



Early last month we finally finished our Sunday morning Bible Study on the book of Hebrews. What a wonderful journey! The writer of this fantastic sermon carefully wove so many wonderful details into the text. It was fun for all those in attendance, myself included, to dig and mine through the words, and discover so many gems along the way. Near the end of this book comes perhaps the most famous chapter of Hebrews, chapter 11 and the list of saints from the Old Testament. As he goes through this list the writer of Hebrews concludes it all in this way:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God,” (Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV).

As we live out our Christian Faith, we face many temptations to hide our hope in Christ. There are our own sins which easily entangle us and make us doubt God’s grace; there are also many attacks from the world against the Christian Church, and by extension,

they attack us as well, acting like trip-wires to living as God desires us to live. These things and many more are traps Satan throws our way

to try and make us fall and give up living a Christian life with any kind of endurance. If we try to face these dangers on our own we will be toast.

Thankfully our Triune God does not leave us all alone. He has placed us into a holy communion, his holy Christian Church, a community of fellow sinner/saints, folks who know their own sins, struggle and fight against them as we do, and are also redeemed by Christ the crucified just as we are. We’re all in this Christian life together!

Yet chapters 11 and 12 of Hebrews reminds us of another level of fellowship, one that is easily forgotten in our day and age. All those sinner/saints of old, those folks from the Old Testament times who also had many warts and issues, yet they too hoped in the coming Messiah, and they have made it through the race! They’ve finished the course and are now with Jesus, and because they are with Jesus they are still around us, cheering us on, each time we gather in our Lord’s presence in the Divine Service!

Altogether we are part and parcel of this one, holy, Christian Church of all time and of every place. That’s what the old word ‘catholic’ meant—universal; of all time and space. And this Church of all time and every place is only ever and completely focused upon Jesus, the author and the perfecter of everything we believe, teach, and confess! We are part of a

very big family, one which always encourages each other, strengthens one another, and focuses each other upon our Lord and Saviour!

When we are assaulted by Sin, dear Christian, know that you are not alone! Satan only attacks those who are saved by Christ! So don't give up, look at Jesus, his cross which paid for all your failings, faults, and sin. He willingly and with open arms took hold of that cross, along with all its pain, just so that you, his joy and his love, might be saved! ***You are Jesus' joy!*** This is very good news!

As summer takes you out and about in an effort to relax and recharge your batteries on vacation, remember where the best and truest rest is found! In Jesus! Where his Word is preached, his Sacrament given to strengthen your lives in this race we call life. If you're travelling, seek out an LCC/LCMS congregation and announce yourself to the Pastor Sunday morning and receive your rest in Christ!

We're in this race together, a communion of saints, all headed by the One who won the race, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus! Let us always find our rest in him!

In Christ's service,

Rev Joel V. Kuhl, Pastor