



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

August 7, 2022

Pastor Randy Ott

9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [1 Samuel 3:1-10](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 122

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Colossians 3:12-17](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 10:38-42](#)

### **The Believer Follows Christ... Followers of Christ Listen When God Speaks**

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father, through our Lord and Savior Jesus: Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

I'm not a big fan of Facebook. I don't really go on it unless it's to talk with the kids. They set up a group thing, so we get on there and see pictures and videos and get to tell each other stuff and talk to each other. That I like because it allows me at times to be what I consider funny and a smart aleck.

About a week ago they were drawing Mega Millions for \$1.whatever billion dollars? I bought a ticket, so I put on the message there to the kids, "Just so you guys could hear it from me first, I'm retiring August 31<sup>st</sup> because I have the winning numbers. Since that's a certainty and a given that I have the winning numbers, I'm going to retire August 31<sup>st</sup>." My sons understood it and they laughed at it. My daughters called me up and said, "Are you really retiring dad? Is this is joke? Are you serious?" They have their mom's sense of humor I guess. No, it wasn't serious and no, I was pretty certain I wasn't going to win the billion dollars, but I got my money's worth just out of doing that with my kids.

Then you come in today and you read the Second Lesson that I just read to you. Isn't God kind of telling you in a sense that you already have a winning Mega Millions ticket? If you want to live the rich life, listen when God talks to you. Hear about this God who loves you so much that even though the world fell into sin, He sent His one and only Son to die for you. Listen to all of His promises and listen to all of His comfort, as we go through life in a fallen world, when we so desperately at times need it. You want a rich

life? It isn't about hitting the Mega Millions ball. It's about listening to your God tell you how much He loves you. So today we hear that encouragement from our God in how to live the rich life. Listen to God.

The first paragraph of what he wrote to the Colossians here sounds a lot like what we looked at last week in [Romans 12](#), where we looked at: ***Be devoted to one another in love.*** Notice how he talks about ***clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility*** and all these kinds of things. ***Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love...*** Last week we talked about that at length, what it means to be devoted in love, to act towards others, not just have nice, warm, fuzzy feelings toward them but ***clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility*** and put others interests ahead of your own, all those things that we talked about. But those things are hard.

In what I just read to you, he follows it up in the next paragraph with: ***Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly...*** which means a lot or abundantly. It's not a drip or a drop here or there. Let the Word of God be something that is there daily for you and richly and abundantly so that you can love like God has called you to love. Like we talked about last week, our sinful nature doesn't want to love other people this way, but this is how God loved us. So we want to work at doing it better and forgiving as God forgave us and loving as God loved us and all these things. In order to do that, he says we need that message of Christ to live in us richly.

He is also calling us (if you look in that next paragraph) to ***teach and admonish one another.*** The Word of God is going to bring you great comfort. It is going to give you the ability to love and be patient, kind and compassionate. That's all a given. But then God says you also now have a responsibility when this Word is living in you and you know who Christ is, you know what He has done for you, and the Spirit is working through the Word and the Sacraments to strengthen you day by day. You have an obligation to ***teach and admonish one another.*** That isn't someone else's job. If you call yourself a Christian, that's your job. That's what God says right there.

It's kind of hard to teach and admonish (teach means to impart the knowledge that someone else doesn't have; admonish means to show someone else when they're doing something that's wrong) and like we saw last week, this is right and wrong as God defines it. Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good is what He said last week. Teach and admonish according to God's Word. Not according to society. Not according to what you think. Not according to what makes you happy, but what God says is His absolute truth.

That means at times we use the Word to show ourselves and those around us, lovingly, and to those we love that we're sinners. We need that. We need that admonishment. We need that truth. We need that so that we treasure and turn to Jesus and see this

incredible love He has for us. Otherwise you and I are going to take that love for granted. We're going to start thinking God owes it to us because "Look at what I'm doing for Him. He must love me more than He loves other people." We need this truth planted deep in us that we are sinners who can never deserve the love of God and He loved us anyhow. That's why we listen to Him.

But what I have found over the years is those who take the name Christian, who call themselves Christian, who tell me "Pastor, I still believe even though you never see me," they often don't know what Scripture actually says.

As we go and reach out to people and say "We want you connected to Jesus. We want you close to Jesus so you are in heaven with us," we have members that have told us "It's none of your business. What I do is none of your business. Whether I'm at worship or not or whether I'm using Word and Sacrament or not, that's not your business. What is that to you? That's between me and God." That statement tells me this person doesn't read Scripture because it's right there—***teach and admonish one another***. Either you are going to listen to what God says or you're going to think you know better than God, and that's an argument you're going to lose. Sometimes we want to say this and that because it makes us happy. "The Word, it says this or that is a sin. Well, if it makes me happy, God must want me to be happy so it's okay for me." That isn't listening to the Word and letting it dwell in you richly. That's living in the mirror. You and I need to hear what God says, not what we think. We aren't that bright all the time. We think we're going to win Mega Millions. We need the truth of God's Word to confront us so that the love of God amazes us and is not just taken for granted. So this is why we need to be in the Word.

I love worship. Didn't always love worship, but I love worship with a passion now. I love listening to my God tell me that He loves me in spite of knowing what I am. I love when we altogether respond and we sing hymns that praise God or we speak words that praise God and we encourage one another as we worship together. I love that. I spend a lot of time in the Word of God. But there are times when I say to myself "*Randy, you're just doing it professionally. You ain't spending enough time just reading the Bible on your own.*" I usually think that to myself after visiting some of our shut-ins. They'll be in the chair they are always in or something like that and right next to them is a well-worn Bible and a crumpled up looking Meditations book because they tell me they read it every day and they tell me that at this time they read the Bible. They look at me and tell me "Pastor, I pray for you every day." I have no reason to doubt them. I can see it in them. I think "*Man, why don't I do better than that? You can say 'Yeah, but they have more time than you have Pastor.' Oh, get over it! I find enough time to do stupid stuff. I should find time to do important stuff, like reading the Word, shouldn't I?*"

We always say we're too busy for this or that. I find a lot of time to do stuff I don't need to do. I'm guessing some of you do too. You are maybe a little better at it than I am at carving out a little bit of time to listen to God's Word. But have Him speak to us so that the truth is always there in front of us so that then I am empowered to love others like He loved me? On my own I'm not going to want to do it. But when I see how my God loves me, then I want to love others and I want others to listen to Him, not to listen to me. I'm not worried about that. I want people close to Jesus. So we encourage one another and we support one another and we point one another to this message of Christ, the message about Christ, the message that comes from Christ, either one. It's His Law and His Gospel. That's what shapes and fashions us (as we sang earlier). This is what we do.

I was visiting with someone this week and they said "I've read the Bible, but there is a lot in there I don't understand." I agreed with them. It's kind of arrogant to think a sinner like me is going to understand God completely. It isn't going to happen. But I do know the more I study it and the more I read it the more I grow. That person said, "That's why I love Bible class because I go and I can learn something from other people and I can grow and I can listen to others." I think that's one of God's greatest gifts to us—others who have an understanding of Scripture that they share with us. Sometimes it's our fellow members who point out a truth that we need to hear. That's a wonderful blessing and that's a fulfillment of ***teach and admonish one another***, which God has called us to do after we have listened to Him.

But one of the other things God gives is that He gave some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service. Our full-time called workers are a blessing and they spend their time studying God's Word and sharing what they know with us. I think that's an incredible thing and it's a gift from God. Today you can go down in the basement after church and have some egg bake and some donuts and some coffee and some orange juice, and if you want to give a donation it will support our Preaching/Teaching Fund, which encourages some of our members to go on and study to be pastors and teachers. I think about how important having pastors and teachers in our lives are. It's amazing to me to see that we have five that are studying to be teachers at Martin Luther College. We've had others that have gone on and tried, but what I always encourage the kids to do is if you've got the talents and abilities, just think about it. Even if you don't go, I'm not worried about it. I'm not upset. But we have so many people that have so many gifts that could serve as pastors and teachers and I just keep telling people to just think about it and see if it's for you.

To be a pastor in our church body you go to school for eight years after high school. Eight years—that's what I did. Eight years, and I'm still bad at speaking English. It's amazing, right? You know when I finally decided I wanted to be a pastor? I think I've told you this before but it was in a sermon, so you probably don't remember. After the seventh year, that's when I said "Yeah, this is what I want to do." That was when I was a

vicar. I spent a year in a congregation and learned what a pastor really is. That's when I said "Yeah, this is it." Every other year it was "Uh, I'm not sure, but I'm going to keep trying." From the time I was little on, I had the teacher Helen Scoles, her picture is in my office down in the basement, and she told me I should be a pastor. I had other people tell me I should be a pastor. I thought they were all nuts. I hated talking in public. I always hated it. But I just kept trying.

That's why I encourage people that if you've got the gifts, consider it, because we need people who, and here is the cool part of becoming a pastor, we get to spend time professionally in the Word, like I said before. Every two weeks they give you a paycheck just to study God's Word. This is pretty cool. That's a great life. Consider it. And if it's not for you, that's okay. God will find you another way of serving. I have no doubts about that. But if you have those gifts, consider it, because those who can help us listen to the Word and show us what God is saying and teaching, that's a treasure and that's a gift from our God.

I thank God for the students that are studying, and I thank God for the students from our congregation that will study, so we have those gifted kids. And I thank God for all His people that listen to His Word and teach and admonish one another, because that one another also includes me and Lord knows, there are many times I need it. I'm going to guess, so do you. So when someone teaches you or admonishes you, know they are doing it in love because they want you in heaven. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.