



the word

February 2020 | Monthly News from Crown of Life Church

Events

FEB 1-2

B Team Basketball Tourney @ WLHS

FEB 3-7

SPIRIT WEEK

FEB 7-9

A Team Basketball Tourney

FEB 11

Culver's Night 4-7 pm

FEB 13

Early Dismissal
Parent Teacher Conferences

FEB 14

MLC BB Tournament
Valentine's Day - NO SCHOOL

FEB 16

Jesus Care's 12:30 pm
Teen Group-Rockin' Jump 6:45 pm

FEB 17

Presidents Day - NO SCHOOL

FEB 22

Second Harvest Heartland Brooklyn Park



Crown of Life Church

115 Crusader Ave, West St Paul, MN 55118

Can Faith and Suicide Coexist?

BY PASTOR EMILE BURGESS

It's telling that our Sunday morning Bible study attendance has doubled for our study on suicide. Suicide is a personal topic for many people. So many questions surround suicide, but it seems, so few answers. This is most true for "survivors," those whose loved ones have taken their own life. *Why did they do it? How could they possibly? Was it my fault? Did God abandon them? Did they abandon God? How can I ever come to terms with my loved one's suicide?*

The Paradox of Suicide

Questions abound, and especially when it comes to the suicide of one who professed to be a Christian. This is suicide's paradox. *If faith means to trust in God and his many blessings, how could this person have despaired and given up on God's blessings? What is the fate of the Christian who takes their own life?* The paradox of suicide has given way over the centuries to the stigma of suicide.

The Stigma of Suicide

A stigma is a defense mechanism. A stigma forms when people are confronted with a paradox that has not adequately been resolved. Stigmas are created by ignorance... and perpetuated by fear—largely, fear of the unknown. A stigma is to make a judgment about someone that ultimately aims to protect yourself! *"I would never have imagined he was the type!"* reveals a stigma that believes, *"This could never happen to me!"*

continued

Underneath the stigma is a failure to understand the commonality of nearly all suicides: hopelessness—a dreaded certainty of mind that there is no hope of your life ever improving, no hope of the pain ever subsiding, no hope of ever feeling like yourself again. Few of us have experienced the kind of severe depression that leads one to such hopelessness. Few of us truly understand what is going on in the mind of the suicidal. *“The person commits suicide not so much because he truly desires to die, but because he is seeking an escape from pain. He wants to eliminate the pain of hopelessness, and suicide is the only way he knows how to achieve this”* (study guide, page 20). And so we protect ourselves by making judgments about the person, about their upbringing, their family life, and even their eternal salvation.

Getting “Faith” Right to Get Suicide Right

Part of the problem is that we misunderstand what saving faith is and what saving faith is not. “Saving faith” is not to be mistaken for what I’ll call “everyday faith.” Saving faith is binary—you either have it or you don’t. Saving faith is not quantifiable—there are no degrees of saving faith. Rather, saving faith is a gift given entirely by God, given in full, not in part. Saving faith has nothing to do with how “strongly” one believes or how uncompromising is one’s resolve to follow Christ. Saving faith is simply to receive, simply to trust that Christ died to pay for your sins. “Everyday faith” on the other hand is our everyday trust in God and his promises. And who of us has not and does not regularly fail to trust in God? Who of us doesn’t daily doubt the promises of God? Weak everyday trust in God does not equal a failing or faulty saving faith.

Without this proper understanding of faith, we get ourselves into trouble when it comes to making judgments about another’s faith. Here are some examples:

- **“A Christian would never _____!”** To suppose that a real Christian would never commit certain sins is really to make saving faith into faith + obedience? Who are we to draw some arbitrary line in the sand that no real believer could ever transgress? Christ died for our sins, no matter how many or how bad they are! FAITH + OBEDIENCE ≠ FAITH.
- **“A Christian just wouldn’t say things like _____!”** Suicidal people say some things that are quite contrary to God’s Word. They may feel as if God has turned against them, like he hates them, like they’d be better off dead. But remember the commonality between suicides: hopelessness. The clinically depressed do not and often cannot think straight. That doesn’t mean that their faith is not straight. “A sick mind does not represent a sick faith” ⁽⁴⁹⁾. “The decision to kill oneself is not [necessarily] a decision based on a

malfunctioning faith. It is based to a large degree on faulty information” ⁽⁵¹⁾. FAITH + REASON ≠ FAITH.

- **“Can a faith and despair really coexist?”** Yes, hope is a wonderful fruit of faith for the believer. But are Christians always hope-filled? Think of Job (Job 6-7), Elijah (1 Kings 19), Jonah (Jonah 4), and Moses (Numbers 11)—all who experienced a kind of “despair of life,” while still not despairing of God’s grace! If the church sees in the kindest possible way the words and actions of these men in their darkest hours, why should we not do the same for those who suffer a similar despair of living? FAITH + OPTIMISM ≠ FAITH.

What about Judas? He despaired. And the Bible tells us he did not go to heaven. The mistake we make with Judas and suicide is to assume that his suicide was the sin that somehow “broke” his faith and earned him hell. But the truth is, Judas’ despair was a despair of God’s grace. He couldn’t believe that God could forgive a sinner as bad as he. God’s Word tells us that Satan entered Judas in the Upper Room (Luke 22:3) and perhaps had abandoned his faith even earlier than that. Suicide is not the unforgivable sin. The only one sin that is unforgivable is the sin of rejecting Christ—a heart of unbelief/a heart of unrepentance.

Resolving the Paradox of Suicide

So how do we resolve the paradox of suicide? We let faith be faith alone. We let sin be sin—all sin is damnable, but all sins are paid for by Christ. We let baptism be the wonderful Sacrament it is. Baptism grants faith to babies, even apart from their reasoning “Christ Crucified” with their minds. When our reason fails us by Alzheimer’s or dementia, by severe depression or schizophrenia, we lean back on our baptismal faith. We take comfort in the baptismal faith of our depressed or suicidal loved ones who don’t always “talk” like a rational believer would. We take comfort in the professions of faith our loved ones made before they took their own lives, before they lost their reason and their hope, but not their Reason for hope—Christ (1 Peter 3:15). It is the gospel that resolves the paradox of suicide.

“A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out” (Isaiah 42:3).

“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:33-34).

The gospel gives what suicide steals: hope—sure hope that our gracious God keeps all his promises, that he forgives our sins through Christ.

continued on page 4

SCHOOL NEWS

2nd Grade Highlights

We've been having a busy and fun year in the 2nd grade room! So far this year, the 2nd graders have: taken a couple of field trips (with more to come!), had an artist come to visit us and do an art project, learned to do new centers, read some fun stories in Reading Class, learned fun things in math, and the list could go on! The 2nd graders came up with a few of their favorite things they've done in 2nd grade.



Elijah- Playing basketball in PE.

Eden- Bible Lessons and reading *Ready Freddy!* books in Reading Class.

Skyla- Doing less than and greater than with our alligators in Math and finding FIN in the *Ready Freddy!* pictures.

Ana- Scratch art in Art Class and learning about Baby Moses.

Hannah- Playing volleyball in PE and doing 2-digit addition in Math.

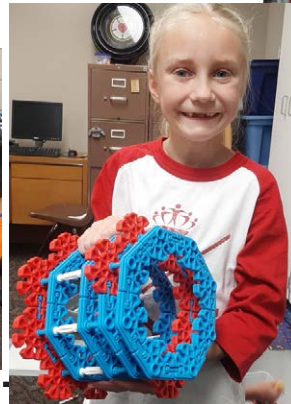
Ruby- Reading Little Miss and Mr. Men books in story time and making our big snowflakes in Art Class.

Asher- Finding FIN in the *Ready Freddy!* pictures and building a playground in centers.

Ayla- Puzzle and building center.

Faith- Having Science and learning about weather.

Josiah- Art projects, especially when we painted our pointillism project.



REPORTS

December 2019 Treasurers Report (Fiscal Year 6/19 – 5/20)

	Actual	Budget	Difference
FYTD Total Income	\$965,694.93*	\$896,554.32	\$69,140.61*
Expenses	\$978,017.97	\$866,349.94	\$42,745.27
Net Operating	\$-12,323.04	\$30,204.38	\$-42,527.42

FYTD income includes \$58,597.93 of a special bequest.

	Actual	Borrowed	Balance
Envelope Offerings	\$595,008.79	\$620,904.08	\$-25,895.29
Special Funds	\$117,606.15	\$45,000.00	\$75,315.15

A detailed treasurers' report is on the church bulletin board.

NEW MEMBER

Jonah Kroll

BAPTISM(S)

Andrew Robert Sherrard (Adult Baptism) and Weston George Sherrard, son of Andrew and Nicole 1.12.20 with Pastor Kom.

DEATH

Florence Polzin died 1.6.20, graveside service at Riverview Cemetery with Pastor Kom 1.7.20

Survivors often feel great guilt for “what they might have done differently” to help their loved one. They struggle with the nagging “if I had only...” Ultimately, no well-meaning person is responsible for another person taking their own life. And even if there may be some validity to the survivor’s guilty feelings, even if a person’s words or actions may have contributed in some way to another’s decision to end their life, Jesus’ blood is precious and powerful enough to cover that too (1 John 1:7).

What Do I Say?

What do we say to the suicidal? How do we help them? In addition to getting them help from a professional counselor, shower them with the gospel. They don’t need to be any further shamed for their faulty thinking or their frightening words. They already have enough shame. *“The clinically depressed or suicidal may need to hear a confirmation of God’s love almost continually”* ⁽¹⁵⁷⁾. If possible, avoid bringing up the next life, either heaven or hell. Focus on God’s love and his intended blessings for today. Assure them that Christ has paid for every sin of theirs. Remind them of their baptism, encourage them to continue hearing the Word with the family of believers and receiving the Lord’s Supper. Tell them their pastor(s) will happily visit them for private confession/absolution and Communion.

What do we say to those grieving a loved one’s suicide? How can we comfort them? Ultimately, God is the judge of every person who dies, no matter how they die. We must look to him to tell us how a person stands justified before him. (This is why we would never want to tell someone their deceased loved is in heaven if that person did not profess a faith in Jesus Christ.) As we look to God the Judge, who he is and what he tells us in his Word give us reasons to have confidence in the eternal salvation of one who dies (in whatever manner) who is baptized, who professed faith in Christ, whose faith was evident in their lives. True, their faith may not have been as evident in their time of struggle with hopelessness, but again, let’s not confuse a lack of hope with a lack of faith.

Let’s find peace in the promises of God. God’s promises of forgiveness at the cross, of faith in baptism, of providence day-in and day-out, of daily protection from the devil, of constant intercession for us, of never leaving or forsaking us—these are promises we can all count on.

The quotations and general outline above are drawn from the book and its study guide: *And She Was A Christian*, by Peter Preus, Northwestern Publishing House, © 2011. online.nph.net/and-she-was-a-christian.html

Becoming Cheerful Givers - A Stewardship Thought

Scripture Readings

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Just as the son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

Thoughts

The basis for cheerful giving comes from the love that we receive from God. *“For God so loved the world that He gave...”* (John 3:16). God loved and continues to love. His nature is both loving and giving. Because of His love for us, He promises to supply all of our needs. Paul said, *“He Who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?”* (Romans 8:32).

With the love and grace that we receive from our heavenly Father, we are changed from self-centered to God-centered people. With God in control of our lives, we can begin to trust and depend on Him. Filled with God’s love, we will love and give cheerfully. Christ’s nature will be seen in our giving to others.

Jesus provided the model of giving one’s self to others. He *“... did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”* (Matthew 20:28). Christ willingly and cheerfully accepted this humble position to give and serve others. Jesus said, *“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you”* (John 13:14-15).

As His stewards, we are called to give cheerfully to the needs of others. In giving to the needy, we are reminded of the words in Matthew 25:40, *“... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these bothers of Mine, you did for Me.”*

Discussion Thoughts

What allowed the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 to give so generously and cheerfully?

Explain the attitude of trust in relation to cheerful giving.

What may you have to forego when you give generously and cheerfully?

Prayer Dear Father in heaven, we pray for a giving spirit. Lord, enable us to give our time, talents, and treasures cheerfully. Amen.

Source: 12 Months of Congregational Stewardship (vol. 2) by Ronald J. Chewning, Stewardship Advisors

TEEN MINISTRY JUST for TEENS

Teen Group Outing at **Rockin Jump** in Eagan

Sunday February 16th

6:45 am – 9 pm

The cost is \$16 for 2 hours of jump time.

**We rented the entire place out
and will be the only people there!**

February Birthdays

1 Jason Myrlie	7 Max Lawrence	13 Andy Coates	19 Ellette Wiplinger	23 James Koeppen
2 Tracey Beebe	Greta Smith	Amanda Johnston	Jon Harley	Ayden Bilitz
Lincoln Bolte	8 Rebecca Boehlke	Jim Loewen	Roger Knippenberg	Darlene Unruh
Rachel Stokke	Pastor Jonathan Enter	14 Robert, Jr. Stokke	20 Chase Schindeldeck	25 Charlie Schaller
3 Jonah Evenson	Lucas Otterstatter	15 Mike Ahlman	James Stueber	Kelly Thorburn
Paul Stokke	9 Jason Fogle	Ben Fuhrmann	21 Brett Fuhrmann	26 James Tako
4 Andrew Enger	10 William Hastings	Katie Schletty	Drew Kock	Julie Waldhauser
5 Marie Pietsch	Harper Lavigne	17 Raquel Berg	Orell Pieper	27 Brad Szczerbiak
Evan Sievert	Demetra Redner	18 Erin Evenson	22 Adrian Caauwe	Susan Tapp
6 Paul Chan	11 Charlotte Kwasniewski	Laurie Footh	Brian Haehnel	28 Ryan Biehn
Victoria Rider	12 Joel Bejblik	Aviana Fries	23 Douglas Danner	Pastor Emile Burgess
Jennifer Rolfes	Ryan Lemmer	Emma Homan	Kirsten Fischbach	Jesse Green
Gracie Szczerbiak	Logan Lorenz		Jack Kapanke	Barbara Hartshorn

February Calendar

Saturday, February 1

B Team Tourney @ WLHS

5:00 pm Worship EGN
6:30 pm Winter Game Night-Eagan

Sunday, February 2

B Team Tourney @ WLHS

8:00 am Worship WSP
9:00 am Worship EGN
9:15 am Education Hour-WSP
10:20 am Education Hour-EGN
10:30 am Worship WSP
3:00 pm New Member Class

Monday, February 3

6:30 pm Worship WSP
7:00 pm Mary/Martha - WSP

Tuesday, February 4

9:00 am Men's Coffee Group WSP

Wednesday, February 5

5:00 pm Confirmation Class - WSP
7:00 pm Sr. Choir Practice - WSP
8:00 pm Praise Band Reh

Thursday, February 6

2:30 pm Southview Service
6:30 pm PTN Meeting

Friday, February 7

A Team BB Tourney

Saturday, February 8

A Team BB Tourney
5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, February 9

A Team BB Tourney

8:00 am Worship WSP
9:00 am Worship EGN
9:15 am Education Hour-WSP
10:20 am Education Hour-EGN
10:30 am Worship WSP
3:00 pm New Member Class

Monday, February 10

6:30 pm Worship WSP

Tuesday, February 11

9:00 am Men's Coffee Group WSP
4:00 pm Culver's Night
6:30 pm Properties
Education
7:00 pm Evangelism-WSP
Fellowship Committee
Stewardship
Worship Committee
Youth & Adult Education

Wednesday, February 12

4:00 pm PreK Parent Teacher Conf.
5:00 pm Confirmation Class - WSP
7:00 pm Sr. Choir Practice - WSP

Thursday, February 13

11:30 am Early Dismissal
12:15 pm Parent Teacher Conf.
2:30 pm Southview Service
6:30 pm Adult Craft Club
7:00 pm Elders

Friday, February 14

MLC BB Tournament

Valentine's Day
NO SCHOOL

Saturday, February 15

MLC BB Tournament
5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, February 16

MLC BB Tournament
8:00 am Worship WSP
9:00 am Worship EGN
9:15 am Education Hour-WSP
10:20 am Education Hour-EGN
10:30 am Worship WSP
12:30 pm Jesus Cares-WSP
3:00 pm New Member Class
6:45 pm Teen Group-Rockin' Jump

Monday, February 17

Presidents' Day - NO SCHOOL
Teacher Inservice

6:30 pm Worship WSP

Tuesday, February 18

9:00 am Men's Coffee Group WSP
5:00 pm Gr. Ski Trip
7:00 pm Council-EGN
8:00 pm Personnel Committee

Wednesday, February 19

5:00 pm Confirmation Class - WSP
7:00 pm Sr. Choir Practice - WSP

Thursday, February 20

2:30 pm Southview Service
7:00 pm Riverview Cemetery

Saturday, February 22

9:00 am Second Harvest Heartland-
Brooklyn Park
5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, February 23

8:00 am Worship WSP
9:00 am Worship EGN
Gr. Spanish Sing
9:15 am Education Hour-WSP
10:20 am Education Hour-EGN
10:30 am Worship WSP
Gr. Spanish Sing
3:00 pm New Member Class

Monday, February 24

2:30 pm Lilydale Sr. Living Service
6:30 pm Worship WSP

Tuesday, February 25

9:00 am Men's Coffee Group WSP

Wednesday, February 26

5:00 pm Confirmation Class - WSP
7:00 pm Sr. Choir Practice - WSP

Thursday, February 27

2:30 pm Southview Service

Saturday, February 29

5:00 pm Worship EGN

ASK THE PASTOR

Deuteronomy has some weird laws. Why do we obey some laws of the Old Testament and not others?

Deuteronomy 22:9-12

“Do not plant two kinds of seed in your vineyard; if you do, not only the crops you plant but also the fruit of the vineyard will be defiled. Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. Do not wear clothes of wool and linen woven together. Make tassels on the four corners of the cloak you wear.”

This is a fantastic question. I get this question a lot because there are a LOT of Old Testament laws that we don't follow and we would call them pretty “weird”. When God gave laws to the Israelites he gave them 3 types of laws, 1) Moral law, 2) Ceremonial Law, and 3) Civil Law.

What is the Moral Law? The Moral Law is summarized in the 10 Commandments. It is the law that we have in our conscience. It is law that is for all people of all time. Nothing has changed when it comes to the Moral Law. This is God's will for all people of all time. The purpose of the Moral Law is to show us our failures and our need for a Savior.

What is the Ceremonial Law? The Ceremonial Law is the worship regulations for Old Testament believers. Some examples of Ceremonial Law would include the sacrifices of different animals to the Lord. The purpose of the Ceremonial Law was to give the Old Testament believers a picture of what their Savior would do. When the Israelites saw day after day sacrifices being made to pay for their sins, they should have

recognized that's what they needed. That was to give them an idea of what their Savior would do, make a sacrifice for their sins. These laws found their fulfillment in Jesus and are no longer essential to be obeyed as Paul states in Colossians 2:16-17, “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”

What is the Civil Law? The Civil Law is the law for a specific culture at a specific time for the sake of peace and good order. Civil laws change often. 150 years ago you would not find any civil laws about running red lights or speeding. There was no need for those civil laws because there were no cars.

Civil laws that applied in 3500 years ago for ancient Israelites don't apply to us because we live in a different time and culture. Understanding the three different types of laws helps us understand why we obey some but not others.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

iPho

REVIEWED BY PASTOR ZACHARY PUDLO ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We'd driven by it a number of times, and every time we did we said, “We should try it out some time.” Finally, we gave it a shot. iPho 2 in Inver Grove Heights is a Vietnamese restaurant that specializes in Pho, a Vietnamese soup. I first tried Pho a few years ago and fell in love with it. It contains a hearty broth, delicious noodles, your choice of meat and often sprouts and jalapenos on the side.

What makes iPho 2 so convenient is the option to order to go. The order always comes out fast, whether you dine in or order to go. While the dining room isn't large, what they lack in size they make up for in fast service, great food, and affordable prices. I usually like to order the large Pho and then have another two meals of leftovers.

I would recommend you give it a shot next time you're driving down Cahill and have a desire for some Asian cuisine.

