

Carl Rockrohr
Romans 8:31-39
Rev. David Rockrohr's Home-Going
Pilgrim Lutheran Church, West Bend, WI
January 31, 2017

Only Jesus Saves

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Romans 8:31-32

Prayer

Only Jesus Saves.

We who are gathered here in Pilgrim Lutheran Church on January 31, 2017 have come for a common reason: Rev. David Karl Rockrohr has been welcomed into His Father's house through faith in Jesus Christ.

Dear Jane;

Dear Tim, Peter, and Dan and their families and my family,

Dear grandchildren, nieces and nephews of David and their families,

Dear in-laws,

Dear multitude of family and friends near and far:

Only Jesus Saves.

We have come to grieve the loss of David. We have come to give thanks to God for David. We have come to comfort and support one another. And we who have gathered here today know what David Rockrohr stood for; David stood for Jesus Christ, true Son of God. Jesus, the one and only way for forgiveness, God's gift of righteousness, true service to neighbor and to everlasting life in heaven.

Pastor David Rockrohr was impelled to share the Gospel message of Jesus his whole life. To young and old, to homeless and to rich, to those in comas and to those in the vigor of youth, to the exalted and to the humble, Pastor Rockrohr knew they all, we all, needed Jesus in their, in our, lives.

What impelled David Rockrohr, and all Christians, to look to Jesus? To the world it is not obvious. For Christians today in the 21st century are not so different than the Christians Paul knew:

Paul wrote to the Christians living in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1:26

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

And we Christians recognize this. From every culture and age, some Christians are famous, powerful and wealthy by worldly standards... but most are not.

And we Christians suffer similar events and trials as those who are not Christians. Pastor Rockrohr himself suffered from a form of Alzheimer's and dementia from more than 2 decades. In the end David's memory failed and his body grew very weak.

To the unbelieving world, such an illness for a Christian pastor might move unbelievers to say – "you Christians should find another god!" Or, others might say "there is no God at all!"

And sometimes we Christians ourselves cannot make sense out of what happens in our lives, and we might give in to doubts and wonder – is God for me? Does God care? Does God love me?

To such question or doubts God says to us, "Yes, I am still for you!"

The prophets, the apostles and Jesus Himself teach over and over that right in the very midst of trouble and suffering and sadness, God is still with us.

Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 16

"But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Now think... why else would Jesus say the gates of hell will not prevail against His Church, except that the gates of hell would attack and try to overtake Jesus' church? And yet in the midst of attack and distresses from hell, Jesus calls His people, "my church."

Some of our troubles and sufferings come from our own actions and rebellions, don't they? We can have a hand in our own suffering. But very often the accident occurs, the cancer overtakes us, the relationship dissolves, poverty becomes our lot... and we cannot discern what we did wrong, or what we should have done differently. The thing happened and we live through it.

Paul taught that all sufferings, attacks, misfortunes, evil earthly powers, the powers of hell and darkness – in fact everything in all creation cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Not even death separates us from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Paul asked in our Romans 8 text:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

We Christians have troubles similar as the whole of humanity. At times, we even suffer for being Christian – so that some take us easy to persecute and even kill, like sheep to be slaughtered.

Paul continued:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What impelled David Rockrohr for his whole life, and the same for all Christians? In Jesus Christ we can not be separated from the love of God. Period.

Only Jesus saves.

This Gospel that the Son of God, sent by God the Father, took on our human nature, taught us, ministered to us, suffered for us, died for us and rose for us... this impels us.

Whatever our station and situation in life – no matter how low or hopeless, Jesus has gone even lower to lift us up. Jesus took on our sin, that He might make us the righteousness of God.

God allows us to say no! to this Good News message. God allows us to reject salvation through Jesus. If so, then we do stand alone against all powers, evil and even death. If we think we can stand without Jesus, death and the devil are waiting to devour us like a roaring lion for eternity.

But such unbelief is not God's plan for us. God's plan is for us to endure throughout this life to the very end with faith in Jesus Christ. The strength, the wealth, the power, the health, the life, the victory belongs to Jesus, the Son of God, who is our Savior and Friend.

Jesus wants and intends for us to endure. Jesus gives His Holy Spirit to live in us so that we will endure and love one another throughout this life. Jesus gives us His Word; His Holy Washing; His Holy Supper; and He gives His people, us, to one another.

Where Dad's soul is right now – in the glories of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is where Dad always wanted you and me to be too. And Dad knew and preached and taught – only Jesus saves.

We, along with David, look to Jesus for victory in all we face that we may endure to the end of this world, into the rest and peace of our heavenly Father's house forever.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus,

We thank you that Pastor David Rockrohr endured in you to the end of this life.

We pray you, Jesus, to give us faith also to endure.

We believe that you Jesus will raise even our weak and dying bodies when you come again.

Jesus, as you intercede for us, comfort and strengthen our faith to never doubt that we are always in your hands, to the end.

In the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.