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BETTER TOGETHER

ME

September 12, 13, and 16, 2020

How often we fail to recognize that our greatest enemy is the enemy within. Every temptation begins with a sinful craving that arises in our own hearts. How do we rightly recognize and battle the enemy called "me?"

BELLS AND WELCOME

OPENING HYMN 243

Oh, Worship The King

Oh, worship the King, all-glorious above;
Oh gratefully sing his pow'r and his love,
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

Your bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In you do we trust nor find you to fail.
Your mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!

M The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C **And also with you.**

CONFESSION OF SINS

M Dear brothers and sisters, in his letter to the Romans, Paul lamented the inborn nature that all too often took control of his thinking and his behaviors. He said:

C **I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do, this I keep on doing** (*Romans 7:15*).

M Throughout the pages of Scripture, God amply warns us about the enemy within. We have good reason to be cast out of God's presence forever. Yet God's mercies are new every morning. Through Christ, God offers forgiveness and renewed power to choose the right and say "no" to the wrong. Let us therefore confess our many sins to God that we may find strength once again in his forgiving love.

C **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M Let us pray.

Lord God we know that we are not only surrounded by many dangers, but that great weakness and danger also lives within.

C **Strengthen us in body and mind, and bring us safely through all temptations.**

M We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever



FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 15:15-21

Jeremiah laments the fact that despite his faithful service, he continues to experience struggle and pain. How easily we fall into the trap of believing that we deserve more than we really do. I am my worst enemy.

LORD, you understand;

remember me and care for me.

Avenge me on my persecutors.

You are long-suffering—do not take me away;

think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.

¹⁶ When your words came, I ate them;

they were my joy and my heart's delight,

for I bear your name,

LORD God Almighty.

¹⁷ I never sat in the company of revelers,

never made merry with them;

I sat alone because your hand was on me
and you had filled me with indignation.
¹⁸ Why is my pain unending
and my wound grievous and incurable?
You are to me like a deceptive brook,
like a spring that fails.

¹⁹ Therefore this is what the LORD says:

“If you repent, I will restore you
that you may serve me;
if you utter worthy, not worthless, words,
you will be my spokesman.

Let this people turn to you,
but you must not turn to them.

²⁰ I will make you a wall to this people,
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you
but will not overcome you,
for I am with you
to rescue and save you,”
declares the LORD.

²¹ “I will save you from the hands of the wicked
and deliver you from the grasp of the cruel.”

VERSE OF THE DAY



C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



These words are writ - ten that we may be - lieve that



Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Peter is convinced that he is in the right, that he is defending his friend and Savior. Yet, like all of us Peter has a nature that is influenced by human concerns and easily loses sight God's plan and purposes.

²¹From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"

After the Gospel, the congregation sings:



C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY 183

Holy Spirit, Light Divine

Holy Spirit, Light divine,
Shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the gloom of night away;
Turn the darkness into day.

Holy Spirit, Love divine,
Cleanse this guilty heart of mine;
In your mercy pity me;
From sin's bondage set me free.

Holy Spirit, Pow'r divine,
Dwell within this heart of mine;
Cast down ev'ry idol throne;
Reign supreme and reign alone.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Proverbs 9:10a) Without you Lord we are nothing and can accomplish nothing. You deserve all respect and honor. Lord, empty us of our pride, our worry, our lack of faith. Fill us with your Word that we can hate what is evil and cling to what is good. Give us an attitude within that may be a help and not a hindrance to those around us, especially those entrusted to our care. Make our families humble students of your Word who boldly do your will to your glory and for your people.

Special prayers and intercessions.

M Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M Now, eternal God and Father, keep us in the saving faith and so enable us to overcome all things through our Lord Jesus Christ.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN 455

Rise! To Arms! With Prayer Employ You

Rise! To arms! With prayer employ you,
O Christians, lest the foe destroy you,
For Satan has designed your fall.
Wield God's Word, a weapon glorious;
Against each foe you'll be victorious;
Our God will set you o'er them all.
Fear not the prince of hell -
Here is Immanuel! Sing hosanna!
The strong ones yield To Christ, our shield,
And we as conqu'rors hold the field.

Jesus, all your children cherish,
And keep them that they never perish
Whom you have purchased with your blood.
Let new life to us be given
That we may look to you in heaven
Whenever fearful is our mood.
Your Spirit on us pour
That we may love you more,
Hearts o'erflowing; And then shall we,
From sin set free, Sing praise through all eternity.

BLESSING

M Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.



WEEKLY CALENDAR

For the week of September 14, 2020

MON	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
TUE	9:30 am	Ministry Growth Team Meeting
	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
	10:30 am	Ministerial Team Meeting
	4:30 pm	Public School 6-8 Grade Confirmation Instruction Classes
	6:00 pm	Divorce Care (School Classroom #8)
	6:30 pm	Alzheimer's Support Group (Church Library)
WED	6:30 am	Sunrise Bible Study (Faith Room)
	7:00 pm	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
	7:00 pm	<i>Following the Promise</i>
THURS	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
	7:00 pm	Ministry Board Meeting
FRI	6:00 pm	Thrall/Dougherty Wedding Rehearsal (Main Church)
SAT	8:00 am	Men's Breakfast Bible Study (Faith Room)
	3:00 pm	Samantha Thrall/Matthew Dougherty Wedding (Main Church)
	5:00 pm	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
SUN	7:45 am	Traditional Worship Service
	9:15 am	Traditional Worship Service
	10:30 am	Outdoor Worship Service

JOIN US ONLINE

If you can't join us in person, join us online! A video archive of sermons is available at www.stpaulmukego.org/worship/sermons.

The Bridge, our casual contemporary service, is livestreamed every Sunday at 10:15 am on each of the following platforms. You can find an archive of past messages on each site, with the full-service HD replay on YouTube.



www.thebridgemuskego.org



@ The Bridge Church Muskego



@ The Bridge at St. Paul's

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

HOSPITALIZED

Bill Graumann (Community Memorial in Menomonee Falls), Lois Guhr (hospice care at Care-Age in Brookfield), Linda Hartwig (Hales Corners Care Center), Fred Liermann (hospice care at Autumn Leaves in Franklin), Dorrette Probst (home hospice care), Brittany Michaels (Duke Hospital in Durham, North Carolina), and Lois Stichmann (The View at Pine Ridge).

ATTENDANCE

The following attended last week's services: 69 on Saturday, 55 on Sunday 7:45 am, 92 on Sunday 9:15 am, 86 at The Bridge, 36 on Sunday 10:45 am, and 20 on Wednesday.

COMMUNION SERVICES

Communion is offered on the second and last weekend of the month. Small group communion in the Grace Room is offered the first and third weekends of the month and connected Wednesdays 10:00 am - noon. Call the church office (414-422-0320) to register for small group communion.

ST. PAUL'S CHRIST-CENTERED CARE AND COUNSELING MINISTRY

We are beginning the organizational preparations for our focused counseling and care ministry (personal/family counseling, support groups and life coaching). We are looking for individuals who are interested in serving 1) on a planning/oversight team and/or 2) assisting in the day-to-day operations of the ministry (support groups, lay counseling/coaching, etc.). If you are interested in serving in either of these capacities or would just like a little more information, contact Pastor Bonack at jbonack@stpaulmuskego.org. Also, if you know of any professional counselors who may be willing to serve part time or full time at our facility, please let us know. Thank you!

HELPING MILWAUKEE KIDS WITH VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The Lighthouse Youth Center at Garden Homes Lutheran Church needs tutors to help youth with school lessons and homework assigned to them via virtual learning. Lighthouse assists families and children by providing a safe environment and needed technology so inner city students can complete school assignments and keep learning. Lighthouse is open and running its program with all the safety precautions in place that are required of them: temp checks, strong cleaning procedures, less than 50% capacity, COVID admission related questions, wearing masks, etc. In addition to the tutoring, Lighthouse is also in need of people to physically provide Friday night suppers for the children or financial help so it can obtain supper for the children directly. To learn more, indicate your interest on the Connection Card or contact Dr. Nelson (414-750-2586 or jnelson@stpmuskego.org).

FOLLOWING THE PROMISE BEGINS SEPTEMBER 29 ON TUESDAYS

"Come one, come all!" to the fall session of *Following the Promise* (FtP), running 12 weeks through December 15. Taught 100% online and "recorded so you can miss a class and watch later," a computer or iPad is all you need! Each week from 7:00 until 8:15 pm we journey from creation's fall into sin to the "goodness" of Good Friday to the halls of heaven--finding Jesus at the heart of the Scriptures. Text interest to Pastor Nate at (414) 426-8236, email him at nstrobel@stpmuskego.org, or register on the back of your Connection Card. This class serves as a path to membership.

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR PETE

Every other Thursday, Pastor Pete leads a Zoom Bible study at 7:00 pm, generally using the GroupWork Bible study material. The next study will be on September 24. Register on the Connection Card or simply click the Zoom link that will be sent out just prior to the study.

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

SEPTEMBER SERMON SERIES—BETTER TOGETHER

As young people return to classes, we are reminded of the importance of equipping ourselves for the various situations and challenges before us in life. If this is true in a temporal and earthly sense, how much more true spiritually! The Scriptures exhort us to equip ourselves to fight the good fight. But just as students require a team of individuals to guide and encourage them toward higher levels of growth (i.e. parents, teachers, coaches, friends), Christians need both the guidance of God's Word and the assistance of other Christians to provide support and direction on their journey toward spiritual maturity. We are better together! What's your plan for Word of God time in the months ahead? Who are the spiritual mentors to assist you on this journey? And finally, what obstacles may be standing between you and attaining your goals?



SEPTEMBER 20
SEPTEMBER 27

YOU
US

MATTHEW 18:15-20
MATTHEW 18:21-35

THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF THE AUGUST FAMILY IN NEED

Our St. Paul's member who is awaiting a double lung transplant is now at an out-of-state hospital and has been accepted into their program and is awaiting donor lungs. Thank you for your generous gifts of \$7,045 to our August Family in Need. These gifts will help them with the many costs of living "temporarily" in another state while awaiting surgery. May the Lord continue to watch over them.

WISH LIST

The items listed below would greatly benefit the ministry at St. Paul's. These items are above and beyond the budgeted expenses. If you would like to give toward a Wish List item, clearly mark your envelope, "Wish List," with the item title, or give online at www.stpaulmuskego.org/give.

Item	Est. Cost	Received	Still Needed
Photo Feature Walls for church lobby and Trinity Café	\$4,000	\$1,875	\$2,125
Church Signage Updates	\$6,373	\$0	\$6,373
Church Family Room Furniture Updates	\$8,850	\$3,003	\$5,847
Garden Homes Lutheran Church Food Pantry	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500

Help Garden Homes Expand Food Pantry Ministry

Garden Homes Lutheran Church and School on Milwaukee's north side has a food pantry that serves their community. They could receive free frozen food if they had a freezer. With this Wish List donation, they will be able to purchase a freezer and add an electrical outlet for the freezer. Any excess funds will be used by Garden Homes to purchase more food for the food pantry.

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

WORSHIP PLANS FOR THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS

The Ministerial Team continues to evaluate the best way to serve our congregation with Word and Sacraments during the COVID pandemic. We will be implementing the following changes:

1. Outdoor Worship on September 20

We will offer another outdoor worship opportunity on Sunday, September 20 at 10:30 in place of The Bridge service and 10:45 am traditional service. It may be possible that we will offer one more outdoor service in October if the long-range weather forecast looks promising.

2. Small Group Communion

We will continue to offer small group Communion twice per month. However, because of the overflow seating in the Grace Room, small group Communion will be offered in the sanctuary after the Saturday 5:00 pm and Wednesday 7:00 pm services and on Wednesday from 10:00 am until 12:00 noon, beginning the weekend of September 20th. Registration for small group communion will continue to be offered through a "Needs List" e-mail and by calling the church office at 414-422-0320.

ORGANIZATION FOR WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SENIORS - OWLS

There will be no OWLS meetings until further notice. President Char Pingel says, "I will miss gathering with all of you!"

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP RESUMES TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Our Alzheimer's support group is resuming this month on their regularly scheduled third Tuesday of the month gathering. If you have a loved one suffering from Alzheimer's disease, please consider joining this support group on Tuesday, September 15, at 6:30 pm in the church library. Contact David Timm at (414) 588-3850 with questions.

OCTOBER SHEEPSHEAD TOURNAMENT

Due to COVID19 concerns, we will not be hosting our annual October Sheepshead Tournament. It will be rescheduled when it can be attended safely.

DORCAS SOCIETY GATHERINGS

The Dorcas Society will not be holding gatherings due to COVID19 until further notice.

CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2020

Our youth confirmation services will be held on Sunday, September 13 at 1:30 and 3:00 pm. Attendance is by invitation only. Both services will be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube.

Sunday 1:30 pm

Alyssa Rae Randolph
Hailey Anne Ristow
Jackson Tyler Rossmann
Eddie Neil Rynders
Schuyler Richard Santos
Jacob David Schenkel
Allie Rose Schneck
Dominic Jordan Schnier
Nathaniel Owen Sperber
Megan Lynn Tweedie
Preston Jay Vahovick
Brooke Kimberly Weber
Henry Stephen Westphal

Sunday 3:00 pm

Austin Keith Bertino
Evan Christopher Clark
Logan Thaddeus Eirschele
Colin Jeffrey Foley
Bailey Katherine Gallagher
Sofia Grace Garofani
Bradyn William Michael Horn
Samuel James Kneser
Aiden Kenneth Krause
Ashton Kenneth Krause
Sophia Faith Lepke
Mason James Mroczenski
Jack Michael Olson
Sara Marie Potter

Together with their parents, the confirmands selected their Confirmation verse and were asked what this verse meant to them. This gave them the opportunity to express their faith. What follows is each confirmand's personal information, Confirmation verse, and profession of faith. We thank our gracious God for the life-giving and life-sustaining gift of his Word, and we pray that he would send his Holy Spirit to keep these young people faithful, even to the point of death, that they might receive the crown of life.

Austin Keith Bertino

Titus 3:5-6

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Austin completed the process for Confirmation at St. Jacobi Ev. Lutheran Church in Greenfield and was unable to be present for their rescheduled Confirmation service in June.

Evan Christopher Clark

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

I have chosen Hebrews 11:1 as my Confirmation verse because for a long time, my mom has talked about the importance of choosing the right Confirmation passage. My sister, Taylor, and my Aunt Becky have also been telling me how important this is.

Last year, Hebrews 11:1 was assigned for memory work. As soon as I read this passage, I knew this was the passage I was going to choose for my verse. In Confirmation class I have come to realize the importance

of the definition of “faith.” Hebrews 11:1 has inspired in me a feeling of faithfulness to God that I pray stays with me for the rest of my life. Catechism instruction also taught me where I am going after life on this earth. This passage has burned into me a confident faith, though I have never physically seen God with my own eyes.

Two major events in my life remind me that God is everywhere, though I have not physically seen him. 1) He saved my aunt from cancer when she was a young girl. If God had taken her to heaven instead, I would never have known one of the most important people of my life. 2) Last year, my cousins were in a very bad car accident and I remember people saying “they were lucky to have survived.” God saved my cousins from being badly hurt and from death. If there is no God, earthly science would rule the fate of our lives. Because of these two events, I know that God is real...and Hebrews 11:1 will always remind me of what I believe.

Logan Thaddeus Eirschele 1 John 1:7

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

I chose this verse not only because it was my Great Grandpa Schultz’s Confirmation verse, but also because it is comforting. When it says, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another,” it means that when Jesus came down to earth, he opened the way for me and all believers to be in heaven and celebrate eternal life with them. When it says, “And the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin,” it means that through Jesus’ death on the cross and his resurrection, I am forgiven for all my sins and guaranteed an eternal life in heaven.

Colin Jeffrey Foley 2 Chronicles 15:7

As for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because of the words it uses and its special meaning to me. When it says, “As for you, be strong,” I see the Lord saying to me that I should be strong in faith and rooted in his Word. This verse is telling me that he will be with me through all my struggles, whether big or small. I can apply this verse to the rest of this year and to the rest of my life. Also he tells me, “Do not give up,” which can apply to anything I do in life. But the most important thing this verse is telling me is to reflect on him in everything I do and serve him. Lastly, he says, “Your work will be rewarded.” This reminds me that my work is leading others to their Savior and their place in heaven through him. My reward is a gift of God’s grace. He allows me to come home to heaven after my time spent here on earth.

Bailey Katherine Gallagher Joshua 24:15

If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because when I was little, my family and I sat for a family portrait at church and we had used this passage. So much has happened in life since then and this passage reminds me that God is the foundation of any family. This passage also gives me comfort in knowing that through the Holy Spirit working faith in my heart, I have the desire to serve God. God allows me to choose my own path in faith, and this freedom that he gives shows his love towards every one of his children who believe. As I have grown, I have come to realize how much God loves me that he sent Jesus to die for my sins as well as everyone else's. Out of thankfulness and love to God I want to serve him and spread his Word to others I meet. I can also serve God by praying for others in need and for those unaware of Jesus' sacrificial death.

Sofia Grace Garofani

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

I picked this passage for a special reason. When it says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above," this part of the passage is a constant reminder to me that God brings me the good things in life. Even all the bad things too. In the end, both good and bad things end up being beneficial to you. The second part of the passage is another reason why I chose James 1:17. In life, I have always dealt with many "shifting shadows" and many friends that don't stick around. In James 1:17, when it says, "the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows," it reminds me that God will always be there for me. It tells me that God, even though I am sinful, will be there always because he loves me unconditionally in Jesus. This passage will always remind me that God brings good things to me and will never leave or stop loving me.

Bradyn William Michael Horn Psalm 18:2

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because I like how this verse has a strong message displaying many different ways God is dependable. As my rock, God is the firm foundation upon which my faith is built. He completes all that I am. As my fortress, he is a safe place for me that I can turn to for strength in times of trouble, when I need him the most. This verse is a reminder that God is all that I need in every area of my life, at home, school, and in sports. It is important for me to remember that God will protect me and give me the strength that I need to tackle anything in my life. It also reminds me that my purpose on earth is to be a witness for him, sharing the message of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in heaven. Jesus paid the price for all of our sins. No matter what, "It is finished." I am a believer in him and will forever trust that God is my rock, my deliverer, and the strength of my salvation.

Samuel James Kneser Psalm 119:105

Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because I know that God will guide me and always lead me in the right direction. During my time here at St. Paul's, I have studied and learned God's Word, and I pray that I will take all that knowledge and carry it with me all through my life. God has a plan for me, and I know that, with his help, I will always stay connected to him. I know that if I always listen to God, he will lead me down the right path and help me make the right choices. God's will is my guideline for doing good works, because it is written in his Word. With God on my side I know I will do the right thing. Even when times get dark, I know that God's light will shine on me and always protect me. God's plan for me will show me the way to eternal life in heaven.

Aiden Kenneth Krause Luke 1:37

For no word from God will ever fail.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because it shows how God will never fail me ever in love and always be there for me. In Confirmation class I have learned that everything in the Bible is true because it is God's breathing the words into the writers who wrote the Bible and the Word is always right. Luke 1:37 shows how God is perfect because he is always true to me and he will never lie to me. This verse assures me that he will never fail me. He died on the cross and forgave us our sin and saved us so we can go to heaven. He did this as man and God. I believe God will never fail me in any way because he is perfect in his love.

Ashton Kenneth Krause

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I chose this as my Confirmation verse because God will always be there for me when I sin and when I make mistakes. He will forgive my sins. It reminds me of that because of Jesus, my Lord, who died on the cross for me. Through faith in my God I will have eternal life. The gift of God is all I need to live my life, because God will always be there for me and he will never let me down. Whenever I am in trouble or when I am feeling down, God will be there and help me through my life. Jesus died for my sins. Because of that, my God will be there for me in all situations and I am confident he will always bless me.

Sophia Faith Lepke

Psalm 46:5

God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

This is my Confirmation verse because it helps me remember that God will help me through all of my decisions. This verse also reminds me that no matter what else is going around in the world, he is helping me keep a strong hold on his Word and promises. My Confirmation verse also reminds me of Deuteronomy 31:6, stating that God will never leave me or forsake me and how God will never break any of his promises. I love playing sports, and this verse reminds me that, when I don't have a good game, God will help me get back up on my feet and help me keep a positive attitude. This verse will also remind me that when I need some comfort, God will always be there to comfort me in his Word.

Mason James Mroczenski

1 Peter 3:8-9

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because it tells me to always believe in the Lord no matter what happens, even if a very loved one passes away or something tragic happens. I will always turn to the Lord for help because I know the Lord is always there for me and will be with me even though I do not deserve it. When the Lord declares my time is up, I shall glorify him with everybody else who is with him in heaven, even though I have done nothing to deserve eternal life. There was no greater pain endured than the pain and suffering Jesus bore for me. He gave his life for me.

Jack Michael Olson

Philippians 4:13

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

I have chosen this passage because I feel like this passage is a very great reminder. This passage reminds me of how Jesus will always be with me and he will never look away from me.

I can always look at my Bible and open it to this passage when I am feeling down, worried or stuck. This passage is an everlasting reminder that he will always love me. That's why I have a cross necklace with this passage engraved on it, so whenever I look at it, I will always get that reminder as well. I have lived my life by this passage. I grew up with crosses and Bibles all around my house and my grandparents' house. This passage was always brought up in some shape or form at one point at those houses on Sundays and holidays.

This passage also has a personal meaning for me, as an athlete. I have, as I said, lived my life by this passage. Being an athlete is just amazing, because I get to be motivated by that passage and use my gifts that God has given me every day. With these gifts, I will be able to do anything God wills. I will be able to leave a mark on the world and the city that I have been raised in.

This passage is a rock that I live by along with the rest of my family. This passage promises that I will be blessed by God as I use the abilities God has given me to do good for him and to help spread his word and grace to everyone.

Sara Marie Potter

John 13:7

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

I chose this as my Confirmation passage because it means that even though Confirmation may feel like an end, it is only the beginning because God has a plan. I feel that his plan for me on this earth is not only to love God, but also to make heaven crowded. I can achieve this goal by reminding myself that when Jesus died on the cross, he thought of everyone who has ever, and will ever, walk on the earth, and loved every one of them. Jesus loved them even if they would never accept him as their own. I believe in Jesus as my own Savior and hope to help others find him too. I need to simply love everyone as Jesus loved me. After all, one day I will look into the eyes of Jesus and be at home!

Alyssa Rae Randolph

Job 8:5-7

But if you will seek God earnestly and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your prosperous state. Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because it reminds me that as I continue life with true faith in God, he will protect me no matter what troubles and temptations come my way. My faith in God gives me comfort because I know that my future will remain in his hands and that he will bless my future with success and brightness. When we put our trust in God in everything we do in life, he will protect us. God is our King, our number one Protector. I will spread the word of God and encourage my friends and family to put their trust in God and truly love him and have faith in him. I will tell them that he will bless their future and protect them at all costs. I will remind them that their sins are forgiven because Jesus has already paid for our sins by suffering on the cross. We can show that we are thankful that he sacrificed himself as we live our lives for him.

Hailey Anne Ristow

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

I chose this passage because I always worry about the future. I worry what my choices now will become later. It's a normal thing to be anxious for the future, but I find comfort in this passage, knowing God has a plan for everything. I think ... what will that grade do to my report card, will I fail or pass that test, what if I don't know anyone, what if I miss that layup and cost us the game? And now I know that even if that happens, and even though I could've studied more, or I could've practiced more, God will work it out for his purpose. Sometimes something really bad happens and I forget about God's promise to keep me safe, that his plan is for my good, and I blame myself for what happened. So as I grow I hope to remember this passage and God's promises to prosper me and not harm me. I think one of the most inspirational stories is of Paul. He was an evil person. God still chose him and forgave him and made him into one of the most faithful people in the Bible. Even though sometimes I do terrible things, I think no one could love me after I've done something so bad. God forgives me over and over and it brings me closer to him. And it was all part of his plan, to have me fall almost to the very bottom, and then he will bring me up even higher than before. I hope to remember this passage as I go into high school where sometimes I might feel like I have no one or there's no hope. Then I can remember it was God's plan all along. And in college where I might struggle with my grades and money, I know God has a purpose for me always.

Jackson Tyler Rossmann

Matthew 6:26-27

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

The reason I chose this passage is because it reminds me not to worry. In life there are struggles that cause concern and worry, but the passage reminds me God will always care for me. I know he will care for me because he says he will take care of the birds and the creatures of the earth. I am God's prized creation, so if he cares for animals and everything that he has made, he will surely care for me. These verses also remind me that God is in control and I can't change the outcome of what is going to happen by worrying. If I worry about these things, I am showing I don't trust God and what he planned for my life. None of this adds any days to my life and just adds unneeded stress that weighs me down with burden. Because of his grace and love for his wonderful creation, God will never leave me or cause things I worry about to separate me from his love in Christ.

Eddie Neil Rynders

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because I have always found comfort in this verse. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD. This brings me joy in knowing that the Lord has planned out my life, and is continuing to keep me from harm and danger according to his plan for me. It tells me how he is always there with me and guiding me down the right path to help me glorify and praise him in all I do. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you..." He has a plan to help me succeed throughout life, not to harm or break me down. "Plans to give you hope and a future." He is going to be with me every second of my journey and give me hope when I need it the most. He also has a future planned for me in heaven. This is why I chose Jeremiah 29:11 as my Confirmation verse.

Schuyler Richard Santos

Joshua 1:9

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation passage because of the great meaning in the passage. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged; for the Lord your God will be with you everywhere you go." The start of this passage encourages us to be strong and courageous, which can help both spiritually and emotionally. It strengthens us to talk to God and to be strong and courageous in our everyday life. The next part tells us to not be afraid. This helps in many ways, especially in not being afraid to confess our sins or emotions to our Father in heaven. The next part tells us not to be discouraged. This can help us if we're feeling lost in our faith and don't know how to motivate ourselves to get back on the right path and into the arms of God the Father. The last part of the passage tells us that the Lord our God will be with us wherever we go. That is really an important message since it tells us that at any moment we always have God watching over us making sure that we stay safe. It also shows that God is always there to help in the rough times when we need someone the most.

Jacob David Schenkel

Psalm 63:4

I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

This verse says, "I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands." For me this passage has a lot of meaning. I believe that praise has a very strong definition. Praise can be anything that glorifies God. A lot of things glorify God: your job, your Christian attitude, your good works of faith, and so on. Now think of how many times it may be that we slip up in our praising God, and instead keep the praise for ourselves. I think of a professional athlete; an athlete gets a lot of praise for his skill and talent. A Christian athlete praises God for the talent he has at a sport or activity. A non-Christian athlete might take all the glory himself because it pumps him up.

Now it's certainly not only in sports that we praise God. The part of the passage that says, "In your name I will lift up my hands," tells me what I need to do. Lifting up your hands when you hear his name can be teaching an unbeliever or someone who doesn't know about Jesus about him. That is also praise. I believe that we Christians are on earth to spread the Word of God. Using all the talents God has given me, I want to share the Word of God with unbelievers and people who don't know about the great things God has done for us. I will use all of my talents and my ability to share God's Word with others.

Allie Rose Schneck

Matthew 28:20

Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because it is comforting to me. It gives me comfort to know that God is with me always. God protects me by keeping evil from me or delivering me from evil's harm. He sends angels to constantly watch over me and protect me. He makes everything in my life serve for my good. God tells me what I need to hear when I read the Bible, attend church, and study His word. God loves me because he sent his only Son to suffer and die on the cross for my sins. Without Jesus, my sins would separate me from God. Because of Jesus' great love for me, my sins are now paid in full. This verse reminds me that I don't have to worry about dying. Because Jesus rose from the dead, I too will be raised on the last day to live with Him forever in heaven.

Dominic Jordan Schnier

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

I chose this as my passage because it is a guide for me to look back on when I need to know that God is with me. I decided that this would be my passage in the 6th grade when Dr. Nelson said it would be a great Confirmation passage. At first I wanted to choose this passage just because he said that. Now I understand what it means and why it would be a great passage due to all that I have learned in Confirmation class. This passage tells me that God knows what he has in store for me - "*For I know the plans I have for you.*" No matter what happens in my life, God will use it to make me a better person and a better Christian - "*plans to prosper you and not to harm you.*" This passage also says that no matter what, I will end up in heaven with Jesus for eternity. I chose this passage because it reminds me that God is always with me and there is always hope, even if it might not seem like it - "*plans to give you hope and a future.*" Jeremiah 29:11 is my Confirmation passage because it serves as a reminder that God has plans for me and is guiding my path. He will always be with me no matter what challenges I may face throughout my life.

Nathaniel Owen Sperber

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

This verse reminds me that God always has a plan for me. No matter what happens, I know God is working for my good. I know that when I'm going through a tough time, I don't have to worry. I can take comfort in God's promise to help me prosper. This verse doesn't mean God will take away all my worries immediately. But instead, through my problems I will thrive and my faith will become stronger. God promises to give me hope and a future. This reminds me that, though faith, I am given the hope of heaven. My future on earth will come to an end. But because of Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection, I am given an eternal future with him in heaven. And I know my life on earth can't even be compared to an eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ, my Savior.

Megan Lynn Tweedie

Joshua 1:9

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because life can throw many curve balls. I know when daily challenges and decisions may come my way, I can be confident knowing in my heart that God will be with me. I can be strong, I can be courageous, and I do not have to be afraid. Knowing this helps me to face hard obstacles that come my way. Knowing this helps me to keep my faith in God and not to feel discouraged when Satan tries to hurt me, bring me down or test my faith.

When I don't feel strong, I hear the Lord's words to me: “Be strong, Megan.”

When I don't feel brave, I hear the Lord's words to me: “Be courageous, Megan.”

When I feel terrified, I hear the Lord's words to me: “Don't be afraid, Megan.”

“For I am with you everywhere you go.”

Each time I am faced with another opportunity to be strong on my path God has given, I am encouraged when God helps me to defeat evil and to grow into a deeper relationship with my Savior.

The ultimate reason for me having strength and courage isn't because I am courageous, it is because God promised to be with me and I know he will never walk away from me.

Preston Jay Vahovick

Mark 10:45

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

I have chosen this as my profession of faith passage because it reflects how I want to live my life: serving others. I want to serve like Jesus did when he cleared the temple courts. Jesus set an example of serving others by rebuking demons, feeding the five thousand, and curing leprosy. But the ultimate sacrifice was him dying on the cross, making us redeemed and forgiven from our sins, and saving us from eternal damnation.

Brooke Kimberly Weber

Joshua 1:9

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

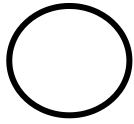
I have chosen this as my Confirmation verse because I know I am going to face many more struggles the older I get. This verse assures me that I don't need to fear what will happen to me or worry about what will come next. In this verse, God says that we should be strong and courageous. No matter how hard the struggle is, I should keep my head up and never be discouraged or get down on myself. Instead, I always want to look him for help. I should always know that God will be by my side no matter where I go and never give up on the life that God has planned for me. Another reason why this is the verse I chose is because I will face all sorts of temptations. The devil will work extremely hard to get me to fall away from everything I have been taught, whether it's in high school, college, or anywhere in life. However, I know that God will always find a way to draw me back towards him.

Henry Stephen Westphal

Acts 16:31

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.

I chose this passage because it gives hope and comfort in knowing that no matter how much I sin, if I believe in Jesus I will be saved along with my family. This passage helps me keep my head up when I have done sinful things and also helps me to repent of my sins. This passage is also helpful in spreading the word of God, because if someone asks for a basic explanation of Christianity I can show them this passage. If people are worrying that they aren't good enough and have sinned too much to be saved and come to Jesus, this passage is a perfect guide for them. This passage is proof to me that I don't need to do good works to go to heaven; all I need is to believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior.



GroupWork

Bible Study Discussion Starters

Life application materials for use in Life Groups, home devotions, and other small groups.

The Cross is the Path to Glory

1. Read Mark 8:17-38. Peter was appalled at Jesus' prophecy of his death. It went contrary to his visions of glory for Jesus and himself. Share an example of a time someone might say, "Never, Lord! This should never happen (to me, to your church)!"

2. How would Peter ever get past having Jesus calling him "Satan"?

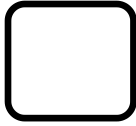
a. After discussing that question for a time, read Mark 9:1-6. What was Peter allowed to see? How might that bring healing to Peter's soul?

b. What parts of the worship service give you comfort when God's law leads you to hear Jesus call you "Satan"?

3. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:34-35). What does "deny yourself" and "take up your cross" mean to you?

4. The Apostle Paul takes up the idea of denying yourself in Ephesians 4 when he talks about putting off the old self. Read Ephesians 4:22-32. In what ways does Paul call upon us to say "No" to ourselves?

5. The message title is: "The Obstacle to 'We' is Me." Why does the first step in healing relationships with individuals involve each of us taking up our cross and following Jesus?



NoteSheet

Sermon Outline

Take notes during the sermon to help you remember the main points.

Better Together: The Obstacle to “We” is Me

Matthew 16:21-26

1. Jesus' Words are Sharp.
 - a. Satan (Adversary)

 - b. Peter (Mark 16:7) & The Mount of Transfiguration

 - c. “Given and shed for you”

2. Jesus' Way is Painful.
 - a. The cross of youth
 - b. The cross of middle age
 - c. The cross of old age
 - d. The cross of the single life
 - e. The cross of the married life

My Next Steps

- **Deny Yourself:** Read Ephesians 4:22-32. Paul makes self-denial very practical.
- **Dig Deeper:** Purchase *The Theology of the Cross: Reflections on His Cross and Ours* by Daniel M. Deuschlander.