Going from Never Enough to More Than Enough


October 24, 2010

This sermon was preached by Pastor Kurt Jacobson at Trinity Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, WI

Dear Sisters and Brothers - on this Lord’s day, May the grace and peace of God and hope of life in Jesus Christ be yours in abundance.

Good morning and welcome to our worship of God and this community of faith called Trinity. Thank you for being here today to worship. We are blessed this morning to join in the affirmation of baptism for 35 high school sophomores. With that milestone in their lives, we also enjoy having many friends and family present, too.

I love this annual celebration. To see these teenagers come to this point in their faith development is a joy to me and a sign that God continues to bring new life and energy to the church in this world. I love these teens. They are spirited, bright and lively. They dream about being teachers, physicians, pharmacists, biologists, artists, architects, and musicians. I know them to have keen desire to engage their faith and serve others.

Many great adults have shaped these young adults and shared in preparing them for life-long Christian living. These teens know they are called to be ministers in daily life. As my colleagues, Pastors Jim and Heather and I have visited with them individually during the summer, we have been inspired, for we see that these teens possess more than enough faith, more than enough energy, more than enough heart and soul for taking their God-given gifts to transform the world as they serve people with Christ’s love.

More than enough is the series we continue this morning and it has two purposes:
  1) to encourage you with the good news that God is more than enough for our daily lives of faithfulness.
  2) to guide you in your daily life to respond to God’s abundance by sharing what you’ve been given in order to transform the world with God’s love and mercy.

Today’s theme is “Going from Never Enough to More Than Enough.” Would you agree with me that we have a tendency to focus more on what we don’t have — rather than what we already possess? That’s what the brothers in the bible reading were thinking as they argued about an inheritance and tried to get Jesus to mediate. Quickly Jesus warns them that life does not consists in an abundance of possessions.

But do we really believe that? “Going from never enough to more than enough” is not easy for us because we all live in the midst of prosperity and a culture where we’re always being enticed to believe we need something more - that we don’t have enough.

Look at this chart. In 1970, few Americans thought things like a second car, a second TV were necessities. Hardly any of us thought air conditioning in a car was a necessity. After meals we spent time together washing the dishes rather than owning a machine to do that task. But over the years our perspective have changed!

I recall when I was a teenager, my parents were planning a remodel of their kitchen which didn’t have a dishwasher. They were debating whether to spend the money and add one. Of course, I thought it was a ridiculous conversation because we had to be the only family in the entire city of Rice Lake that didn’t have a dishwasher! My father’s response: “I have many dishwashers and you’re one of them.” He didn’t see it as a necessity. But how many of us would now give up that machine in our kitchen?

Going from never enough to more than enough is a matter of perspective. We are surrounded and influenced by a culture that wants us to believe that we are in need ... that we don’t have enough. Keeping perspective on what is enough for our lives has never been more challenging than now.

Yet the truth remains, we like our stuff. We all have stuff. We see it, buy it, display it, insure it,
and compare it with other people’s stuff. The National Association of Home Builders reports that the average home size in the United States is 2,400 square feet, up 1,000 square feet since 1970.

But we still don’t seem to have enough room for all our stuff! Enter a new industry that didn’t exist in the 60’s. There are now more than 52,000 self-storage facilities in this country. While we tend to think we don’t have enough, our love for stuff has helped the storage industry grow from 200 million square feet to 2 billion square feet in the past 20 years!

You get the point. We live with the tendency to focus on not having enough. I say it’s a matter of perspective. And it’s a matter of Christian faith.

How many of you believe it when you pray the Lord’s Prayer and say “Give us today our daily bread”? As our sophomores were taught about this part of the Lord’s Prayer using Martin Luther’s Small Catechism - as Lutherans we understand daily bread to include everything our bodies need such as food, drink, clothing, house, money, good family, good leaders and government, good weather, peace, health, decency, good friends, and the like! And we believe that God gives daily bread without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving.

In praying the Lord’s Prayer we acknowledge that God is the source of all that we need for this life. Yet we fall into thinking we need more. Or we fear we don’t have enough or might run short. For you and I to “go from never enough to more than enough” we need to live the prayer.

Next week Pastor Heather will explore with us “Developing More Than Enough Faith.” I hope you’ll be here. If we’re ever going to find peace in our lives we need to find trust in the truth that God is more than enough and regain perspective on what is enough for our daily living.

The hit movie of the early 90’s, Cool Runnings, tells the true story of a Jamaican bobsled team at the winter Olympics. When they arrive in Calgary the team is laughed at, since nobody can take seriously a Jamaican bobsledding team. Add to that the team is led by a disgraced coach who had lost his team’s gold medal in an earlier Olympics. He had cheated by adding weights to the sled to increase it’s speed.

After a slow start in the heats, the Jamaican team suddenly become a strong contender for the medal. That night while studying photos of the race track, one of the team members asks his coach why he had cheated. What the coach says is a matter of perspective on what is enough. Let’s watch now. (“A gold medal is a wonderful thing. But if you’re not enough without it, then you’ll never be enough with it.”)

That statement made me think about the truth for our lives - that because of God we are all more than enough. With generosity of grace and love God created you, claimed you in baptism, forgives your sins, and promises you life. It’s more than enough. But how often do make that truth the core value of how we live? How often do put a future spouse, money, house, job, possessions, or anything at all as the point that when we achieve that thing - then we’ll have enough. But when we finally get to that point, it isn’t enough!

When you and I embrace the truth that we have enough and when we believe that God does provide all we need for our lives – then “going from never enough to more than enough” is possible. Before you leave this morning - I’d like you to jot a line or two on the card included in the bulletin today. I’ll read every one. Then in the week ahead, I’ll be thinking of you all – and praying for that which you need in your life - and I’ll pray that the God who claims you and loves you abundantly, will guide the decision you make to share yourself, your abilities, your money and your faith to show the world that you have perspective and you’ve gone from never enough to more than enough.