

IMMANUEL MONTHLY

July 1, 2011

“The question isn’t whether you will have a master. Everyone will have a master. The question is: Who will your master be?”



From Pastor’s Desk True Freedom is Freedom *in* Christ

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

To be free is not the same as to do as you please. To do as you please is anarchy. Anarchy sets each individual as his own government without regard for anyone else.

But freedom recognizes limits in respect for another’s freedom. Freedom submits itself to a just standard, a standard that recognizes inherent rights of all mankind. This is what the founding fathers codified in the Declaration of Independence

and the Constitution of the United States.

In these documents we find that our freedom is rooted in the fact that we are all created by God, and therefore, we all have inherent, inalienable rights under Him. To deny this fact is to deny not only the basis of freedom but freedom itself. For when we deny the God who creates and endows all human beings with inherent rights, we set ourselves up as gods. This,

however, means that we are all a god unto ourselves. Thus, *we* set the standard for ourselves, each to his own. And when this happens, each person becomes a law unto himself without regard for anyone else. That isn’t freedom. That’s slavery. Anarchy is a form of slavery because we are all at the whim of everyone else’s standard. Ironically, true freedom is living in subjection to the right things, having the right master.

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This is also true of our relationship to God in Christ. The question isn't whether you will have a master. Everyone will have a master. The question is: Who will your master be?

St. Paul speaks of this in Galatians 5:1, 13-15,

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. . . . For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.”

And again in Romans 6:16-23,

“Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience,

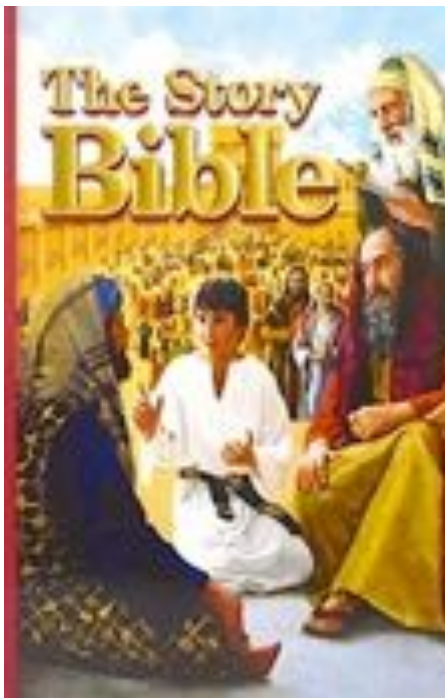
which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. . . . But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

True freedom is only freedom to live as slaves of God in Christ Jesus. Thus, we are finally free to live as God intended us to live: From Him and for each other.

And so this July 4th, celebrate not only the political freedom we enjoy because of the God who creates and endows us with rights. Take time to celebrate also the freedom we enjoy in Christ, who by His cross, set us free from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

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Pastor Braaten



The Book of the Month The Story Bible

Open Up a Treasure. Open Up God's Word.

Never before in Concordia Publishing House's nearly 150 years of publishing have they produced a Bible for children as rich and feature filled as *The Story Bible*.

This treasure will be a great help to pastors, teachers, parents and grandparents as they, like the faithful mother and grandmother of St. Timothy, lead the little ones to understand the Sacred Scriptures.

Whether for at-home use, in preschools, or as part of a congregation-

wide children's ministry, this Bible will make a lasting impact on children from ages 3 to 8.

Teach children about the Bible in a way like never before. Concordia Publishing House's new release, *The Story Bible*, delivers beautiful life-like art combined with features not normally found in children's Bibles such as discussion questions, learning activities, and prayers.

For more information or to see samples visit cph.org/storybible.

And if our congregation orders 10 or more copies, CPH will give us a \$10 savings on each copy we purchase. Call or e-mail the church office to sign up TODAY.

From the President Preaching Is All About 'You'

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

"We need to preach more about the Gospel!" a well-meaning pastor admonished his brothers at a pastoral conference. As he continued his speech, a little old man shuffled up to the microphone. It's hard to believe that this old pastor, barely over five feet tall, had been among the very first in all the German churches to reject publicly the Nazi Party platform and then struggled against Hitler for the rest of the war. He declared to his brother pastors: "For more than 50 years I have *never* preached *about* the Gospel. I have only *preached* the Gospel!"

Herman Sasse put his finger on a perennial weakness in our preaching. The sermon is not mere information. The preacher must dare to speak the biblical "you!" in both Law and Gospel. "*You* killed the Lord of glory!" "*Your* righteous deeds are as filthy rags." "*You* are the man!" (Nathan to David).



"But through it all, let's stop preaching limply and merely only about the Law and the Gospel. Let's preach the Law in all its condemnation and the Gospel in all its sweetness."

Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

And the Gospel is proclaimed the same way: "Today is born *for you* a Savior." "*You* are raised in Him in Baptism." "The blood of Christ, shed *for you.*"

Preaching is a finger-pointing business. It takes courage to stand in the pulpit and let fly, accusing full-on with all the force of the damning Law. "The Law is to be preached in its full severity" (Walther). It takes

even more skill to preach the full and sweet Gospel to sinners accused. Yet the Bible is packed to the brim with Christ's full and free forgiveness, read to be dished up and delivered by the lips of the preacher. "By killing he makes alive," Luther emphasized again and again. And so our preaching must kill the old man, damn him thoroughly to hell and raise him up again with Christ and His free forgiveness.

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Preachers, let's sit at the feet of the apostles. Notice how many times "you" appears in Peter's sermon:

"Men of Israel, . . . The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom **YOU** delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But **YOU** denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to **YOU**, and **YOU** killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. . . . And now, brothers, I know that **YOU** acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that **YOUR** sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for **YOU**, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for **YOU** a prophet like me from **YOUR** brothers. **YOU** shall listen to him in whatever he tells **YOU**. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. **YOU** are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with **YOUR** fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in **YOUR** offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' God, having raised up his servant, sent him to **YOU** first, to bless **YOU** by turning every one of **YOU** from **YOUR** wickedness."

I love a bit of humor in a sermon, a rhetorical surprise. A story is great, even the occasional personal story. I'm a fan of all sorts of styles, of changing things up and "finding a new string to thump" on occasion (Luther). But through it all, let's *stop* preaching limply and merely only *about* the Law and the Gospel. Let's preach the Law in all its condemnation and the Gospel in all its sweetness.

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"For more than 50 years I have never preached about the Gospel. I have only preached the Gospel!"

Education Corner

Gideon, Mighty Warrior VBS

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

This year's Vacation Bible School is set for **Sunday, July 31st–Thursday, August 4, 6:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m.** The theme is *Gideon, Mighty Warrior*. It is devoted to learning how God always gives His people victory over their enemies. No matter how bad things look, despite all the odds, God always keeps His Word and promises and comes to help His people.

And so we will learn of Gideon, the mighty warrior of the Old Testament. God chose Gideon to give His chosen people, Israel, victory over the Midianites. God chose Jesus Christ to be our Gideon. The Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to give us victory over our enemies—sin, death, and the power of the devil. The odds were stacked against them. But God's Word and promises never fail.

Here is the schedule of the week's topics:

- ✘ **SUNDAY**—*Gideon Is Chosen to Defeat the Midianites (Judges 6:1–24)*
- ✘ **MONDAY**—*Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal and God shows Him the Sign (Judges 6:25–40)*

- ✘ **TUESDAY**—*The Lord Gives Victory to Gideon with 300 Men (Judges 7:1–23)*
- ✘ **WEDNESDAY**—*Gideon Subdues the Midianites (Judges 7:24–8:21)*
- ✘ **THURSDAY**—*Gideon's Ephod and Subsequent Death (Judges 8:22–35)*

We strive to provide both an enjoyable environment as well as a quality learning experience. Through craft and play, music, teaching, and worship, your child will grow in their understanding of themselves, the world around them, and their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our prayer is that they will continue to be surrounded by God's Word through regular church attendance as well as daily prayer and devotion in the home. To this end, if there is a way that I may be of spiritual assistance to you or to your family, please contact me. Vacation Bible School is a wonderful thing, but continual growth in hearing God's Word and receiving His gifts is the ultimate aim and final goal of the Christian life.

Register online

www.immanueltuscola.org

Sun, 7/31–
Thurs, 8/4

6:00–7:30 pm

You can register for VBS on our website. Just fill out the form and click submit.



GIDEON

Mighty Warrior

Vacation Bible School

Sunday, 31 July–Thursday, 4 August ✘ 6:00–7:30 p.m.



“We use a chalice because Our Lord instituted the Sacrament with the cup, and the church has often used that cup to bear witness to the unity we confess in the Sacrament.”

Rev. Jason Braaten

In the News

A New Chalice Given in Memory of the Faithful Departed

By Rev. Jason Braaten

Chalice is a Middle English word with a Latin root. It literally means “cup.” In the Divine Service, the chalice is the cup that holds the very blood of Christ, which was shed for the forgiveness of our sin and for the life of the world.

We use a chalice because Our Lord instituted the Sacrament with the cup, and the church has often used that cup to bear witness to the unity we confess in the Sacrament.

Some may wonder whether the chalice is sanitary, but numerous scientific studies have proven that since the chalice is made of precious metals, it reacts with the alcohol in the wine to create a sterile environment.

This new chalice was chosen both for its functionality and its beauty. It came before the elders that our current chalice was difficult and cumbersome to receive the blood of Christ from. This was due to the shape of the cup of our current chalice. The shape of this new chalice’s cup will make it easier to receive Christ’s blood. The Christian imagery and symbolism engraved on its base and stem will also aid us in the reception of its contents; it will teach and remind us what we are receiving.

There are two things to note on the base and stem. First, as with our previous chalice, grapevines are depicted to remind us that what we receive is the fruit of the vine. But we also see six scenes from the life of Jesus. This is fitting because this is exactly what He gives us in His body and blood: His own life.

The Crucifixion of Our Lord

The first and central scene is the cross itself. The cross is surrounded by grapevines. In, with, and under the fruit of the vine, we receive what Christ our Lord shed on the cross: His most holy and precious blood.

The Institution of the Lord’s Supper

Looking clockwise from the cross, Jesus directs us to where we can receive the benefits of His death on the cross: the Lord Supper. There we receive forgiveness of sin, life and salvation, just as He promised (Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:18–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–25).

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

On the eighth day, according to the Law of Moses, all males were to be presented in the temple for cleansing, for the rite of circumcision and to be named. This is the first time our Lord shed His blood for us in order to keep the law on our behalf and for our benefit (Luke 2:21–38).

The Nativity of Our Lord

This scene depicts our Lord’s birth, when He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—human just like us—to fulfill the law for us and to suffer all the wrath the law intends for us. In exchange this, He gives to us His righteousness, purity, and life because of His incarnation, death and resurrection (Matt. 1:18–25; Luke 2:1–20; John 1:1–14).

Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

Greeters List

- 3 Jul Harold & Irene – West
Donna & Gunnar Campbell – East
- 10 Jul Jim Dyer – West
Joan Vukelich – East
- 17 Jul Ruth Sims – West
Laverl Byers – East
- 24 Jul Becky Kappes – West
Tim & Teri Pollock – East
- 31 Jul Harold & Irene Wattjes – West
Donna & Gunnar Campbell - East

Coffee Committee

- Jul Harold & Irene Wattjes
- Aug Pastor & Lauren Braaten
- Sep Laverl Byers
- Oct Harold & Irene Wattjes
- Nov Jerry & Joyce Alexander
- Dec Pastor & Lauren Braaten

Altar Committee

- Jul Dolores Ford & Becky Kappes
- Aug Janice Arthur & Janet Stumeier
- Sep Wanda Long & Irene Wattjes
- Oct Theresa Fields & Sharon Allen
- Nov Ann Hilgendorf & Carol Munson
- Dec Ann Carroll, Holly Wikoff,
Sherrie Hoel & Tonia Timlin

Bi-Monthly Missions

- 7 Aug EIU & UofI Campus Ministries
- 2 Oct LWML
- 4 Dec Christmas Bureau

Elder On Duty – Communion

- 3 Jul Dave Slaughter
- 17 Jul Greg Nau
- 31 Jul Greg Nau
- 7 Aug Greg Nau
- 21 Aug Geof Danielson
- 4 Sep Geof Danielson
- 18 Sep Geof Danielson
- 2 Oct Jack Appleby
- 16 Oct Jack Appleby
- 30 Oct Jack Appleby
- 6 Nov Dave Slaughter
- 20 Nov Dave Slaughter
- 23 Nov Dave Slaughter
- 4 Dec Greg Nau
- 11 Dec Greg Nau
- 18 Dec Greg Nau
- 24 Dec Geof Danielson
- 25 Dec Geof Danielson
- 31 Dec Geof Danielson

ATTENDANCE			OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	General	Missions	Building
5 June	18	63	\$2,107.79	\$0.00	\$0.00
11 June	19	66	\$2,160.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
19 June	16	67	\$1,465.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
26 June	18	60	\$2,071.25	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	71	256	\$7,804.04	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	327		\$7,804.04	\$0.00	\$0.00

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The Baptism of Our Lord

Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan to fulfill all righteousness. He stands in our place, in the place of sinners, to bear the full weight of all the law required. But He also cleansed and sanctified all water to make Baptism what it is for us: a washing away of sin, the giving of the Holy Spirit and our adoption as sons of the Father (Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–24).

The Ascension of Our Lord

The Ascension marks the time when Jesus sits down at the right hand of the Father. The Ascension is the realization of His promise that He will be with us always, just as He promised. And He has made good on that promise; He is with us, bodily present, in the

Lord's Supper. He gives us Himself—His holy body and blood—to forgive our sins. He saves us from death and the devil. And He gives us true and eternal life for all who believe in these words: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:6–11).

This gift is given to Immanuel in loving memory of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus and now rest in Him from their labors. The chalice will be consecrated and installed on Sunday, July 3rd.

† **Raymond Pollock** †
 † **Audrey Oye** †
 † **Linda Watkins** †
 † **Ethel Harbaugh** †
 † **Orthalyne Rahn** †
 † **Margaret Hartman** †
 † **John Alexander** †
 † **Robert Poindexter** †



A picture of Immanuel's new chalice.