

THOUGHTS

BY DOUGLAS W. SCHROEDER
SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

J

HALFWAY BACK

Doesn't it feel as though we are halfway back from the Covid-19 debacle? People certainly are fed up with the continued play-by-play action and incessant masking. First, we are making progress, then another variant shows up and the circus begins again. Two years ago, I said publicly that you cannot stop a virus from spreading; common sense would tell a person that. However, we have seen a ridiculous amount of fear, restriction of freedom, and scientific pronouncements that incessantly change. I say good ridded to it all in 2022!

A

NEW YOU (IN CHRIST) IN 2022!

The theme for Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, the home of The Word Today, is *New You (in Christ) in 2022!* The theme passage is Colossians 3:1-17, which emphasizes putting to death old sinful habits and putting on new behaviors that glorify God. I love the premise of the discussion, "Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things (v.1-2)."

N

U

It takes effort to move our perspective from earthly things to heavenly things. It does not happen naturally. That is why I put the phrase "in Christ" in parentheses, to remind us that Christianity is not merely a self-improvement program, but being reborn, renewed, regenerated so as to conform more closely to the Savior. I hope that you will be diligent in worship this year. Statistics of church attendance show that currently 30-50% of people who were worshipping in person before Covid-19 are now not in the sanctuary! That is awful! It makes Christians look like wimps and losers! How are we supposed to win the world if we let the world make us soft?

A

R

It is time for a new you! Especially if you have fallen into a lax attitude spiritually, it is time to wake up! The Apostle Paul reminded, "The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed (Romans 13:11b)." Do not let this year find you entrenched in inactivity! Get moving! Be renewed this year through recommitment! Get involved in worship, Scripture study group, and Sunday School for your children! May God make you a new, revitalized believer in 2022!

Y

AN EXAMPLE OF WHY I AM FOR THE DEATH PENALTY

Some Christians think it is improper for us to endorse capital punishment. I suspect they have a misunderstanding of God's Law and the outcome to society when punishment is not much worse than a slap on the wrist. Last year was a demonstration of what happens when lawlessness reigns. Scores of innocent citizens and police were murdered.

The Word Today
Box 77
Greendale, WI
53129



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

JANUARY

2

0

2

2

The latest example was Bradley, IL police Sgt. Marlene Rittmanic, 49, who was responding to a noise complaint at a hotel. Wounded and bleeding, begging for her life and urging the perpetrators that they did not have to kill her, nevertheless, they did without mercy.

I am all for the death penalty. Yes, I preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, too. Is there a conflict? No, there is not. The government is God's agent of wrath (Romans ch.13) to bring justice. Liberals think that humans are pretty good all told and that they only act up when they are in need. Supply the need, and supposedly the wickedness of looting and shooting goes away. That is a stupid outlook, one that was shot down – pardon the pun – this past year. Without strong enforcement, judiciary, and penal system, crime and murder will proliferate.

I would be in favor of fast-tracking capital punishment. If the evidence was conclusive, I would agree with a one-week execution timeframe. The wicked do not learn from soft and extended consequences to violations. It is appalling to have murderers sit for years in prisons and be given multiple opportunities to extend appeals when they have been judged and found guilty. The clearer the evidence, the shorter the timeframe needs to be. When it comes to the dynamics of crime, cultures are not responsive to the Gospel by and large. Without teeth, the law becomes a laughingstock. Failure to exact retribution makes a mockery of every victim and police officer gunned down, and it weakens the country regarding your safety.

This is a color-blind assessment, but manipulative types will scream that my comments are racist. I don't care what color the murderer put to death is – white, black, red, yellow, purple – matters not. What matters is justice in the streets. I would love for those facing fast-track execution to wise up and repent! I wish murderers would be born again and renounce their evil ways! That would be a victory for Heaven! You can be assured, however, that a toothless law and consequences will never push the wicked to reform themselves. We are doing no favors for our culture, nor for the Gospel to let evil flourish.

When the Lord established the social laws for Israel handed down at Mt. Sinai, murder was not to be tolerated but punished life for life (Exodus 21:23-25). The original law was intended to uphold justice, but also prevent escalating personal retribution. If you read it carefully, you will see that children in the womb were protected by this law! Elective abortion is an abomination to God. Too many Christians do not realize that the personal injunction to love one's enemies does not extend to the government. Personally, we must be pacifistic, but unless the government strongly opposes evil, it will grow like a weed, and increasing the odds of your being a victim of it. A godly culture that values human life will have extreme penalties for those who play God and wantonly murder.

Blessings,
Douglas W. Schroeder