



October  
2013

Pastor's  
Page

**Disciples: Ears Opened and Hands Emptied**  
Deut. 30:15-20; Luke 14:25-35



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Fellow Redeemed members of temporal and eternal Zion, I ask and pray that we all ponder in our hearts the Words of Jesus below. These Words of Jesus give eternal life and salvation.

**Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, 26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.**

**34 “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35 It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (ESV)**

Jesus teaches that being His disciple is not easy. Jesus tells us that one cannot choose his family over following Him and be a disciple. One cannot choose NOT to bear his own cross and be His disciple. Jesus then goes on to compare counting the cost of discipleship to building a tower and fighting a war. Jesus concludes these remarks with the starkest warning of all about salt losing its saltiness and being thrown away. If you are scratching your head right now and asking, “What does this mean?” you are not alone. Let’s go through the words carefully together. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**

You know how there are some people who always read the last part of a book first and it helps them understand the story as they read? We are going to do that here. Jesus concludes the counting the cost of being a disciple with, **“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35 It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away.”** Jesus, as He does, gives examples that may even go beyond the natural world to the absurd in order to make a point. Can salt really lose its saltiness? No, it cannot. But pretend it could—wouldn’t that be strange? And, what use then would it be? Could you pour salt on flavorless salt and make it salty again? Nope. Once salt is no longer salty—it is useless—it serves no other purpose. It isn’t even helpful to the soil or a pile of manure. Pretty striking description! But, as you know, Jesus isn’t teaching a cooking class, but giving the recipe for what makes a true disciple. So, who is the salt that has lost its taste? The salt is former disciples. Yes, it is former Christians. If you thought once salt always salt, think again. Much salt loses its taste. It is those who grew up in the church and were made disciples by baptism and teaching, but now no longer follow Jesus in Word and Sacraments. They have fallen away—either by false doctrine and belief or shameful living. Jesus is teaching that it is worse for a Christian who has known the truth and believed it, but chose to walk away from the faith, than someone who never was salt to begin with. And, on Judgment Day these tasteless former salty disciples won’t be thrown into a manure pile, but into hell. That’s the end of the book so **he who has ears to hear, let him hear.**

Let’s now back up and read the first part of Jesus’ Words now so that we understand what He is teaching. **“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.** A disciple is called to Jesus. How? Through Word and Sacraments. Think Gospel Call. Think Great Commission. **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.** Note that discipleship is life long—cradle to grave. And, where does Jesus continually call us and teach us? Right here in the Church—from font to pulpit to altar. One can’t and isn’t following Jesus if they are not present where Jesus is really present in Word and Sacraments teaching and forgiving. They may

think they are a disciple because they know all about Jesus, and were disciples in confirmation class, but if they are at the lake, the ball game, the campsite, the deer stand, the family reunion, the brunch, the job, or just sleeping in—they are not following Jesus, but others or themselves. **“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.** A disciple follows Jesus no matter the cost. Jesus must come first. And, Jesus makes life long salty disciples via the Church. One cannot choose earthly relationships over Jesus and be a disciple. Anyone who says, “I don’t go to church, I want to, but I don’t want to leave my spouse at home. I don’t want to break up the family over Jesus and Church” cannot be a disciple. One who chooses any other person or their own sinful flesh over Jesus here in the Church cannot be a disciple, even if they sincerely think they are and I quote, “know what they believe.”

**Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.** Following Jesus in preaching and communion brings cross bearing. Speaking the truth to a hostile world brings suffering. It may mean less money, no promotion, it may mean your child isn’t the best player on the team or band, but gets penalized for missing practice or a game for following Jesus and putting Him first on Sunday morning. Jesus does not promise to make you and keep you as a salty disciple apart from Word and Sacraments in Church. We may not like that or believe that, but I am bound to tell you what Jesus says. It may mean admitting and humbling yourself to say, “I haven’t been the model disciple or Christian parent. I actually need to change my thinking—that is, repent.

**28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’** Count the cost, Christians, disciples, and salt. Being a Christian isn’t easy. It takes time, sacrifice, and suffering. Many fall away and don’t agonize through the narrow door. Count the cost for building a tower--a *Mighty Fortress* if you will—to keep you safe from your enemies of devil, world, and flesh. Jesus in Word and Sacraments must come absolutely first to the pointing of hating even family or yourself if they get in the way. There is nothing more important in your entire life than being where Jesus is preaching and serving you at His Table, says Jesus. And, not just being around where Jesus is teaching and making disciples, but listening to Him in Word and Sacraments. “Lord, you taught in our streets!” **34 “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35 It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”**

**Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.** Like counting the cost for building a safe tower, so being a disciple is like preparing for war—counting the cost. Even kings and presidents do this for things far less important than eternal salvation, like temporal war. Abraham Lincoln agonized over his decisions regarding the Civil War. Even President Obama has counted the cost for intervening in Syria. But, what battle is Jesus warning us, His disciples of? He says we have 10,000 troops and the enemy 20,000. Count the cost, salt. Once you are baptized and made a disciple of Jesus, the battle begins. Satan has no need to attack his own troops, he attacks Jesus’ disciples to make the salt tasteless. This is why we need the armor of God, the mighty fortified tower of Word and Sacraments, the life long teaching and preaching, and to be alert to the flaming darts aimed in our direction.

I beg you to wake up. As it says in Deut, **“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. 16 If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. 17 But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, 18 I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish.** Following Jesus, your Master and Teacher in Word and Sacraments—you have nothing to fear. Putting family, school activities, sports, work, or relaxation over Jesus, means you really love the other and hate Jesus. It cannot be both. Repent.

There is one verse that we still haven't looked at and it is the verse that turns all the others on their head. Jesus says, **So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.** In context, this comes right after Jesus says to count the cost for building a tower and fighting a war. Jesus isn't telling you to whip yourself into shape and that it is up to you to build a Tower of Babel to heaven with your effort and good works. He isn't telling you that He wants you to be His disciple, but it is up to you to do your part. Besides, what king could beat 20,000 troops with 10,000? We can't. This is why Jesus tells us to renounce all that we have. Renounce our works. Renounce that we think we have the right building material to build a Mighty tower. Renounce that we think we have the wisdom to win the war against the devil, the world, and the flesh. We don't. We can't. Are your ears open to what Jesus is preaching to you right now? Your hands, and my hands, are empty. We have nothing to offer Jesus. We cannot make ourselves disciples nor can we make sure we remain disciples. Jesus makes us His disciples in Baptism and teaching and keeps us safely in His Father's hand until life everlasting. And, what is baptism and what does Jesus teach? That we need to storm the gates of hell and beat the devil? If sinless Adam could not beat Satan, we sure are no match. No, for us fights the valiant One, Whom God Himself elected? Ask ye, Who is this? Jesus Christ It is. It is Jesus alone that went toe to toe with the devil and won the victory. As fully man, Jesus was tempted just like we are. He was tempted to despise preaching and God's Word. He was tempted to sleep in, serve His flesh, or put His family and friendships ahead of His Father's Word. But, He did not. Not even once. Not even in His thoughts. Where we fail constantly, Jesus never did. He chose life. He chose obeying God's commandments. He did this for you and me. There isn't one requirement for being a disciple that Jesus didn't fulfill for you. Every step He took was perfect for you.

And, what is more, Jesus, as fully man and fully God, died the death on the cross that we all deserve. The punishment for breaking God's Commandments. The wrath for our taking for granted preaching and God's Word. The righteous anger that God had when we choose money, sports, and fun over Him. The punishment that we deserve for not fearing God when we think we can live how we please and God cannot tell us how to live. All of this wretched sin was placed on the sinless Son until the Father's punishment and wrath was no more. Jesus received it all. Your sins, all of them, even the ones the devil throws in your face, were paid for by the blood of Jesus. Behold, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. And what Jesus did for all by pure mercy and grace alone He delivers to us in Baptism, Absolution, Preaching, and Communion.

Yes, He makes and keeps us disciples of this Good News for sinners by baptizing us and teaching us as we walk through the war zone to heaven. He erects a Mighty Fortress of Word and Sacraments where He keeps us safe and believing until the cease fire. Discipleship is God's work in Word and Sacraments. He provides us the armor of God. He keeps us safe in His house. Abide where Jesus is really present where 2 or 3 are gathered in His name. Keep on listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Remain connected to Vine and receive all the nutrients you need in Absolution, Communion, and preaching.

One final thought from our reading to leave you with. Jesus never tells us to be salt or to be light. He simply declares that we are salt and we are light. Christianity is not about us doing. Disciples have their ears opened by Jesus and their hands emptied of their own efforts, ready to receive the perfect efforts of Jesus. It is hearing what Jesus declares us to be. He declares that you are salt, apart from works or efforts—you are as white as salt for His sake. Your baptism keeps you clean every day. You are forgiven. If you are listening to Jesus teach you and forgive you often here in Church, you are salt and you are His disciple. **Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, 20 loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Amen.** (This is a slightly modified version of my Pentecost 16 sermon, which is available on our website.)

*May the peace of God, which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

*Pastor*

## A letter that I wrote to Our LMCS Synod President:

Pastor T. Clint Stark  
2013  
Zion Lutheran Church  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

September 18,

Greetings, President Harrison, in the name of Jesus!

I hope that you are doing well and that the Lord is giving you the strength to carry out your difficult vocation. I can't imagine having the responsibility that you do. You are in my prayers and I thank our Lord when I remember you. I know that you are extremely busy, so I will cut to the chase.

The congregation that I serve sent in several overtures to the recent Synodical convention, and while I would love to discuss them all with you, I desire to highlight the one issue that is most acute to Christ's ministry here in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. That particular issue is fellowship with the *American Association of Lutheran Churches* (AALC). The pertinent overtures, 4-03 and 4-04 on page 9 of 60 in the PDF or p.355 of *Today's Business*, were referred to you in *Omnibus A* as the chief ecumenical officer of Synod.

As you know, in 2007, the LCMS entered into altar and pulpit fellowship with the AALC. Chippewa Falls is a city of around 13,000 and we have a local AALC congregation, *Christ Lutheran*, served by a former LCMS pastor, Rev. Mark Homp. Unless I am mistaken, the AALC officially does not practice closed communion, but practice what they term, "responsible communion," which is, and I believe you would agree, really open communion. Here is what they say on their website:

**Do you practice open or closed communion?**

**We practice "responsible communion," which is neither open nor closed. That is, according to the Bible we have a responsibility to tell people what we believe ("we receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ with the bread and wine, for the forgiveness of sins"), based on Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 1 Corinthians 11:23-28. The person has the responsibility to check with the Bible to ensure that it does teach that, and that the person agrees with that. Administration is left with the local pastor as part of his pastoral care.**

<http://www.taalc.org/FAQ/CommunionInTheAALC.html> (September 18, 2013)

Now, I know that it wasn't your decision to enter into fellowship with them in 2007, nor was it your decision to change the power to declare fellowship from Synod in convention to Synod President. I also imagine that it will take time and energy for you or your designee to talk with the AALC to bring about unity in doctrine and practice or to break fellowship. However, in the meantime, I am at a loss as to how to explain to our many new members who have fled the altar and pulpit of the AALC to join our congregation

that they are still in altar and pulpit fellowship with what they just fled. They have come to our LCMS congregation and have embraced true Lutheranism. They have embraced liturgical worship, Law and Gospel preaching, and closed communion. They have repented and been absolved for their AALC days when they embraced heterodox and charismatic worship and openly communed with their ELCA and Episcopalian friends under the official policies of the AALC. They demand an explanation from me (LCMS) of how we can truly believe that closed communion is loving and Biblical, yet are in fellowship with open communion church bodies like the AALC. They see that that means that we in the LCMS also really practice open communion and are communing, not just with the sins of the AALC, but the ELCA and all those whom they officially and openly welcome and allow to commune. We are burdened that we share in accepting, for example, homosexuality and abortion by being in fellowship with an open communion church body.

This is truly hurting Christ's ministry here, especially the fragile consciences of our members and the orthodox name of the LCMS in our community. I believe that you will give this due attention, and I know you have other areas of doctrine and practice to deal with that are probably equally important as we walk together. I just beg you on behalf of our consciences at *Zion Lutheran*, Chippewa Falls, to resolve this quickly. And, since this fellowship issue falls solely on your desk and conscience, what comforting words would you like me to share with Christ's sheep each day that we continue to share and live-in the unrepentant sin of open communion against our consciences, God's Word, and the official "closed communion" position of the LCMS? Or, is there simply some other information about the AALC that we are missing?

Again, you are in my prayers. I look forward to hearing from you.

In the Spirit of desiring true *koinonia*,

Clint

## ACELC article

Aw. Does the Iddy-Widdy Widdle One Weenounce the Debil and All His Ways? - See more at: [http://acelc.net/page/acelc\\_blog#sthash.fO6m1MrZ.dpui](http://acelc.net/page/acelc_blog#sthash.fO6m1MrZ.dpui)

### LWML Missions - Mite History

#### The Widow's Mite

*Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything - all she had to live on" (Mark 12:41-43).*

#### Mite Boxes - How They Began



Perhaps inspired by the various "cent" or "mite" societies of the early 1800s, the Woman's Mission to Woman (Baptist) urged members in its first circular letter in 1871 to use their new mite box to raise funds. The entire family was encouraged to contribute. The garnet-colored paper box had an opening on the top and the words, "Woman's Mission to Woman," in gold letters on the side.

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL THE MEMBERS WHO HAVE OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS!!

Isabel Lenz	10/1
Lois Eichinger	10/3
Laurie Schweisthal	10/5
Roger Ewings	10/6
Erna Welke	10/8
Gerald Hoepner	10/10
Karen Clark	10/15
Jenna Ewings	10/15
Mark Klemke	10/15
Vicki Bellore	10/17
Elizabeth Welke	10/17
Arlene Hakes	10/20
Sara Bowe	10/24
Benjamin Ziebarth	10/24
Dianne Schroeder	10/25
Shianne Hunt	10/27
Diane Leland	10/27
Emily Schwetz	10/28
Mary Gettler	10/30
Amanda Ziebarth	10/30

## ♥ HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO: ♥

Ryan & Kelly Hunt	10/01/2005
Bradley & Carol Sundell	10/01/2006
Roger Jr. & Laurie Ewings	10/02/1993
Greg & Diane Leland	10/04/1975
Shawn & Mandy Schoelzel	10/05/2002
Gene & Dottie Neumann	10/10/2003
Tom & Sara Bowe	10/17/1992
Tom & Judy Benson	10/22/1994
Herman & Sharon Sahr	10/24/1964

## † WE ASK YOU TO REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS THE HOMEBOUND MEMBERS:

Irene Kvapil

Isabel Lenz

## NEW MEMBER WELCOME:

We welcome Jeff Kummerow, by way of transfer from Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ashland, WI. If you haven't already, please introduce yourself to him.

## WOMEN'S SOCIETY NEWS:

Women's Society met on Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. Ten members, five guests and pastor attended. Cake and ice cream was served by our hostess Diane Gettler. After enjoying the dessert, Pastor Stark led us in devotions "Outing Sin" written by Rev. Scott Murray. It was based on Confession and Absolution - one the 6 chief parts of the Lutheran Catechism. Sermons should include both Law and Gospel. After devotions a short business meeting was held. The cards and a gift for the wedding of Jens and Jessica Jensen were mailed to them. Thank you to all who gave a card and the gift. A new electric stove was given as a gift to the society. Thank you! The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Our next meeting will be October 10<sup>th</sup> at church at 1:00 p.m. Mary Gettler will be hostess. All ladies of the congregation are welcome to join us.

## 100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY FOR ERNA WELKE:

Open House & Card Shower 2-4 p.m. on October 6<sup>th</sup>.  
Address: 222 Chapman Road, Chippewa Falls.

## GORDY'S RECEIPTS

Please save all of your Gordy's receipts and leave them in the back entrance.

## WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:

Each Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. 10-15 men and women meet in the Fireside Room to go over the upcoming Sunday's scripture lessons. Lively discussions prevail and there is always room for more participants.

## YOUTH GROUP:

KwikTrip script sales continue on Sunday mornings. During the week Zion members may purchase script during church office hours. Please save and drop off aluminum cans in the church's garage. We had a recent deposit of \$78.50 from collecting and recycling aluminum cans. Thank you.

## RADIO & FLOWERS:

If you would like to furnish altar flowers or sponsor a radio broadcast for a special occasion please call the office. **Altar flowers** are **\$30.00** at Gordys if **you pick up** yourself or **\$40.00** if you would like them **delivered** to the church. You also may bring your own flowers. There is a flower chart in the church on the left of the door as you enter from the education wing. Sign your name by the date you would like to furnish flowers. **The radio broadcast is \$76.00.** Call the office if you would like to furnish a broadcast or if you would like the Secretary to order and have the flowers delivered. You may pay in the church office or put in the offering plate & write "for flowers."



## NEW CHOIR MEMBERS NEEDED!

If you are interested in joining the choir please speak with Lyn Brace.