

DEBT AND FORGIVENESS

After I accepted the call in 2016 to Living Word Lutheran Church to serve as the Senior Pastor, one of the first orders of business was to figure out where we were going to live. A member of my congregation connected with a realtor and off we went. He, in turn, connected with a website to view homes that fit our budget and needs. For a couple months, we perused a myriad of homes; becoming overwhelmed very quickly. We applied for a mortgage and were approved. Now we needed to actually look at some homes. We flew from Minnesota to Washington for an extended weekend and eventually found our home in the second to last house we looked at. Long story short, we got the house. As excited as we were it was still a little unnerving. You see, this was our first home and thus our first mortgage. Just thinking about the debt we were going to incur made us a little jittery but we knew we had to do this and that we could afford it. I guess there is just something about being in debt that is unsettling; especially when considering all those numbers in a mortgage.

Matthew Chapter 18 has one of my favorite parables. It's the story of a king settling accounts with his servants. One such servant owed the king around 3.12 trillion dollars (in today's money). After begging for mercy and promising to repay the debt, the king forgave the entire debt. The servant went out from the king but instead of thanking the king and singing his praises, he went out to find a friend of his who owed him some money. Upon finding him, he grabbed him and demanded payment. When his friend couldn't pay, the unforgiving servant threw him in prison until he could pay. When the king heard about this he was none too happy. So, the king reinstated the debt and threw that unforgiving servant in prison.

The point of the story isn't the threat of condemnation if we don't forgive our fellow man, but rather the amazing grace of God. Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven a debt that we could never, ever repay but through confession we are forgiven our debt. That right there should lead a person to praise and worship God. I would be excited if my mortgage was suddenly forgiven. I would like to think I would sing the praises of my lender, however that is nothing compared to what God forgives and thus I am singing His praises to you now.

My friends, you are sinners, but through faith in Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Now, isn't THAT awesome. Think about it. You have incurred a debt that should send you to hell for all eternity. Good works cannot save you. Being a nice person cannot save you. Helping the poor cannot save you. Only Jesus can save you. Period. YOU are in debt, but you are forgiven. Just go to God and confess your sins and you WILL be forgiven. That's our amazing God showing amazing grace. All praise be to God, forever and ever. Amen.