



Small Group Study Guide for June 6, 2021

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: The Sundays after Pentecost bring us to the *Semester Ecclesiae*, the half-year of the Church. The Time of Christmas and the Time of Easter together constitute the *Semester Domini*, or the half-year of our Lord. The *Semester Domini* focuses upon the events of the Lord's life: His conception and birth, His fasting and temptation, His suffering and death, His resurrection and Ascension, His session at the right hand of the Father, and His pouring out of the Spirit. The *Semester Ecclesiae*, in contrast, focuses much more upon the teachings of the Lord. What exactly does it mean to live by faith in Jesus? How may we love Him in His people? How do we shine the hope that God has given us into this sad world?

Getting Started:

1. Have you ever spent a lot of time building/creating/putting together something? What was that process like?
2. This question is relevant to the text and the sermon, but share only as you are comfortable: How is your health and how is your body holding up?

In the Word: 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:1. Please read through this section of the text.

3. St. Paul begins this passage of Scripture by making use of some rich Old Testament imagery (as he references clay jars). How is such imagery used in the Old Testament (If stumped, check out: Genesis 2:7; Isaiah 64:8; and Jeremiah 18:2-6)?
4. 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 includes quite the list of negatives and positives that describe the life of every Christian to one degree or another. What are the negatives and what are the positives—the far outweigh the negatives? How do you see these present in your own life?
5. St. Paul states an imperative truth in verse 13. What does he claim about our faith? Why is this such an important teaching?

6. In verse 17, Paul writes, “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.” While that is absolutely true—thanks be to God—the suffering we go through is real and difficult. Think about how to hold both things in tension, and how to minister to somebody you know who is suffering.

Putting it Together

7. This text really speaks into the reality of how we suffer and how our bodies are breaking down and wasting away. Vicar Heinze shared a whimsical story about playing basketball in a mask with the 8th grade boys and jokingly wondering if he was going to survive the ordeal. While there are certainly many painful and difficult stories about our bodies breaking down, do you have any light-hearted or amusing stories about your body slowing down?
8. The word ‘tension’ has already been used in this study, but it is such an important word in our Lutheran theology that it must be used again! We know that because of the Fall, we were completely corrupted by sin. We are not sin. Our bodies are not sin. Yet there is nowhere in the body we can go and not find sin present. At the same time, our bodies have been carefully and lovingly created by God. And here we read about how the greatest treasure in all of existence has been dumped into our “clay jars” (the death and life of Jesus is present in our flesh!). Think about how we hold these in tension and properly talk about our bodies.
9. St. Paul writes in verses 11-12, “For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.” What rich language that can be used to describe living the Baptismal life! Can you see the connection with our Baptismal life?
10. Verses 16-18 are simply beautiful and filled with the sure and certain hope that we have in Christ Jesus. St. Paul reminds us that we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. I would like to take verse 18 and combine it with verse 12 in parentheses: “For the things that are seen are transient (so death is at work in us), but the things that are unseen are eternal (but life is in you).” Talk about how we receive comfort from God through this teaching, even as our bodies break down and waste away.

Prayer: Lord God, heavenly Father, by Your Son You have revealed to us that heaven and earth shall pass away, that our bodies shall rise again, and that we all shall appear before the judgment seat: We ask You to keep us in Your Word by Your Holy Spirit; establish us in the true faith and graciously defend us from sin, that our hearts may not be weighed down, but that we may ever watch and pray and, trusting fully in Your grace, await with joy the glorious coming of Your Son, and at last obtain eternal salvation; through the same, Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.