



War: Part 5 – Jesus Upends It All

“By the time of the Pharisees, just before Jesus arrives, this is the hope: the Messiah will come, he will be righteous and will inspire in the people a keeping of the law such as it should be kept. In keeping this law, like one of the judges of old, or like King David, the Messiah will cause God to relent from punishing them through foreign domination. God will bless them for their obedience and remove war and judgment from them.” -August Newsletter

The response of God’s people to their national trauma, the destruction of their country and their Exile in Babylon, made a lot of sense. (Though I should admit that my understanding of it oversimplifies the matter. There were other groups of Jews who had different understandings/strategies. The Sadducees, for example, had chosen to cooperate with the foreign enemy and not take religion quite so seriously. The Zealots assumed that God would help them if they helped themselves, by murdering Romans and starting a revolution.) But many or most of the people we see in the gospel accounts seem to be operating within the Pharisee’s paradigm: Keep the Law so that God would relent from punishing, wait for the Messiah to come as a sign of the removal of that punishment (war and foreign domination.)

John the Baptist arrives on the scene preaching both repentance and the imminent coming of the Messiah. On the one hand this is extremely exciting for everybody and it

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makes sense. The purification of God’s people just before the arrival of the Messiah and then the culmination of their hope, the restoration of a king on the throne, religious faithfulness, victory, independence, glory! But there was a problem. John was criticizing the important people. All of a sudden there was a new and terrible possibility: might the coming of the Messiah mean their removal from power and influence? This put them in a terrible spot. They wanted Messiah to come and for God’s punishment to be removed. On the other hand, life wasn’t so bad and they didn’t want their dream to rely on their own downfall.

So, when Jesus started preaching and as it became clear that he was someone who exercised power and authority (the Messiah?) they paid very close attention to him. One of the things they needed to see from him in order to believe was a deep commitment to the sacred keeping of the Law. Their foundational understanding was that God had punished them with war and foreign domination because their ancestors had not kept the Law. The Messiah needed to impeccably keep the Law and bring others to do likewise. If not, no matter what he might do, no matter what power he wielded, he couldn’t possibly be the Messiah.

Just as John had done, Jesus put them in an impossible spot. He did two things: 1) He had power and authority such as the Messiah would have; 2) He broke the Law constantly and was easy-going with others who broke it. Without the deeds of power, it would have been easy to dismiss him. Without the keeping of the Law, it was impossible to accept him.

I do not think that any of this was an accident. The coming of Jesus in the way that he came was a repudiation of their foundational belief, that God was punishing them because they hadn't kept the Law. The coming of Jesus was the rejection of their understanding of God as an exacting judge who sought to punish them.

Rather, Jesus came preaching a God who was a shepherd seeking his lost sheep, or a father embracing a lost son and throwing a party. Jesus came touching the unclean, eating with sinners, forgiving people who hadn't even repented yet. Jesus made a point to do deeds of mercy on God's holy day, the Sabbath, as if to provoke them, as if to say, "What could be more holy than restoring people who were hurting?" None of this fit their vision of a God who was punishing them for their disobedience. None of this fit their vision of a God who had loosed war upon their forefathers and destroyed Jerusalem by the hands of the Babylonians.

The Gospels are a collision of visions of who God is. And these visions are starkly in contrast to one another. Does God demand holiness and obedience from his people and punish them with war and death when they fail? Or is God like a loving father who is patient and full of compassion, who seeks to forgive and restore?

Jesus' embrace of obvious sinners, his unrepentant breaking of the Sabbath, his forgiving of sins, his deeds of power, all of these things make it impossible for there to be some kind of compromise. Either the Pharisees and religious leaders would win or Jesus would. It couldn't be both ways.

So they killed him. They used the ultimate weapon of their vision: death. They employed the foreign dominator to do it. In seeking to hold onto their vision of God, they discredited and tainted themselves.

And then Jesus is raised from the dead. What lies dead instead is their vision of God as the wielder of war and punishment against them. Rather it is Jesus who is victorious. God is a loving father. God is a shepherd who seeks and restores the lost. God sits with sinners as with friends.

Now this raises all kinds of questions for me. I'm finding that in the writing of this series of articles I am raising interesting and difficult questions for myself which I'm not sure how to answer yet. Maybe you are having questions (or reactions) too? That's good.

Next month I'm going to try to pick up with what early Christians thought of war.

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Rev. Ben Worley
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Fruits of the Spirit

2023 Dorcas Cluster Fall Retreat for Women

Dorcas Cluster Fall Retreat will be Wednesday, Sept 13, 2023 at Twin Lakes Christian Center. Registration and coffee 8:30 a.m. Bible Study led by Pastor Tom Hagen – "Live" Guided by the Spirit. Speakers will be from D/SAOC and Beacon of Hope. Registration fee is \$25 due August 30, 2023. Registrations forms are available in the entry.

In-Kind Gifts for D/SAOC Fort Dodge will be collected-- Items needed: disinfectant wipes, dish soap, laundry soap, dryer sheets, cleaning supplies, dishwasher pods, storage/freezer bags, aluminum foil and plastic wrap, bath towels (hand towels and washcloths), kitchen towels/washcloths, twin size sheet sets and pillows, fragrance free items, coffee, filters & creamer, batteries, lightbulbs, gas cards, Menards gift card (Maintenance), nonperishable snacks, school supplies, food/drinks, shampoo/conditioner, body wash/soap, deodorant, paper towels, paper plates, napkins, plastic/Styrofoam cups, Kleenex, toilet paper, sippy cups, diapers (size 4-6), baby wipes, baby bottles, baby shampoo and baby lotion.

In-Kind Gifts for Beacon of Hope: garbage bags (13 and 45 gallon), paper towels, toilet paper, paper plates, plastic silverware, floor cleaner, coffee, creamer and general cleaning supplies.

A box is in the entry for your generous donations.

Thank you.

**Emanuel-St. John Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2023**

Randy Souder called the meeting to order. Present were Cindy Souder, Pauline Lange, Rhonda Johnson, Dar Lake, Kari Lantz, Faith Worley, Pastor Ben, Nicole Meyer, Dennis Hinrichs, Randy Souder, LeRoy Johnson, and Candace Booth. Motion by Dar Lake, second by LeRoy Johnson to approve Randy Souder as temporary President for the meeting. Motion passed. Devotions were given by Pastor Ben. Motion by Dennis Hinrichs, second by Dar Lake to approve the agenda. Motion passed. Motion by Candace Booth, second by Dar Lake to approve the June minutes. Motion passed. Motion by Dar Lake, second by Candace Booth to approve the Treasurers Report with a balance of \$25,512.35. Motion Passed.

Old Business: None

President Report: None

Pastor Report: Pastor Ben reported after returning from camps and vacation he visited church members in nursing home or homebound.

Worship and Music Committee: Candace Booth reported that committee working on scheduling volunteers for helping with worship. They discussed types of worship services and possibly doing a survey.

Parish Education Committee: Faith Worley reported Sunday School will start on September 10. Committee is still looking for two Sunday school teachers. Susan Albright and Jamie Bartels will be coordinators of the Christmas Sunday School program

Outreach Committee: Kari Lantz reported that the Break the Cycle Bike ride luncheon was a great success. She has some pictures she will try and get up on the church's Facebook site.

Property and Management Committee: LeRoy Johnson reported that committee talked

about electronic door locks for church doors. Motion by Dar Lake, second by Dennis Hinrichs to approve the Property and Management Committee to purchase locks. Motion passed. The committee discussed spraying church cemeteries, cleaning of the air conditioning units and putting some type of rock around the church building.

Stewardship and Finance: Dar Lake present. No report.

WELCA: Candace Booth reported on the Fall Retreat at Twin Lakes Christian Center September 13.

New Business: Motion by Dar Lake, second by Kari Lantz to purchase an upgrade for the Church Membership roster on the computer. Motion passed. Gods Work, Our Hands will be held Sunday Sept 10th.

Motion by LeRoy Johnson, second by Dar Lake to adjourn. Motion passed. Lord's Prayer.



**Rally Sunday
September 10, 2023----9:00 AM**

Sunday School begins at 9 a.m. each Sunday morning through May 2024. Children of the congregation and community from the age of three are invited to come each Sunday morning to learn about Jesus. Children are asked to enter via the main entrance for registration. After registration the children will gather in the sanctuary for announcements and opening to the new year.

Children will be singing at the 10:00 a.m. worship service. Grade 4 students will also receive a Bible during the worship service.

September Birthdays

- 1) Julie Haberstroh
- 3) Tina Peter-Smith
- 4) Toryn Albright
- 5) Erin Gifford
- 6) Elin Albright, Dennis Booth,
Jered Campbell, Arlin Purdie
- 8) Dennis Dettmann
- 9) Jeffrey Talbott
- 10) Denise Ramsey, Stacy Talbott
- 11) Ann Albinger, Keith Berry
- 13) David Diersen
- 14) Dennis Hinrichs, Zerik Winey
- 15) Sarah Cerra, Randy Scharn,
- 17) Kimberly Adams, Susan Albright,
Carlyee Clark
- 18) Shelly Baumhover, Ty Purdie
- 19) Jamie Maulsby
- 20) Trevor Bounds, Kenneth Lange
- 21) Shelli Berry, Tanner Berry
- 22) Tyler Adams
- 23) David Robideau, Nathan Sands
- 25) Cindy Finley, **Carol Ross**
- 26) Brandon Diersen
- 27) Joleen Harmon, Dyle Rockafellow
- 28) Jamie Clark, Alison Greene,
Hallee Maulsby, Brett Meyer,
Shane Segebarth



Quilts given to the Quilt Auction

Marlene Meyer	\$150
Rhonda Johnson	\$ 75
Betty Scheidegger	\$275
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Rhonda Johnson	\$250
Betty Scheidegger	\$125
Betty Scheidegger	\$300
Betty Schedegger	\$150
Marlene Meyer	\$200
Em-St Johns ladies, men & Friends pinwheel blocks donated to the church	\$225

Pictures of these quilts will be posted on the bulletin board in the narthex so you can see the beautiful quilts that were made.

Wedding Anniversaries

- Sept. 1, 2007 Jon & Angela Ellerbrock
 Sept. 15, 1990 Timothy & Gloria Kral
 Sept. 17, 2005 Chad & Tonya Lankford
 Sept. 18, 2021 Grace & Joseph Schrage, Jr.
 Sept. 20, 1980 Ricky & Laurel Linqvist
 Sept. 20, 2003 Jeffrey & Stacy Talbott
 Sept. 21, 2019 Kaleb & Emily Roth
 Sept. 22, 1973 **Michael & Sara Carlson**
 Sept. 24, 1983 Randy & Marilyn Schmitt
 Sept. 28, 2019 Nolan & Allysha Huddleson



Dear generous donors to the Quilt Auction

THANK YOU!!! On behalf of IOLBC, I want to offer my sincere thanks to you for your donation to our 36th annual quilt auction! The work, time, and creativity that you put into each item is truly appreciated. Thank you for your generosity in giving to this ministry!

In total, we received about \$61,400.00 in bids on Quilt Auction weekend! This money enables the camps to continue providing excellent youth and family programs. Thank you for your investment in the work of sharing Christ with so many campers!

The amount of your personal or group donation is enclosed. Please share the good news. Regardless of the individual amount, you were an important part of raising a tremendous amount of support for the camp. THANK YOU!!!

I hope that you will again be a part of this exciting weekend in 2024. Also, please consider coming to camp for one of our retreats, summer camps, or even come and stay in our facilities on a personal retreat.

Thanks again for your great support! I wish you God's richest blessings in every way!

For all of the campers blessed because of you,
 Rod Quanbeck
 Executive Director
 Ingham Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camps

Thank You!

RAGBRAI update

The Bishops' RAGBRAI Team completed an awesome week biking across the state. Supported by the hospitality and generosity (and so much pie!) of you and your congregation. The current team total is \$63,273 with more donations arriving at the synod offices daily. The three synods will continue adding to the total until September 1, so it's not too late to join the cause! Be on the lookout for highlights of 50 ministries fighting hunger across Iowa and photos and videos from the ride in the coming weeks. THANK YOU!

[Julie Cook](#)

Administrative Assistant

[Western Iowa Synod](#)



September 2023, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article

Leave a Legacy Gift

LSI has responded to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service for over 150 years. During this time, we've created a legacy of lifting up and empowering thousands of our Iowa neighbors, thanks to the generosity of donors like you.

You can celebrate your lifetime through a legacy gift, to ensure LSI can continue to provide lifesaving services for those in need. Many of our faithful donors want their gifts to continue after their lifetime, and have elected to leave a legacy through LSI's foundation or the ELCA foundation.

Planned gifts to LSI help to create a firm foundation for our ministry and contribute more than \$400,000 each year.

Thanks to the generous compassion of individual donors, congregations such as yours, and our ministry partners at the three synods of the ELCA,

we can be confident LSI will be here to meet the changing needs of Iowans for years to come.

You Can Make a Lasting Impact

A longtime supporter of LSI turned an appreciated real estate asset into a charitable remainder unitrust agreement with the ELCA foundation. Because of this agreement, they will receive income from the trust for the remainder of their two lives, and subsequently to their two adult children for a twenty-year term. According to the actuarial tables, this gift will finally terminate in about forty years, leaving a very strong and greatly appreciated impact on LSI's future.

Another LSI donor elected to share their investment by directing a required minimum distribution (RMD) from their IRA directly to LSI. The donor used this contribution to match new or increased gifts during the annual matching gift campaign.

We ask you to consider how you can make a lasting impact and leave a legacy. To learn more about planned giving opportunities, go to LSIowa.org/leave-a-legacy/ or contact Deb Whitford, LSI senior director of philanthropy and church relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.Iowa.



Resolve to pray each day Prayers Make a Difference

Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference.

--Max Lucado

