

Greetings in Christ!

There is even more going on than I anticipated for you in the next couple weeks, so get out your calendar and pay attention!!

First on Dec 13th we have the Sunday School Christmas Program at the 10:30 service, then there is the Christmas Concert at 4 pm, and our Dinner Party at 6pm at the parsonage! PLEASE RSVP for the dinner party! We had a great time in October with 14 people for dinner and games afterward! If you'd like to bring a dish you're welcome to, but that is not required. Also, before all of that fun begins, there is an opportunity for those of you in the Eau Claire area! Caitlin Shuda, a young adult member of Immanuel is singing with her Gospel Choir at St. Matthew Lutheran Church on Friday Dec 11th at 7:30. But hold on, we're not through yet! St. Lukes has extended an invitation to Immanuel Young Adults to attend their 'Ugly Sweater' Christmas party (don't worry, any attire at all is acceptable) on Dec 17th from 6-9 pm at St. Lukes Lutheran Church. Then, in case we haven't had enough fun yet, (and to be sure we don't leave out those of you who are stuck at school until that weekend!) we're meeting at the parsonage again (140 10th St. N) at 6 pm for a game night, and gift exchange. If you're able, please bring a gift suitable for either gender *not to exceed* \$5. Also, the entire Immanuel Congregation is invited to come Christmas Caroling in our Immanuel neighborhood on Wed Dec 23rd. We'll meet at the church at 5, and gather there afterward for some hot chocolate or cider. I'm working with our outreach team right now to come up with a small gift and invitation we can give to each of the homes we stop at. There is nothing set in stone yet, but we will likely invite anyone who's able to help put this gift together on Sunday Dec 20th between services since we don't have Bible study that Sunday.

Whew. I'm going to take a moment to rest my fingers now...then onto the devotion!

2 Tim - Session 5

The Gospel: Do It

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20tim%201:8-2:10&version=NIV>

Check out the following clip, paying special attention to its description of the state of the Declaration of Independence. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5l-6N8Y-Sgg> Some of you may be familiar with the movie or American Government and know even more details! We can see there that great precautions are taken to protect the integrity of America's original documents. But what about upholding the values and laws, in addition to just keeping the piece of paper intact? What is done to accomplish that?

We've been talking about the Gospel for the last couple weeks, and I'm going to go out on a limb (well, actually not so much me as the curriculum, but I'm going along with it! ☺) here and compare the Gospel to the constitution of the Christian faith – it is what everything else is built upon!

Last week we talked about the Gospel being good news, and what that really means to us, and for our lives. If someone asked you what the basic message of the Gospel is, what would you say? Think about it for a bit; maybe jot down a couple drafts of responses. A couple things that would be important to include are that it was God's move, not ours that brought the Gospel into play. Also, that it bridges the gap between us and God, and in doing so brings peace to the turmoil created by that gap—our sin. So why is that good news? Because our lives are all about our relationship with God! And the Gospel makes that possible!

Within a few decades of Jesus' life on earth, people were already starting to have mixed up versions of this Gospel message, which is exactly why Paul was so particular about it in so many of his letters! We're going to re-read 2 Tim 1:8-2:10 again, now looking for specific instructions regarding the Gospel. Take a moment to make your own list, even if it's just a mental one.

Some gems: Don't be ashamed of it, join with Paul in suffering for it, keep it as the pattern of sound teaching, guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit, and entrust it to reliable men so they can teach it to others.

There are a couple themes in these instructions: to protect and preserve it. Just as our government protects documents to keep their integrity, Paul works to protect the integrity of the Gospel message, and encourages us to do the same. He does this by stating it clearly in his letters, and by entrusting it to Timothy, who could teach others. We are encouraged to pass on this perfect and true Gospel message just the same!

We're going to shift gears here now. Paul compared a Christian's responsibility to the gospel to three occupations: A soldier, a farmer, and an athlete. Each of these positions require three things: A serious commitment, a lot of sacrifice, and a willingness to suffer temporarily. These occupations require a rigid tight schedule, a lot of extremely difficult physical labor, and that can't be half-done.

Now we're going to jump around through some other scripture to hear some of Jesus' teachings on the Gospel: Luke 6:47-49, Luke 8:15, 21, and John 14:21. What does Jesus encourage us to do with His words and commands?

Now for a tougher question – What does it *mean* to preserve and protect the Gospel now? In our lives? What are some challenges with that? How do we disciple others? How do we seek to understand the Bible's big picture, and the details?

Take a moment to think of what that means for you in your life, and pray for God's guidance and strength in that.