



Christ Lutheran Church

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Share God's Word, share His love, and do it now!

Pastor Chip Winter, Director of Ministries

“Groan for God” Romans 8:18-27

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Dear family in Christ,

Have you ever made a life-changing discovery? Are kids discovered something that has changed our lives. Good toothpaste. Although as adults it seems our taste buds are dulled, kids hate brushing their teeth. We tried so many different kinds and flavors for the last 12 years with our kids. But now we discovered the ultimate toothpaste that makes the kids want to brush their teeth. Revolutionary, I never would have thought it was possible, but it's true.

But you know what will be better than even that. Not having to brush your teeth at all. Your teeth would remain perfect all the time. And do you know how to accomplish that? Not by getting dentures, but by doing one thing, and one thing alone. Going to heaven. At that point you would have the perfect teeth, perfect body, and even the perfect mind. No longer would you have to do maintenance on yourself, you would just exist perfectly mind, body, and spirit.

Let's face it, Life stinks. Things fall apart. Last week I had a bad day. My phone stopped working. I could no longer function as I normally would. There is one thing about electronics that is particularly annoying. They break. And not only electronics.

Cars break down. Houses fall apart or something goes wrong. Everything around us is falling apart. Not only that but, our bodies and everything in all creation is falling apart.

I remember in Jurassic park one of the philosophers had a theory about nature. It was called the chaos theory. This chaos theory said that everything in nature is breaking down and becoming more chaotic. The movie made him seem like a pessimist in the beginning. But it turns out his theory is correct when the dinosaurs get loose and suddenly it becomes a mild horror movie.

Contrary to what our culture seems to believe, we are not evolving into better people. The world is not improving. In another movie I was watching “Hidden figures.” The director of NASA experts says that improvements in technology always leads to one thing, bigger and better bombs. We create more and more weapons of mass destruction. In many ways I think he’s right. Where has technology ultimately gotten us? Less time with family, friends, and it even destroys our lives as pornography spreads throughout the Internet.

What’s worse is we are often guilty of creating problems for other people. We don’t treat others the way we should. We sadly are little weapons of mass destruction ourselves. Maybe we ruined a friendship. Maybe we ruined our finances. Maybe we ruined caring for the ones we love.

And so in life we long for something better. We like children hope for good toothpaste. We hope for good times, and good treats. We hope for cool treats like ice cream, slushy’s, and maybe iced coffee or a cold brew on a hot summer day. Even like newborn babies we long for what is good. **1 Peter 2:1- 3** Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— if indeed you have

tasted that the Lord is good.

We are groaning, longing, and desiring redemption. And even the creation longs for everything to be made perfect. Animals, who were subjected to destruction by Adams fall into sin, even long for things on earth. Animals long for food and water. They do sometimes even go through pains of childbirth, at least from what I have read.

In the same way we care for animals we should care for people. And people are even more worth the expense to sustain them through life. I once had a dog, which oddly enough had no teeth when we got him. He was an old dog that apparently no one wanted. There came a point where we had to pay 500 dollars for him to continue on in life. We forked over the money and he lived for one more year. Peoples lives are much more precious. We live because God has a purpose for us. A dog's purpose is probably less significant.

Nevertheless a proverb says that a good man has concern for his animals.

Proverbs 12:10 Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel. God wants us to be concerned with all life. He wants us to take care of creation, don't pollute and take care of what God has given you. It's called stewardship. It's something Adam was doing from the beginning as God directed him to be the steward of the earth.

I am reminded of a plaque I have in my office that says, "As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God." Psalm 42:1 God always offers something better. Even water that wells up to eternal life. Even baptism that refreshes the soul and brings life from death. Even the best meal ever, bread and wine that feeds the soul. God has something better, something revolutionary. "Taste and see that the Lord

is good.” **Psalm 34:8** Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

The creation itself longs for the redemption of mankind. And how much more do we long for our redemption. The scripture says the creation groans even until now. This can be taken in two ways. Either the creation continues to groan all the way up until the end of time. Or because of the events that have happened now, the creation has stopped groaning and received redemption.

I propose both are true. It is a now, but not yet idea. We have received the redemption of our souls now through Christ. He is our redemption, though his blood for the forgiveness of our trespasses and sins. He has given us forgiveness and eternal life today. In a sense we have received our redemption already knowing the Christ has come. But at the same time the hymn remains true, O come, O come, Immanuel until the end of time when Christ comes.

We long for God, and I really think we are in trouble if we are perfectly happy with life, as we know it. God has in store for us eternal salvation. Even as outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are growing day by day. **2 Corinthians 4:16** So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

Every day God promises to be with us. Everyday God offers himself to us in the forgiveness of sins. Every day God promises to be with us to the very end of the age and to see us through and give us patience as we eagerly await the redemption of our souls, bodies, and minds.

God even goes so far to help us know what to pray for. God helps us to cry out to God. He gives us the Holy Spirit to groan in faith, not only for ourselves, but knowing who to pray for and what to pray about. Last week Trevor encouraged us to pray for someone in the pew next to us. How about we follow up with that person and see how they are doing. How about we tell each other what we need prayed for.

Christ will come, and then all our prayers will be answered. Prayers of healing. Prayers of restoration. Prayers of desperation. With patience we wait. Yet as we wait let us point out good things like toothpaste. Let's point out love and forgiveness when it is offered. Let's point out the good things, the holy things, the things that are those perfect gifts from above. And in times of trouble, we know that, even in the horrors of life, it is true and it is wonderful that yes, yes, Christ will come. That is revolutionary. That is extraordinary. That is something to long for each day. And for some who have never met Jesus, it is a life-changing discovery. Much much better than good toothpaste! Amen