

# Sermon for the funeral of Marvin George Moe

**Date:** November 26, 2018

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Psalm 103:1-8

**Epistle Reading:** 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 11:28-30



**Sermon Text:** 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

**Sermon Title:** Jesus, our Champion, Has Won the Battle

**Choir:** LSB 752 – Be Still, My Soul

## Hymns:

LSB 709 – My King of Love My Shepherd Is

LSB 710 – The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want

LSB 744 – Amazing Grace



Pastor James Groleau  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
1200 13th Avenue NW  
Austin, MN 55912  
Office: (507) 433-2642  
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net  
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org  
FaceBook.com/StJohnsAustin  
Twitter.com/StJohnsAustinMN  
FaceBook.com/Shepherd.James.Groleau



## **Text: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

So from now on we don't think of anyone from a human point of view. If we did think of Christ from a human point of view, we don't anymore. Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence. God has done all this. He has restored our relationship with him through Christ, and has given us this ministry of restoring relationships. In other words, God was using Christ to restore his relationship with humanity. He didn't hold people's faults against them, and he has given us this message of restored relationships to tell others. Therefore, we are Christ's representatives, and through us God is calling you. We beg you on behalf of Christ to become reunited with God. God had Christ, who was sinless, take our sin so that we might receive God's approval through him.

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May God's grace rain down upon you, with His peace, in the name of the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

That grace, that I just prayed would be upon you, is a grace that is needed by all of us. That grace was of utmost importance to Marvin a few days ago. It is important for all of us. You see Marvin Moe was a sinful man. We generally don't think of a man of his age as being sinful but it's true. It is also true that I am sinful, and so are you.

Without God's grace there is no hope. There is no one who is good enough to get into Heaven on their own. There is no one that impresses God with their good works, good thoughts, or good intentions. All of us, even Marvin, have been stained to the very marrow of our bones with the tar-y stain of sin.

In fact the problem goes far deeper than that. Scripture teaches us that all of creation groans under the stain and burden of sin and sin's effect.<sup>1</sup> Since we, and all that we live in, is stained and ruined by sin and since God demands absolute perfection from us, and will not tolerate anything but perfection in His presence, what hope is there for Marvin? Is there any hope at all for him? Is there any hope for you?

St. Paul, by the power of God the Holy Spirit, wrote these words:

Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence. God has done all this. He has restored our relationship with Him through Christ.

He further wrote:

In other words, God was using Christ to restore His relationship with humanity. He didn't hold people's faults against them.<sup>2</sup>

You see way back in the garden of Eden something happened; something changed. There had been no death, no corruption, no pain. Everything was perfect. Adam and Eve lived in a perfect relationship with God. Then the power of sin overtook them and they did the unthinkable. They thought they knew more than God, and further thought they could become equal to God. They thought they could be their own replacement for God.<sup>3</sup> They fell for the same sins the caused Lucifer himself to fall: greed, lust for power, and ignoring the Holy Word of Almighty God.

What was the result? Most people would answer that question with, "God cursed them." That is not the correct answer. It is only part of the answer. In Genesis chapter three you can read it yourself. There God questions Adam first.<sup>4</sup> The He turns His attention to Eve.<sup>5</sup> The punishment that came was painful, it was severe. Yet it was when God's eyes fell on Satan that

1 **Romans 8:22** – We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God—those whom he has called according to his plan.

2 **2 Corinthians 5:17-19**

3 **Genesis 3:5** – [*Satan lied saying*] "God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened. You'll be like God, knowing good and evil."

4 **Genesis 3:11-12** – God asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat fruit from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?" The man answered, "That woman, the one you gave me, gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

5 **Genesis 3:13** – Then the Lord God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

the venomous wrath of God Almighty is seen as He stands between His own children and Lucifer.

Even though God was angry at His children for their disobedience He was still going to protect them. He still loved them. Even though they had chosen a path that led them away from God, and separated them from God and God's love, God would not endure being separated from His children forever. To Satan He said, 'One will come. That One will fix what you have tried to destroy. That One will be bruised by you, but in the end He will crush your head.<sup>6</sup> One will come to restore My children back to Me.'

You see in the very same breath that God punished His children for doing wrong, He also saved them. In the very same breath. There in Genesis chapter three we see the first promise of the Messiah, the first promise of Emanuel<sup>7</sup> – God walking with us, the first promise of all that we will celebrate in a months time at Christmas. The Babe of Bethlehem, the Messiah of the Manger, was that One who was to come. That One who had been promised so long ago. That One who would crush Satan's head and restore all of us, God's holy children, back to the relationship we once had.

That is the real meaning of Christmas.<sup>8</sup> It is not about merriment or mirth, family or friends, gifts or glad tidings. Christmas is about Christ. Christmas is about God dropping the hammer and stating for all creation to know, "Here I stand! I have come to save My children." Christmas is about the ultimate holy war. It is about a battle that was raging between Satan and God. Christmas is about our Champion taking the field of battle.

As much as Christmas is about the ensuing battle at the arrival of our Savior, Easter is about the shout of victory at His winning the battle. Marvin Moe was sinful man. As sinful as you and me. We were separated from God but God came to find us. He came to rescue us. He came to be our Champion, to win us and our lives back to Him. Our Messiah has come and His name is Jesus. He has crushed the head of Satan and our salvation has been purchased in full. It has been paid in full.

A few days ago Marvin Moe looked upon the face of his Hero. God was smiling as He took his hand, and it was then that Marvin heard the most precious words that any human being could ever hear, 'Welcome home.'

Marvin Moe was a sinful man. Sin and sin's affect had taken its toll on him. His body could no longer bear up under the load of what sin's affect had done to him. It was sin, and sin's affect – death that finally won. Yet in that same moment Death was defeated, and Marvin Moe was ushered safely home. He now enjoys the paradise of Heaven and the wonder of that peace that can be found only where sin cannot reach. He can now see how Heaven decorates for Christmas, and in a few months he will sing with the angelic hosts at the celebration of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the ultimate victory that won freedom for us all.

Jesus said:

6 **Genesis 3:15** – I will make you and the woman hostile toward each other. I will make your descendants and her descendant hostile toward each other. He will crush your head, and you will bruise his heel."

7 'Emanuel' is a Hebrew word that means: 'God with us.'

8 'Christmas' is a Latin word – Christ-Mass or 'Christ-Celebration.'

“Come to Me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”<sup>9</sup>

Marvin’s battle is done. All the trials and troubles of this world have been forced to abandon him at the Gates of Pearl.<sup>10</sup> Now he waits. He waits the way a child waits for Christmas. With eager excitement and anticipation. With fervor and wonder he waits for the day when Jesus will come again. This time He will come not in humility, but in might and power as our bodies are raised up and restored, and we are placed in that new Heaven and new Earth that will never end and never again know the stinging touch of sin.

In that wonder Heaven may call out from the hymn book of Holy Scripture, the Psalms. As they join in song with the angelic choirs they shake the foundations of the palace at New Jerusalem,<sup>11</sup> the house of God Almighty. In their voices is heard these words:

Praise the LORD, my soul! Praise His holy name, all that is within me. Praise the LORD, my soul, and never forget all the good He has done: He is the One who forgives all your sins, the One who heals all your diseases, the One who rescues your life from the pit, the One who crowns you with mercy and compassion, the One who fills your life with blessings so that you become young again like an eagle. The LORD does what is right and fair for all who are oppressed.<sup>12</sup>

Marvin Moe was oppressed by sin and sin’s affect, but no more. He is free. God, through His Word, and His Sacraments, sustained and preserved him. God held him and protected him. God was his Hero. At the end of his battle, God took his hand, and led him home.

To God alone be the glory. In Jesus Holy Name. Amen.

9 **Matthew 11:28-30**

10 **Revelation 21:21** – The 12 gates were 12 pearls. Each gate was made of one pearl. The street of the city was made of pure gold, as clear as glass.

11 **Isaiah 6:4** – Their voices shook the foundations of the doorposts, and the temple filled with smoke.

12 **Psalms 103:1-6**