

Living Out Our Lutheran Identity

Crucifying Consumer Mentality: The Vital Need to Recommit Ourselves to Christ's Mission

October 20, 2020



1. Share one thing Pastor Mueller said that resonated with you.
2. Share one thing Pastor Mueller said that you found to be thought-provoking (for whatever reason).
3. What theological reasons might we point to for struggles and decline in our church? How can these reasons be misused?

Matthew 24:10-12 - ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.

Matthew 24:24 - ²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 - ³ For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

4. Pastor Mueller identifies several possible problems *within* the church that threaten our mission. Which do you see as most dangerous to the ministry of our congregation or synod? Explain your answer.

Is it possible that we are more interested in preserving institutions than we are in making disciples and getting people to heaven? Is it possible that our clergy have become so worldly that their lives are largely indistinguishable from the unbelieving world we are trying to convert?... Is it possible that in operating our Lutheran elementary schools, we have ostensibly replaced parents as the spiritual caregivers in the home? Is it possible that we have become so addicted to technology in our day that the thought of personal, relational, face-to-face witnessing or ministry is absolutely antithetical even to the way we think? Is it possible that because we live in the country that we do that this whole politically correct notion of tolerance has desensitized us to the point where we can't even use the binding key...the whole notion of responsibility and accountability has gone up in smoke? (<https://vimeo.com/391521561#t=11m33s>)

5. Pastor Mueller said, "Parish renewal begins with personal renewal. And that means that, if we want a healthy synod, we have to have healthy congregations. If we want to have healthy congregations, that means that we ought look in the mirror at me."
(<https://vimeo.com/391521561#t=16m25s>) How does King David's story serve as a model for personal renewal?

Psalm 51:10-15 - ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. ¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. ¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

(Cf. also 2 Samuel 12; Psalm 32; Psalm 51)

6. Pastor Mueller identified a Lutheran leader as one who is like Jesus:

1) I know _____

2) I know _____

3) I'm going to _____

7. Pastor Mueller said, "In America, we've got people who are in a dead sprint for hell, and it is almost like they are gleeful to see who's going to win." What keeps us from seeing people in this way and personally and collectively doing everything we can to make sure that they hear the gospel (Romans 10:13-17), the only message with the power to change their destination (Romans 1:16-17)?

8. Identify the barriers to discipleship that Jesus confronts in each of those he meets in Luke 9:57-62, and describe how these barriers show themselves in our personal discipleship today.

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." ⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." ⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

9. **Luke 10:1-3** - ¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves."

- a. Identify evidence that the harvest is plentiful today.
- b. What workers was Jesus primarily talking about, when he said the workers are few?
- c. Explain the following obstacles that Pastor Mueller said keep us from going when the Lord says, "Go!"
 - i. Institutionalism
 - ii. Parochialism

10. Identify at least three specific ways that we can better engage, equip, motivate, and turn loose the lay members of our congregation for gospel ministry.

11. Explain how Jesus' response to the excitement of the returning seventy-two guards us from dangerous and harmful thinking in our discipleship and witnessing.

Luke 10:17-20 - ¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." ¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

12. Pastor Mueller closed with these steps toward personal and congregational revitalization:

- 1) Acknowledge that we are our own worst enemies; we have contributed to the problem. Have an honest brotherly and sisterly conversation in love about it.
- 2) Remember that our sins, like David's, are forgiven by the selfless sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God is a God of love!
- 3) **1 Corinthians 15:58** - "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."