

“COMFORTABLE WITH SIN?”

“Though they know God’s decree that those who practice such things deserve death, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them” Romans 1:32

Have we become comfortable with our sin? Think about it: The Lord created marriage so that “The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for the mutual companionship, help, and support that each person ought to receive from the other, both in prosperity and adversity. Marriage was also ordained so that man and woman may find delight in one another.” Yet, we look for ways to break our marriage vows through affairs and divorces.

God created human beings to be male or female (Gen. 1:27), yet we endeavor to undermine His creative intent by redefining gender and sexuality in ways that are fully in keeping with the feelings and desires of this Sin corrupted, fallen world, yet far different from God’s will and design. When it comes to sex and gender issues we, too, ask the Serpent’s question: “Has God really said . . . (Gen. 3:1).”

God gave the good gift of wine “to gladden the hearts of men (Ps. 104:15),” yet we use His good gifts to get drunk, lose control of our senses and even become addicted.

In so many ways we corrupt and pervert God’s good gifts, all the while trying to justify our sin or, at least, to think that it’s not really that big a deal. After all, “*we’re only human.*”

But it is a big deal. It’s a big, damn deal! I say it that bluntly because that’s what sin and rebellion does to us: It damns us! All too often, though, our response to the hymn-writer’s question: “Do we pass that cross unheeding, breathing no repentant vow?” is a resounding “**YES!**” Rather than fleeing to the comforts of God’s Word and Sacraments, we have become so comfortable in our sin that we feel little need to repent of anything. We satisfy ourselves with platitudes like “I believe in God,” or “God just wants me to be happy,” or even “The God I believe in would never send someone to hell,” and then go on our merry, sinful ways to our ultimate doom. Indeed, as Jesus says: “Broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are upon it (Matt. 7:13).”

Yet it is a mercy of God – a severe one, perhaps – that He uses our crushed dreams, broken relationships, ravages to our bodies, and even our impending deaths to show us our true condition before Him. Then, with the weight of all our sins pressing down hard upon us, God calls us to repentance, and to believe that Jesus took the burden of those sins on Himself. The death of Jesus for sinners isn’t for the purpose of making us comfortable in our sin, but to comfort broken sinners with the assurance of forgiveness and a new life in and with Christ. The Law is meant to “afflict the comfortable” so that the Gospel may “comfort the afflicted.” Now, instead of finding only enslavement, regret and condemnation because of our sins, we rejoice in the Good News that “God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).”

The Season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday Services on February 10th. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this season of repentance and come and participate in the midweek Services. While our whole lives should be lives of repentance (as Luther says in the first of his 95 Theses: “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says ‘Repent ye,’ He willed that the entire life of believers to be one of repentance”), this season helps to sharpen our awareness of the deadliness of sin, and the great love of God that sent His Son to redeem us. Going through this Lenten discipline may not be as comfortable to us as is our sin, but it will give us so much more comfort as we live in the Savior’s mercy instead.

God bless you in your Lenten observances,

Pastor Lueke