

you mean, without a lot of pretence, using your words to manipulate the situation to get what you want. And remember to always speak your words in Jesus' sacrificial love. Never because it's the first thing to come to your head, but because it is; 'helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.' (Eph. 4:29)

Let us pray.  
Jesus thank you for making us your agents of life in this world of death. Fill our words with your Word, that we build people up, nurturing the life you have created in them.

May we not simply use people to meet our desires, but empower us to sacrifice ourselves using your gift of sexuality your way, rejecting all forms of pornography, holding marriage in great respect as you do. And Jesus help us to say what we mean, without twisting things simply to get what we want. Help us to simply say; Yes or No. Help us this week to be reconciled with those where our relationships are stressed. Amen.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

12 February 2017

## LIVING IN JESUS' KINGDOM—3

Matthew 5:21-37



As we continue looking at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, let's recap. First, this is not how to become a citizen of heaven. Jesus, life, death and resurrection open the way for us to be re-born as the Father's children, which makes us legal citizens of heaven. No doubt about it.

Jesus is shows us how to live in his kingdom. How to walk through life in harmony with him.

Second we are reminded that the power, the strength, the wisdom to apply what Jesus is teaching doesn't start with us. The strength comes from Jesus, who has sent the Holy Spirit to be with us. Remember the first of Jesus blessings: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for there is the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt. 5:3)

Jesus is reminding us that we are blessed when we rely on him and not ourselves. That's great, Jesus is giving me his support to follow where he leads. We're not being asked to do the impossible. "With human beings this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26) Jesus said; "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed... Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matt. 17:20) Cause when I'm doing what Jesus is blessing, what Jesus is calling me to do, it's his power and authority that gets things happening. Now that's Good News.

And the first thing Jesus empowers us to do, is to be agents of life, not bringers of death. What would you prefer, to be an agent of life, or a bringer of

death? Jesus places his words on our lips so that when we speak we speak his words of life. What a wonderful privilege we have.

Anyone can be abusive, swear, tear others down, be judgmental. But we have the word of life; Jesus. As we speak 'The Word' we bring life. In fact Jesus is the one who brings the dead to life.

Everywhere else all I see are people going from life to death. To think we know the one who can take people from death to life, and he has invited us to share in this wonderful act of giving life.

When I abuse another, or even just use them to get what I want, I rob them of life. Each harsh word, each swear word that so easily flies off the tongue when I'm angry, destroys another.

But when I speak Jesus' words of life I'm empowered to build people up, to encourage people, with far more than mere positive words. I speak life giving words because Jesus is in them. Jesus empowers you to speak life giving words into a world which is yearning for life. But if left to its own, death is the only outcome. What a wonderful privilege we have, to speak Jesus' words of life.

One of those powerful words of life is; 'You are forgiven'. Reconciliation is one of Jesus specialties. Where relationships are in danger of death, Jesus is able to bring life, to bring reconciliation.

That reminds me of these superb words from Paul; "For Christ's love compels us... If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ

and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." (2 Cor. 5:14-21)

When Adam sinned his first instinct was to hide. Jesus comes to empower us to come out of hiding. Don't

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**agents of life, not bringers of death.**

hide in religious ritual, but in his strength deal with the issue. Deal with the person, asking for forgiveness, saying; 'I'm sorry', offering forgiveness, creating an atmosphere of safety, because the other person knows you're not out to crucify them, but to do what is best for them, even at your own expense.

That's certainly Jesus' example. Jesus didn't crucify us, but was crucified for us, at his own expense. In Jesus we are liberated to be

agents of life, not bringers of death.

This leads to the second area of life Jesus highlights. An area where we as a society have the potential to lose the richness of life that Jesus seeks to bring. Jesus highlights our sexuality, and how we can live in this area as agents of life and not bringers of death.

Jesus highlights pornography as a bringer of death. Here people are dehumanised, and used to gratify selfish desires. People are traded as a commodity.

When people are exploited as a commodity we are always acting as agents of death. So the term; 'Human Resources' always makes me nervous. Companies don't have 'Human Resources', they have living, breathing, people, with hopes and dreams, who are to be served by the economy, not there to serve the economy.

Where are we tempted by pornography? Where are we tempted not to see a person but a commodity to meet our desires?

Jesus reminds us that as agents of life we are to honour marriage. This is the proper place for sex, within marriage. There to be an expression of trust, as each person is vulnerable with the other. Nothing hidden, being open and honest with each other.

Outside of marriage Jesus is reminding us that sex becomes self-centred and loses its prime purpose as an act of selfless love. So Jesus reminds us to treasure marriage, and that in this safe, nurturing environment of trust is the place where sex brings life and vitality, not the decay of a nation.

That reminds me of one of the devil's lie; my sexuality has nothing to do with anyone else. It's my body and I'll do with it as I see fit. Jesus

didn't give his life so that we could be selfish and just do our own thing. A community of selfish people is a very unhealthy, even dying community.

Jesus has given his life that we might be a community with his living breath in all we do. Here is one area where we definitely

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**Jesus has empowered us to speak life giving words.**

need Jesus' strength to do what he says. If I simply think with my sexual feelings, where do you reckon I'll end up?

In Jesus we have the wonderful opportunity to think, feel and act out of his life giving love. When I wait, I have to sacrifice my desires. Where are you being called to wait?

Where is Jesus growing you as you sacrifice yourself, sacrifice your desires, trusting him.

What was the original sin? Adam and Eve lost trust in God and didn't sacrifice their desires, but took what they wanted. Thank God that once again in Jesus we are able to trust God, taking him at his word, and sacrifice our desires. Here we get to know more and more the wonderful depth of God's love.

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And the third area of life Jesus highlights is being true to our word, just like he is. You can always take

God at his word. And in the Gospel of John I'm reminded; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) God's word is a living word. A life giving word, for we are reminded from Genesis that when God spoke it was created.

Jesus has empowered us to speak life giving words, not a lot of hot air. Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'. Be honest with your words. Say what