

THOUGHTS

By Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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Thoughts
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KEY CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT

The manuscript is written and the artwork is in hand. Soon my companion book to Pastor Paul's volumes, Key Chapters of the Bible: Gospels and Acts, and Key Chapters of the Bible: Epistles will be published! It is expected to be published in September, a lovely marker for Our Shepherd Lutheran Church's 60th Anniversary! I invite you to join us for that occasion on September 23rd; we will have a pig roast and picnic following the 10:30 a.m. service that day. The Word Today and Our Shepherd have had tremendous blessings showered on us by the Almighty! Come and celebrate with us!

"TURN THE OTHER CHEEK IS DEAD"

That was the title of my recent sermon exploring how there seems to be a shift toward revenge, and legally Stand Your Ground laws have been passed in many states. An alternative named the Castle Doctrine or Castle Law, is also being enacted in many states. The upshot is that one can now legally respond with force, and if necessary kill. The law of a country is not often in perfect harmony with our faith, and in some cases it is not in harmony with faith. The Christian is called to a higher standard than upholding the law. Jesus told his followers, "You have heard it said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also (see Matthew 5:38-42 and Luke 6:27-36)."

Among all the teachings of Jesus I find some of the strongest resistance on this point from believers. It seems we feel self-defense is part of the Gospel, but it is not. Jesus is totally pacifistic, to an extreme degree. He calls his people to a *radical love not known by the world*. Christians may have opposing opinions on this topic due to conscience. Some feel strongly that they must oppose evil if necessary, especially to protect others. Some believers feel that no violence is ever condoned. It is good to wrestle with such topics and pray about them. Our culture seems to be "hardening" in that resistance to the point of killing is finding more acceptance, while showing extreme love through forbearance is declining.

SURGERY AT 90!

It is not that uncommon anymore to hear of persons 90 years old having major surgery! Recently one of our elder members fell, broke her hip, had surgery to replace the ball of the hip joint, and within a week is up and walking! How marvelous that the Lord has allowed mankind to use the incredible genius granted in our minds to develop modern medicine! Jesus was the one to shift the emphasis on the sick and dying from disdain to compassion. The ancient world tried to get rid of the sick and handicapped. Jesus taught his followers compassion for the sick. An explosion of hospitals and care ministries came from the example of Christ. Millions have given their lives in Christian service to care for those injured on battlefields, brought down by accidents and illness, and struggling with addictions or other mental health infirmities.



*The Bible is God's Word . . . Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh . . .
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

August

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GOD'S GRACE IS ASTOUNDING

We tend to forget how incredible the mercy and kindness of God are – until we have messed up big time! We see instances of people who commit heinous crimes, and often we are tempted to condemn them. We perceive sleights against us and we may hold a grudge, even if they repent.

Where our mercy runs short, God has unlimited mercy! It is a good thing that the Lord is almighty, and doesn't tire or fail when it comes to compassion! All it takes to be reminded of this is a major moral failing on our part. Oh, the day will come; no one – apart from our dear Lord, Jesus – gets through this life without at least a few critical sins. When the consequences of those sins fall upon us, then how quickly we want the everlasting love of God in Christ applied to us! And he does, God actually does forgive us. Amazing!

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CHANGE TO CHANGE THE WORLD!

We are up and running with the "Change to Change the Word" initiative! I do not know how often I will report on it, but I thought you might like a lead update; our first offering of change brought by people participants was just over \$652! Every cent will go toward the mission of The Word Today, reaching those around the world with the least exposure to the Gospel of Christ. If you would like to join us, just let us know and forward the "change", albeit preferably in a much lighter form of currency!

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PRAY FOR PASTOR PAUL AND SYLVIA

Pastor Paul, who fell and broke his femur about six weeks ago, is past the bed rest stage and is now starting rehab. This will be a long and difficult road, as he had so little exercise over that time period. Please pray earnestly that he is able to summon the strength to stand and walk well again; otherwise he will be confined largely to a wheelchair. Pray that Sylvia is able to work through the financial and domestic tasks that fall to her during this time period. Thank you for your faithfulness in this matter!

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ESAU IS GETTING CRANKY

Our Shih Tzu, Esau (He was born with deep red hair), is 14 this week, and he is getting cranky! He whines continuously as we eat, nips at fingers if we try to wipe his beard off, and can't be sent to the groomer due to biting at the groomer. It's not just people who can get snippy as they get older! But we still love him!

Blessings!

Douglas W. Schroeder