



DAILY DEVOTIONS

A thought to comfort and encourage you



Light Lutheran Church

June/July 2026
Sunday 28th - Sunday 5th

This week's Devotions are by Tim Klein

Tim is a recently retired LCA NZ pastor. He enjoys spending time with family, connecting with neighbours and gardening.

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A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



ALL OR NOTHING

By Tim Klein

Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it (Matthew 10:39).

Read [Matthew 10:24–39](#)

Have you ever been in one of those total commitment situations? They say to you, 'It's all or nothing! You're in, or you're out – no middle ground – not "fair weather" but of "rusted on" followers.' This relates to Jesus saying, 'No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money' (Matthew 6:24).

Matthew 10 speaks about a committed relationship of faith and trust in Jesus. He invites us into equality with him – to be one with him – to be lost in him – our teacher and Lord. This profound truth is also expressed in the light of John 14:20: 'In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.'

In Matthew 10:39, Jesus invites us to invest ourselves completely in him: no half measures, no sitting on the fence, no having a bet each way!

In the middle of all the voices that cry out to us, calling us to invest in this or that, the voice of the Lord invites us to entrust our lives to him. Nothing and no one else can give us the assurance of life he does. Our lives cannot be assured by financial investment, by building strong family relationships, by hard work and commitment to our vocations, by diet and exercise regimes – by any human aspect of our lives.

Only Jesus can give that all-embracing assurance.

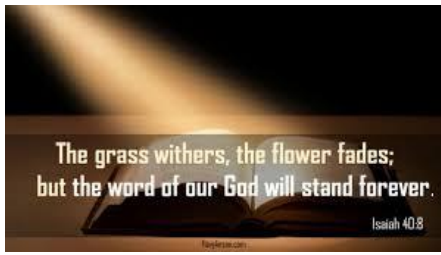
Jesus isn't asking for one-sided blind faith but for a mutual commitment. He attaches a promise, a blessing: 'Join with me, and your life – your eternal life – is safe and secure. Travel with me, trust me through the ups and downs, the sins and successes of life, and I will forgive and keep you!'

This is so important for us in today's world, where we are constantly offered choices, to review our commitments and ask whether there is a better way.

Perhaps right now is the time to refresh your commitment as a disciple and follower of Jesus.

Dear Heavenly Father, in this world of choices, of wins and losses, let your Holy Spirit continue to reassure us of this truth: whoever loses their life for Jesus' sake will find it. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



LOOK AHEAD WITH CONFIDENCE

By Tim Klein

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it (Matthew 16:25).

Read [Matthew 16:21–28](#)

Here's a story of one of my young grandchildren – one of those memorable images this grandparent carries around with him. About 10 other little children were running from activity to activity, laughing and having fun together in our backyard. She really wanted to belong with them, but she was finding it hard to keep up and engage. They had all run on, and she stood there swinging one arm – like pumping herself up – till finally she took off and joined them. I loved it.

Being with Jesus can be a bit like that – recognising that his invitation is real and trustworthy: wanting to be with him, swinging our arms and finally running after him. What could possibly be better than living unafraid in a life of faith with him and his family?

Only six more chapters into the Gospel of Matthew, we encounter almost the same text as yesterday. How different is your life today from yesterday? Can any of us tell how any day will unfold as we hang our heels over the edge of the bed each morning? A simple browse of the death notices of the local newspaper reminds us of the fragility of our confidence.

What is the significance of our life? The words of 'the Teacher' in Ecclesiastes 1:2 are a sober reminder of the sum total of our lives.

If that's the full story, why bother continuing? But it's not. We continue by living with Jesus. How easily we can lose a sense of purpose and joy in life.

And so, we lose our lives and find them again in Jesus.

He reminds us that life with Jesus is full, even in the middle of struggles. Eternal life is assured. In baptism, we are welcomed into the kingdom of God.

How do we live in this kingdom? With confidence! Ecclesiastes 2:24 puts it this way: The best thing we can do is to enjoy eating, drinking and working. These are God's gifts to us. So, live life to the full. Find an opportunity to love, serve, bless and praise the Lord every day.

We pray with Steve Kuban, who sang in 2014:

I will praise you with all of my life

I will praise you with all of my strength

With all of my life, with all of my strength

All of my hope is in you

My life is in you, Lord

My strength is in you, Lord

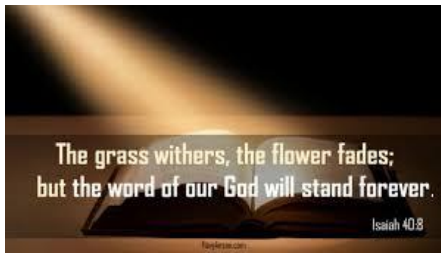
My hope is in you, Lord

In you, it's in you.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU

A GREAT REVERSAL

By Tim Klein



Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life (John 12:25).

Read [John 12:20–28](#)

And here it is again, a very similar text to those of the previous two days. Today, I want to speak about a great reversal – something we human beings find hard to appreciate. We don't like to talk about losing our lives or giving things up for the sake of the kingdom. We would rather have it all.

If we could rewrite John 12:25, this is more like how we would write it: 'Whoever loves their life wins it, and whoever loves their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.'

It's quite a sobering thought to be reminded of how Jesus interprets the worth of our efforts in life. I consider some of those great blessings in my life – my family, my home, my guitar, my friendships, my achievements, my accumulated superannuation funds, those awards and certificates and so on – and wonder whether they contribute in some way to my eternal welfare. Surely they make a difference.

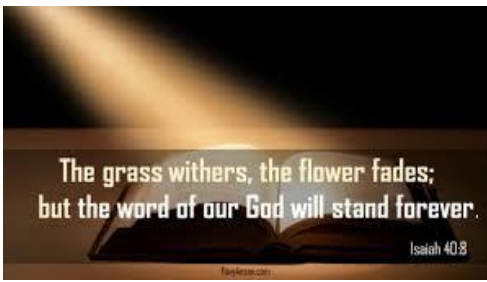
But Jesus reverses my expectations and values, making it clear that my eternal life does not depend on my own efforts. In a strange way, that's comforting because the opposite is also worth considering: What about my failures, the mistakes I've made, the sins that dog my days? What do I really deserve? Certainly not life!

And here, once again, we encounter the gospel. Jesus puts aside his life. In the face of my sin, the dearly loved son of God, loved by his friends and those whom he served, lays down his life and loses it in an act of love for you, me and the world. In mercy, he dies our death and replaces it with eternal life.

So, what remains for you and me? Here, Jesus invites us to see our lives in his eternal perspective. We recognise that our lives, that all we gain and achieve in the final analysis, humanly speaking, finally amount to nothing. Instead, our sin and brokenness attract the mercy and love of Jesus such that he exchanges his life for yours and mine so that we can live with him forever.

'Lord Jesus Christ, at the foot of your cross, I kneel today. In your wounds, I place my wounds. In your silence, I find my peace. In your sacrifice, I find my worth. Help me to never forget the love you poured out for me. Amen' (Catholic Daily Prayer).

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



FREE?

By Tim Klein

So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian (Galatians 3:24,25).

Read [Galatians 3:23–25](#)

Through this week, we've been talking about winning and losing: about eternal life and where that sits in our relationship with Jesus. Today's reading from Galatians connects this with the law and faith.

In everyday life, we learn that if we do the right thing according to the law, we live; if we do wrong, we die. We know and experience the law as a boundary to the way we live. But now in these verses, as in much of Paul's writing, we are pointed to a new freedom. We are no longer bound by the law. It's not that the law has nothing to say to us; rather, we now live with a new freedom.

If we still lived under the law, we would remain bound to death – there's no other way because none of us can perfectly fulfil the law. We sin, and the message from Romans 6:23 is that sin pays out in death (the wages of sin).

In these verses, the law is described as a guardian – something that surrounds and guides us in life. As human beings, we feel constrained by the law of what we can and cannot do. It's not like a concrete wall – more like an electric fence. If we touch it, we get a shock and back off. We can push through the fence and go our own way, but the damage is done. Our freedom is limited.

But here in these verses, we learn about a new guardian, not a fence, but faith. Now our lives are guided by faith. Even if we barge through the electric fence, faith invites us to turn back to Jesus for mercy, healing and comfort.

This gives us a new freedom that is guaranteed by and found in Jesus.

Thank you, dear Lord, for the gift of faith and the freedom we find in this gift. Keep our lives safe and surrounded by your love and mercy. Keep us turning to you when we find ourselves trapped and burdened by sin. Thank you for the freedom that only you can give. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE FREE?

By Tim Klein

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations ...? (Colossians 2:20)

Read [Colossians 2:11–20a](#)

And we're still on about life, death and freedom this week – day five!

I recently received one of those government health letters inviting me to do the 'poo test' – you know the one (at least you probably do if you're over 50). Here's a regulatory letter. Will I submit?

I self-administered the test, and bang, less than a week later, I was told that I needed a colonoscopy. Thankfully, there was no indication of any cancerous growth, only several small polyps removed on the spot. Thank you, Lord.

Along the way, I had blood tests. My surgeon identified some anomalies. Long story short, within a very short space of time, I was diagnosed as coeliac.

Now, it seems I must die to my love of bread products – anything containing gluten. The rules and regulations of coeliac disease are very clear: no more pizza, cakes, sourdough breads or cream buns.

I'm thinking about this in the light of Colossians 2:20. I'm faced with a choice: obey the coeliac regulations and give up gluten, or continue as though the disease does not affect me. It's a kind of 'to sin or not to sin'. I'm well aware of the consequences either way.

In a way, knowing I have this disease frees me up to make choices that, in the long term, are better for me than if I hadn't known.

That has some connection with Colossians 2:20 – and even Romans 7:15: I do not understand what I do. What I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do. I now know gluten is very bad for me, but I still want creamy honey doughnuts.

Of course, this word in Colossians is not about gluten; it's about temptation, submission to the law and freedom. I must ask myself: Do I really want to be free? Do I truly desire to love life and see good days? We will take up that question tomorrow ...

Lord, we hear you say in Galatians 5:1, 'It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.' Prompt us with your Holy Spirit to stand firm in the freedom you have won for us. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



WHAT YOU REALLY, REALLY WANT

By Tim Klein

Whoever desires to love life and see good days (1 Peter 3:10a).

Read [1 Peter 3:8–14](#)

One of the things I really, really want right now is for my rainwater tanks – all 205,000 litres of them – to be full before summer and the need to water my garden begins again. Right now, I'm watching steady, gentle rain falling. Every drop is flowing into the gutters and rolling down into the tanks! It's one week into winter, and already one-third of my annual need is stored. Hallelujah! While rain is something I really, really want, it's not the ultimate thing I need. Even if it doesn't rain and I must turn the water off in my garden, there are more important things – not just for me, but for everyone.

In 1996, the pop group Spice Girls sang, 'Tell me what you want, what you really, really want.' They may have found short-term satisfaction, but they weren't singing about what we ultimately need – you, me and the whole world.

So, what do we all really need in this life? This short list from the online US fatherhood program allprodad.com is an attempt to document our basic needs:

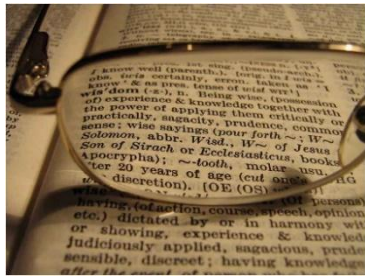
- to connect
- to be valued
- to be understood/seen
- to overcome adversity
- to love and be loved.

Of course, we could all write our own lists of what would seem most relevant to us and our needs. There are many needs and wants we all have in common. I can identify with those five needs, and perhaps you may too, to a greater or lesser extent.

But God knows our bigger picture, and in 1 Peter 3:8–14, he spells it out for us.

Dear Lord, I want to lose my life in you and be found in you for all of my days and into eternity. Let your Spirit guide my thoughts and actions in ways that please and bless you and others. Let what you want for all of us be what I really, really want – and a motivation in my life. Amen

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



TO LIVE IN THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD

By Tim Klein

I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever (Psalm 89:1a).

Read [Psalm 89:1–4, 15–18](#)

Yesterday's devotion posed the question: What do you really, really want? From 1 Peter 3:8–14, we learnt what the Lord really, really wants from us: unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart and a humble mind.

What I really, really want is what the Lord really, really wants. More than that, I want to be with the Lord into eternity. I want to sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever in all circumstances, to sing and dwell in the house of the Lord (Psalm 23), and to live in peace, unafraid.

Those of you who know me know I love to sing, especially the Lord's songs. I love to sing with my brothers and sisters in Christ in the house of the Lord. It's a place and way in which I experience the sublime love and presence of God among us.

I have sung solo, in small and large choirs, in folk groups and accompanied by guitars, organs, pianos and orchestras. I have sung with my wife beside me and my children, too. I hope and pray I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever, from this moment into eternity.

My voice (and yours, too), however, is not just mine. It is the voice of the Lord's Spirit, stirring up in his people the desire to make melody to the Lord. We're not all what people might describe as good singers, but it doesn't matter to the Lord. He's listening for something deeper – the melody that comes from his heart into and through the hearts of those who love him.

If you know this prayer of confession and praise, sing with me now:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,

His mercies never come to an end,

They are new ev'ry morning, new ev'ry morning.

Great is your faithfulness, O Lord,

Great is your faithfulness.

(From Lamentations 3:22–33; Edith McNeill AT 153)

THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU

SHARING JESUS – WELCOMING THE FATHER

By Tania Nelson



Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me (Matthew 10:40).

Read [Matthew 10:40–42](#)

Today's reading comes immediately after Jesus' sending out of the Twelve in mission to preach, heal and bless. The disciples were instructed to 'Go ... to the lost sheep of Israel' to proclaim that 'The kingdom of heaven has come near' (Matthew 10:6,7b).

We, too, are sent to tell our friends, family, neighbours and colleagues of the wonderful deeds of the one who has sent us. How do we do this? We certainly don't need to get the whole gospel out in one conversation. Neither do we need to get into a debate about creation and evolution or something like that. That's not the way to go, at least not initially.

The late US theologian, Pastor Timothy Keller, spoke of keeping it simple. He suggested to:

- Let people know you go to church.
- Let people know you're a Christian and that it means something to you.

So, when you let four people know you're going to church this coming weekend, perhaps one will come back to you and ask about why you go. When you share those things – that you go to church and that your faith is meaningful to you – with the people you meet along the way, it may organically lead to more extensive, in-depth kinds of discussions.

You may be welcomed, because you shared the reason for the hope you have in Jesus, with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). And when you are welcomed, your Father in heaven is welcomed too.

Lord, you sent the Twelve to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is near. Help me to share the hope I have in you with my friends, family and neighbours, for I know that you died for me and have given me eternal life. Amen.

Tania is the ministry lead at Mawson Lakes Community Church in suburban Adelaide and is a pastoral ministry student at Australian Lutheran College. Tania loves taking beach walks with her husband, David, spending time with her family and friends, and reading. Sometimes she is blessed to experience all three of these joys at her family shack on South Australia's Yorke Peninsula.

PHILIPPIANS 1

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. I always pray for you, and I make my requests with a heart full of joy because you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.

It is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a very special place in my heart. We have shared together the blessings of God, both when I was in prison and when I was out, defending the truth and telling others the Good News.

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR A FOND FAREWELL!

I have always been attracted to the relationship that existed between Paul and the community at Philippi. It is the one community that Paul didn't seem to have a major argument with. (Philippi did have a couple of leaders (women) who didn't seem to get on with each other.) Otherwise, Paul was extremely grateful for their support of Paul and his ministry, no matter where it led Paul to, even to Rome and beyond.

I find in my own ministry at Light some similarities with Paul's time at Philippi. Paul had to make new plans, since the door had been shut to northern Asia (Turkey) on the Black Sea. We don't know why or how that occurred. But we do know that Paul was shown in a dream that he needed to cross the Bosphorus into Europe, to Greece.

Paul's ministry in Greece then started in some controversy. He found the followers of Yahweh down by the local river, on the Sabbath. This suggests that there

was a community of Jewish people living in Philippi, but not enough to form a Synagogue. You needed ten mature males to legitimately build a synagogue. So the local community met by the river where they could wash themselves in preparation for worship and have water for their worship rituals (baptisms). That is so much like my time in PNG.

Included in that community at Philippi were a number of women who were 'Worshippers of God' (non Jewish followers of Yahweh). In fact, Acts 16 informs us that most of the worshippers were women.

The controversy came when Paul, who was irritated by a slave agitating the community about Paul's presence. She was affected either by a spirit which allowed her to read the future. Paul healed the slave of her affliction and the owners became angry because they lost their source of income, because of her words and actions among the gullible. Paul was thrown into prison.

It was here that another opportunity to witness to Christ arrived. After an earthquake, the rather crusty and superstitious jailor heard the gospel about Jesus Christ. He was baptized with his family.

The incredible part of this story is the relationship which was then established between Paul and the Christian community which arose around his ministry. No

matter how tough it became for them or Paul, they stuck by him and supported him through thick and thin.

It is this aspect of their relationship that touches my own sense of belonging at Light. We have walked a wonderful journey as the people of God. I thank you for your encouragement, your support, and your love.

Your servant, shepherd (sheepdog) and brother in Christ

Pastor Geoff

PS *I am grateful that prison hasn't been on the agenda.*

BISHOP DAVID

Seven years ago, while I was in Darwin, before I came to Light, David Altus was our Bishop, and he gave me two pieces of advice that were impossible to forget: **Short and Sweet and Finish Well.**

I immediately dismissed the first as an impossibility. Anybody who has asked me a question knows that there is the short answer and the answer I usually give, the full answer, with the historical background that explains the answer. The second piece of advice, however, has been a source of concern for me for some time. I have been debating how I could satisfy David's encouragement, even though I know that he wasn't the first person to offer that advice.

Well! **I am finished.** That much has been very clear since I started counting the days, about three months ago. But how do you define **well**? I could debate whether or not I finished well over the last seven years.

Many of you have been observing and sometimes suffering under my attempts to sing new and old songs, with me playing on my guitar. I think I have been getting closer to **well**..... I hope I have been getting closer to **well**..... One of the songs that I introduced to recently, through the song books that were used at Wheatfields, is titled "**It is well with my soul.**" We've sung it a couple of times. It was written by an Englishman who had lost his whole family when his ship capsized on a journey to visit his brother. **Horatio Spafford** defines wellness, not by what I am doing, but by what God has done and is doing for me.

BY GRACE! IN GRACE! WITH GRACE!

He was in good company. St Paul defines wellness in exactly the same terms. **Wellness is a free gift.** In Romans 6 his words are very precise and concise: **The free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Everything that I have! Everything that I am! Everything I am becoming is a free gift—a grace. In fact, these words from Paul have formed the basis of my favorite saying: **By grace, in grace, with grace!** Just in case that statement needs to be clarified: by **GRACE**, I mean an **undeserved, unexpected, and inexhaustible gift from a gracious and generous Father.** The extended quote is: **We have been saved by grace. We are showered in grace every day. We live with grace, graciously and gracefully.** I have repeated it so often that I am sure you will never forget it.

I can say with absolute certainty that grace is the foundation of my life as a child of God and my work as a pastor. I can also say that I am drowning in grace only to be reborn each new day in God's forgiving grace.

But we don't have to stay just with the words of Paul. The words of Jesus which were recorded in Matthew also express the nature of living in grace and living with grace. **Anyone who welcomes you is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me.**

Every single day, through the relationships that we have shared with each other, Christ has been showering his healing gifts in our lives. Daily, through the relationships we share with each other, Christ is changing our hearts to live comfortably and enthusiastically with grace, to live graciously.

This I have seen. This I am thankful for. For this I give Christ the honour and the glory.

*From that point of view, while I have been living and serving at Light, I have been **well**, living with and serving a people of grace. And I have every confidence that God's grace will continue in your lives from this day on, whether we are here or there or in the house of The Father, together with our Saviour Jesus Christ in eternity.*

Paul's relationship with the congregation at Philippi best expresses my sense of wellness at Light.

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. I always pray for you, and I make my requests with a heart full of joy because you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.

And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.

It is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a very special place in my heart. We have shared together the blessings of God, both when I was in prison and when I was out, defending the truth and telling others the Good News.

(Skip the prison part and I echo those words with enthusiasm.)

*You know what? I could have cut everything I have just shared with you and simply sung my theme song which says exactly what I have always been trying to say. That song is titled **Grace!** Then I would have followed Bishop David's first piece of advice: **Short and Sweet.***