 6th grade)

**RALLY DAY WILL BE
SUN., SEPT. 12th**

† Will meet at both
9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. on Sundays

For more information contact
Stacey Lambert
248-561-3473
or the Church office
586-566-8660

Confirmation
(7th & 8th grade)

**PARENT/ STUDENT ORIENTATION
WEDS., SEPT. 8th @ 7PM**

**FIRST CLASS WILL BE
WEDS., SEPT. 15TH**

† Meets on Wednesdays from
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Check the schedule for
specific events.

For more information contact
the Church office

C.H.A.O.S.
(9th - 12th grades)

**FIRST GET TOGETHER WILL BE
WEDS., SEPT. 15th**

† Meets on Wednesdays
at 8:00 p.m.
Check the schedule for
specific events.

For more information contact
Tim Mackey
586-532-9032



The Consequences of Sin

The story of sin is the all too common story of human life. We continually sin and fall short of God's commands and expectations for our lives. The consequences of sin can be seen all around us: violence, oppression, greed, jealousy, addiction, brokenness, and shattered relationships to name a few. We know that the world is not how God intended it to be and that our choices, both individually and corporately, have led us to where we are. In the face of sin and brokenness we are called to turn to the Lord, seeking forgiveness and trying to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." Mark 1:14-15

The kingdom of God comes into our lives when we move away from our selfish desires and choices, when we move away from a life of sin, and with the power of spirit begin living for the Lord. Jesus' message was clear: the way of sin is death and the way of God is life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

While Jesus' message is clear it is often difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. The question becomes: must we wait until heaven to live a life without sin? Or even a life with less sin? Can we live more holy and righteous lives here and now?

The stories in Genesis tell us a great deal about the power of sin in our lives. In particular, the story of Cain and Abel is quite illustrative. As Cain and Abel come to worship the Lord, each brings an offering for God. Cain works in the field and

brings an offering of "the fruit of the ground" while Abel, a shepherd, brought the "firstlings of his flock."

Each gave to the Lord as an act of worship, but God only received the offering of Abel. There is no explanation of why God did not receive Cain's offering in the text. What followed was an interesting exchange between Cain and God.

The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Genesis 4:6-7

God is telling Cain that it is possible to live a righteous life; it is possible to "do well." God also warns Cain that the power of sin is lurking at the door and has a desire for you. It is possible to do well (at least in theory) but most strikingly, sin has a desire for Cain. This is a profoundly powerful statement. Sin desires Cain. He can do well, but sin is preying upon him, nudging, pleading, instigating, and tempting him.

The story of what Cain does next is better known. In anger and jealousy he takes his brother Abel to the field and murders him. While this story is often pointed to as the archetype for sibling rivalry, it is less a story of conflict between Cain and Abel, and much more about the conflict between Cain and God. Further, it is the conflict *within* Cain over how to handle his sinful desires that leads him astray.

The question for us is: if sin is knocking on our door, desiring to lead us astray, do we have any hope of living life for God? Are we inevitably caught in a life full of sin?

Sin has real power in our lives as it not only leads us away from God spiritually, but has real effects for

others and the world. The consequences of sin have led to violence, oppression, war, greed and so much more. Sin is not just an individual problem, it is a world problem.

- Is it possible, through the faith of a few, to make the world more peaceful and loving?

- Can we through Christ, live lives that are better and make a positive difference?

- Or is our world hopelessly lost and beyond redemption until the Lord returns?

My prayer is that through the grace of God, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, we might live lives worthy of the gospel. That because of Jesus' love for me, I might be more loving. Because of the amazing gift of grace, I might be more gracious. Because God includes me as a child of God, I might include others in the same way. If we can love like God loves us, I truly believe our world's problems would improve. Perfect and sinless? Doubtful. Better and worth working for? Absolutely! As the vision for life with Christ found in Ephesians reminds us:

You are living a brand new kind of life that is continually learning more and more of what is right, and trying constantly to be more and more like Christ. Ephesians 4:13



Please check out Pastor Ben's blog at:

<http://biblestudyinsideout.blogspot.com/>



King of kings Lutheran Church
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Pastor Ben Sandin

We're on Schoenherr Road, just north of 21 Mile Road

Join us for weekly worship:

We have Contemporary Praise Worship
at **BOTH** 9:30 & 11:00 a.m. on Sundays

Sunday School will resume in September

Contemporary Praise Worship, Mondays at 7:00 p.m.



*Registration is open
for all of our fall
youth programs.*

*Stop by the church office
for a registration form or
go online to www.koklc.org.*