



Zion Messenger



September
2024

Pastoral Ponderings from Pastor Phil....

*The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey and drippings of the
honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in
keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:7-11*

There are two great pillars that hold up the Bible, and as they hold up the Bible, they become teachings that hold our lives up as Jesus does His work on our behalf. They, very likely, have been approached multiple ways throughout the course of time, but Luther rightly divided these two primary themes as "law and Gospel".

When I was going through Confirmation Class, what seems a lifetime ago, I was taught two "SOS codes". The first speaks about the law. It **Shows Our Sin**. When we turn and look to the Gospel, as a consequence of seeing our sin, we get our second one; it **Shows Our Savior**. They work in tandem, and as they work together, we get the biggest picture of reality to who we are as Jesus comes to us. If we don't understand ourselves through the law, we don't see the need for Jesus. When we understand ourselves through the law, we can't help but see our need for Jesus.

*First Wednesday
of the Month*

*"Alternate Worship
Services"*

At Zion

Next service is on

September 4th

At 6:00 p.m.

*Bible Classes on
Wednesdays
September 11, 18, &
25 at 6:00 p.m.*

Join Us!

The law presents an interesting stumbling block for most of us with a European lineage. We think of the law as being a burden to toil under, or a bludgeon that the government gets to use to bring us into line. While this can be the case (I don't like it when people drive fast through school zones- thank God for the burden and bludgeon), there is a missed reality that comes alongside of who we are as we consider the law. In Hebrew, the law is the תּוֹרָה. In English we would call this the Torah. We generally refer to this as the first 5 books of the Old Testament, traditionally this is the Tanakh, because in it we find the Law of Yahweh. The mistake we make is that we see this in our western mindset and miss the color, shade, and joy of what the law is. Torah doesn't actually mean law. Torah is instruction and guidance. There is a martial idea that goes along with the root of guiding an arrow, but for us the bigger picture is what a father does for his children. Something I tell my children, as their father, is to not be average. Don't be ordinary. Average and ordinary don't stand out. They don't generally excel. Average and ordinary simply accept the ho hum status quo and move with it as good cogs. I encourage my children to not be this. I want them to be joyously unique as they live the lives that God has created for them. The law becomes this for us.

The idea of the law as guidance is explicit throughout Lutheran theology. Catechumens are asked regularly what are the functions of the law in the life of the believer? They answer dutifully, ad nauseum, a curb, a rule, a guide. For whatever reason we drop two and only focus on the one. We see it only as a rule. We never talk about the other two. These aspects of the law are interesting because if we were to recognize and respond to Torah the way a rabbi would suggest, we would far more regularly see the law as a curb and guide, meaning that it wouldn't be a rule all the time. We wouldn't be getting into trouble all the time... as the blood bought saints of God. When people are lost in sin, it's very hard for the law to be anything except a cruel master that bludgeons and accuses.

Being raised in Jesus Christ, there is a joy in the realization that what God expects from us is clearly stated for all our relationships. In the first table of the law, commandments 1-3, we are told what our relationship to God should look like. We are told what He expects of us and how we are to live, how we are to worship and be pleasing to Him. Commandments 4-10 are the second table, and there we find out how we are to interact with one another. Condemnation and judgement are certainly there, but at the same time we are given clear and explicit explanations of what the rules of the house are. In your homes, it might be no swearing and using bad words. YHWH says don't use His name in vain, or talk about your neighbors.

The law is something that we often don't see for what it truly is. We too quickly see it as the accuser, and not as often as the wisdom of God given to us for our understanding of what our lives should look like. As we think about the law of God this month, I would encourage you to ask yourself, where is the law accusing, and how should you respond? Where is the law trying to guide you? How well are you following?

With any conversation about the law, we can't forget the Gospel. When we deal with the law, the reality of it is that even at it's most gentle it can be crushing. We don't follow the wisdom and guidance of God because we are still sinners yet, awaiting the return of Jesus when all things will be made right. We keep in mind that while we try to follow the law, Jesus doesn't try; He did. He fulfills everything that we can't and offers Himself for us that we might be saved. We seek to follow the command and will of God as the Spirit is upon us, but we rejoice that Jesus did and does. The laurels of Jesus are placed on our head, and as a consequence we become the very Children of God.

Brothers and sisters, our basic teachings about Scripture point us to the enormity of sin. There's no way around that. It also points us to the reality, and saving work, of Jesus Christ. While sin is a problem and it's big; Jesus is bigger. Sin, death, and the devil have had their day and their attempt. Jesus saves you and me. We praise Him, we rejoice in Him, we celebrate Him being our God who saves. Our God who fulfilled the law and does all things right.

In Christ,

Pastor Phil



A special voters meeting will be held on September 22, 2024.

Questions? Ask Pastor Phil.

Save the Date!

The Zion Better Together Dinner will be in November 10, 2024!

More information to follow.

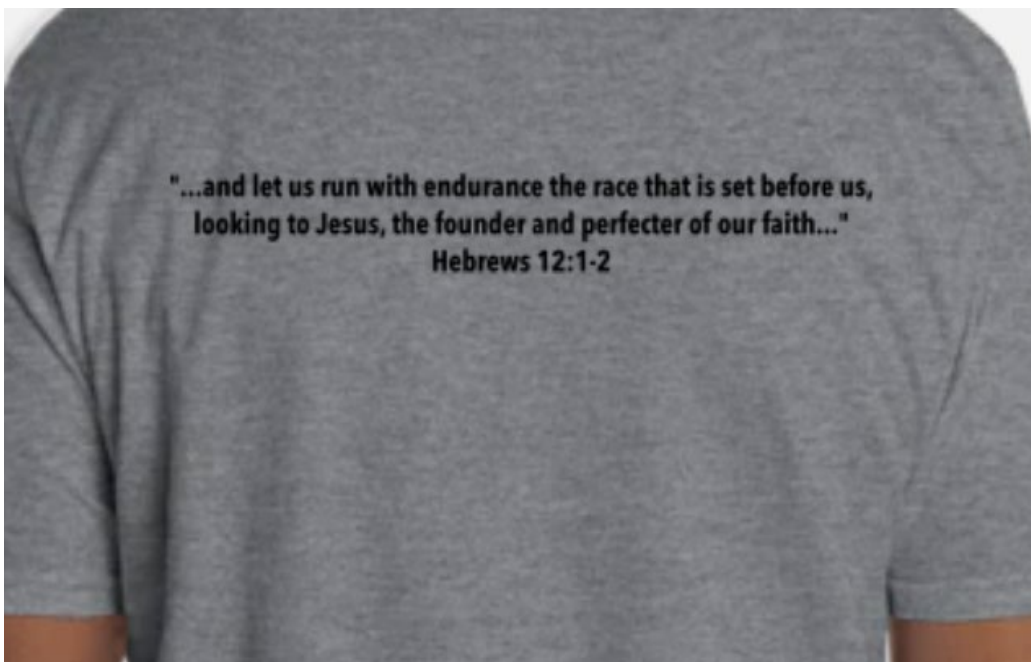
Get your Endure t-shirt today!

Order at: <https://forms.gle/2QFDSLti7ayikobs9>

Celebrate faith, community, and the theme of "Endure" as the Zion Lutheran Church, Staunton, Youth Group sells t-shirts to recognize our school year theme and create excitement for the National Youth Gathering in July, 2025. The soft-style Gildan shirts can be purchased in youth sizes s, m, l or adult sizes s, m, l, xl for the cost of \$25 each. Adult sizes 2x and 3x can be purchased for \$27 each. Orders should be in near the end of September.

Contact Kristi Cook, Youth Coordinator, if you have questions. # 314-578-9158

Kristi.Cook@zion-school.org

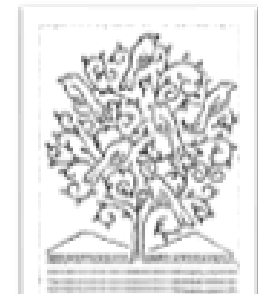


September 2024

Zion Lutheran Church

Mark 4:30-32

30 And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? **31** It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, **32** yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mission Sundays ¹	Labor Day- No School ²	3	4	5	6	7
8 & 10:30 Worship 9:30 SunSchool	Noon-2p Pr.Phil@HisServStation D.O. Fundraiser	5p Girls' Volleyball Home Game 6:30 Elders	8:30 Chapel 9-noon Lydia Circle 10:30 Glenwood 6p*Alternate*Worship	8:30a AdultBible Study 10-noon Pr.Phil@HisS.S.	TrinityEville BaseballTournBegins	Tourney TBA 3p1stPubSchConfirmation Class 5p Worship
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
8 & 10:30 Worship 9:30 SunSchool 1-3 "God's Kids"	Noon-2p Pr.Phil@HisServStation 5pGirls*VolleyballHomeG 6:30School Board		8:30 Chapel 9-noon Lydia Circle 10:30 Glenwood 6p Bible Study	8:30a AdultBible Study 10-noon Pr.Phil@HisS.S.		3pPubScConfirmationClas 5p Worship
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8 & 10:30 Worship 9:30 SunSchool 4-7 MS-HS Youth at Zion Bethalto	Noon-2p Pr.Phil@HisServStation 6p Evangelism	MELHS Field Day	8:30 Chapel 9-noon Lydia Circle 10:30 Glenwood 12:30 HealthRehb 6p Bible Study	8:30a AdultBible Study 10-noon Pr.Phil@HisS.S. 6n Parish Ed		3pPubScConfirmationClas 5p Worship
22	TBA: Public School ²³	Confirmati ²⁴	Classes ²⁵	Begins this ²⁶	Week ²⁷	28
8 Wor 9:30 SS 10:30Wor* Joyful Noise*ChoirSinging Voters' Meeting!	Noon-2p Pr.Phil@HisServStation	4:30p Stewardship 6:30p Council	8:30 Chapel 9-noon Lydia Circle 10:30 Glenwood 6p Bible Study	8:30a AdultBible Study 10-noon Pr.Phil@HisS.S.		TBABoys Volleybal Game 3pPubScConfirmationClas 6p Worship
29	30					
8 & 10:30 Worship 9:30 SunSchool	Noon-2p Pr.Phil@HisServStation					

