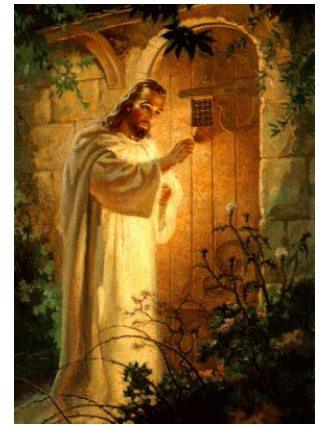


ST. LUKE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
SERMON BY PASTOR ANTHONY E. SCHULTZ
MAY 10, 2009 MOTHER'S DAY EASTER 5 **1 JOHN 3:18F**



Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Do you know what this past week was? It was National Bread Pudding Recipe Exchange Week! Did you know that? I love bread pudding – with raisins or without! It was also national Hug Holiday week. Not to be confused with *hug a crabby stranger* day – which is September 14th. That's a long way off. It is national Barbecue month. That's nice, too. Get some baby back ribs and put them on the grill – and then smear on some *Sweet Baby Ray's* barbecue sauce – until it's a dark brown glaze. And then you can gnaw the meat off the little bones and wash it down with something so icy cold you can feel it on the back of your throat. It's national egg month. Sounds good, too. Maybe steak and eggs for a hearty breakfast. Have you ever actually had that – steak and eggs for breakfast – with a nice glass of fresh squeezed orange juice and some fresh coffee? It's national vinegar month. That reminds me of a nice crisp Kosher dill pickle spear – the kind that make a real crisp noise when you take a bite! You would have to be pretty sharp to keep track all the national months and national weeks and national days. I don't know anybody who knows all that stuff – but the fact is – the Scriptural truth is – our Heavenly Father knows everything – absolutely everything! That's what God's Word reminds us of – this Mother's Day weekend:

God Knows Everything!

1. He knows we are wretched sinners. And
2. He knows we are forgiven!

Today is the 4th of what will – with Jesus' permission be 6 Sundays in a row where we are reading from First John. From the Sunday after Easter through the Sunday after Jesus' Ascension we are reading from First John – from the **God is love** letter! Last Sunday – Confirmation Sunday – we had one of the most pure and powerful Gospel messages in all of God's Word. Do you remember – midst all the excitement of Confirmation Sunday? **How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!** Realize what that means! We are children of God – not by birth – but the sweetest way of all – by adoption – picked and chosen to be children of God – because the Father loves us by grace alone! Our Heavenly Father sacrificed his innocent Son Jesus – so that we could be His children – to bear His name – *not* just for 50 or 60 or 70 years – but *forever!* How much must God love us to do that?

God's Word tells us today – **God knows everything!** That means he knows we are wretched sinners. He knows all our sins. That sinfulness began when we were as small as a grain of sand inside our mother's tummy. King David wrote about that original sinfulness in Psalm 51. You know these familiar words. **Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (v.5)** These are not popular words. There are in fact many people who reject this concept that we are born with a sinfulness that we inherited from our sinful mother

and sinful father. The fact is — there is a man in England — who has invented what he likes to call a “De-baptism” certificate. You can fill it out and send it to the Church where you were baptized. It says, *“having been subjected to the Rite of Christian Baptism in infancy — before reaching the age of consent, I hereby publicly revoke any implications of that Rite and renounce the Church that carried it out. In the name of human reason, I reject all its Creeds and all other such superstition in particular, the perfidious belief that any baby needs to be cleansed by Baptism of alleged (and then they use all capital letters) ORIGINAL SIN, and the evil power of supposed demons.”* They say that thousands of fallen away Christians have downloaded this form. It’s hard to believe someone who is so busy doing the work of the father of lies — the inventor of half-truths — misbelief, despair and all other great shame and vice! The Bible is God’s Word! If you believe that — you will also believe that we are born with inherited sin. God’s Word clearly teaches, **“The wages of sin is death!”** *Romans 6:23* If newborns and infants and toddlers are not sinful — then they should never *ever* die. And painful experience clearly shows — babies and very little people do die. It is **the washing of rebirth and renewing of the Holy Spirit** — *Titus chapter 3* that we have in infant baptism!

God knows everything! God knows when you woke up this morning. He knows what you had for breakfast — Orange juice or *very berry* juice — or no juice at all. He knows if you had oatmeal — made in your microwave — buttermilk waffles warmed in the toaster — with syrup or raspberry jam. Jesus knows how many little seeds you ate — and if there is one or two still stuck between your teeth — that the few moments you spent brushing your teeth — didn’t get! Jesus knows if you took a cup of coffee with you or not. He knows everything. He knows if you put on your seatbelt — if you signaled before each turn — if you turned on to 3rd street — and your blinker kept blinking the better part of the block — because you didn’t turn your steering wheel hard enough to turn it off. Jesus knows how much gas is in your gas tank. He knows what you have been thinking for the last 3 minutes — even if you don’t remember. He knows what you will have for lunch — even if you don’t know yet. He knows who you like and who you find irritating and frustrating and annoying. Jesus knows your blood sugar — your ratio of good cholesterol to bad cholesterol. He knows your blood pressure and your IQ. He knows the day you will die — down to the moment. He knows the place and he knows the cause. He knows everything.

God knows everything! A holy God who hates sin knows my deepest and darkest thoughts? Think about that on Mother’s Day. If there’s anybody who knows they are less than perfect — it’s mommies. Mommies know that they weren’t perfect when you were very small inside their tummy. Some mommies feel guilty — when they first found out that there was a baby in their tummy — they didn’t say a *thank you* prayer. Instead they were not happy. Maybe they weren’t happy — because they thought they were through having babies — and then — a long time after what they thought was their last baby — here was coming one more! And they weren’t happy — at least not *right away*. Oh, they were very happy later — but then a little afraid — what if something goes wrong — would that be punishment from God — because they *weren’t* happy right away? Then mommies feel guilty while they are expecting — because sometimes they ate stuff they weren’t supposed to — or the doctor said they weighed too much. Mommies feel guilty if they get upset and frustrated — because they can’t sleep — because their baby is fussy. They feel guilty if their baby isn’t happy — if their baby isn’t beautiful — if their baby isn’t gifted in every way. They feel guilty if their baby gets sick or gets hurt — like they should have been more careful. They feel guilty if their baby has some inherited problem — if they have your family nose and it’s too big — or the family ears — and they stick out too much — the family teeth and they aren’t perfectly straight — and don’t twinkle when they smile! And

then they feel guilty about feeling guilty! Our holy Heavenly Father knows all our weaknesses, our shortcomings and our failures – and he forgives them *all*. **God's is greater than our heart. He knows everything.** *He knows we are forgiven!* We are forgiven – even when we don't feel forgiven!

This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. Whenever we feel guilty – restless at the thought of being near God – it's because of sin. Maybe it's something we did very recently – the last day or two. And maybe it's a sin we did years ago – when we were in college – and we had too much to drink – and it was Spring break and we were far from home. Maybe it was at work – and there was some money – and we were pretty desperate – because we didn't have any groceries – and so we picked up the money and put it in our pocket – and nobody ever knew! Nobody ever suspected us! Or maybe it was in school – and we cheated. We copied answers from the really smart person who was sitting right beside us – and we could see their paper. Or maybe you were correcting your own paper – and it was so easy – to change answers from wrong ones to right ones – just very slowly – we changed answers – and nobody ever suspected! Or we took drugs out of the medicine cabinet – pain medication – and we took a whole bunch of pills – or drank a bunch of alcohol – and our parents never suspected – because they never keep track of that stuff – or we took cigarettes and smoked them – or watched bad videos or whatever! We knew it was horrible and hurtful and wrong and *we did it anyway*. And we would give anything to go back and have a do over – and we would never do it. But now it's too late – and the guilt and shame hurt deep *deep* inside! Our comfort is the powerful unconditional Gospel promises of God. God is greater than our heart. God knows everything! He knows we are forgiven.

It is in the light of Jesus' forgiving love – that we bear the sweet fruits of faith. God's Word says--**Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.** **Dear children.** Sometimes we don't like to be called **children** – don't like to be treated like **children**. We are pretty small – even too small to talk very much – when we try to assert our independence. I can feed myself. I don't need someone to scoop my strained prunes with tapioca on that little spoon with the soft thick rubber coating. I can feed myself! And we grab with our pudgy little hand the big scoop of prunes and they squish between our fingers. I can dress myself – as we put our pants on backwards. I can put on my own shoes – as we put them on the wrong feet! I don't want to take a nap! I don't want to go to bed now – it's still light out! I can't wait to get a driver's license – so I can drive myself where I want to go – when I want to go! What do you want to be when you grow up? I don't know! All I do know is – I don't what to be what you suggest! Before you know it – we are old and infirm – and people are making decisions for us – and we are saying – *I'm not a child. Don't treat me like a child*. I can decide for myself – I can do that for my self – and maybe we can – and maybe we can't! The circle of life! Dear children of our Heavenly Father – **let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth!**

God knows everything! It's national Tay-Sach's disease month. Did you know that? Tay-Sach's disease? I never heard of it – I suppose – because by the grace of God – I don't know anyone who has been plagued by this horrible disease. Tay-Sach's disease is something you are born with. People who are Jewish, Irish, French-Canadian or Cajun should automatically be tested – because for you the risk is much much greater than the average person. I didn't know that. If you are Jewish – it makes a difference what kind of Jew you are. If you are a Sephardic Jew – the chances are one in just 150 that you could be a carrier. If you are an Ashkenazi Jew the odds are one in just 27! Do you know the difference between Sephardic Jews and Ashkenazi

Jews? Tay-Sach's disease is something you are born with. Your body doesn't know how to get rid of fatty waste by your brain cells and that does harm to your brain. Oh, you do pretty well until you get to be about 6 months old. Then you don't grow so fast any more. Gradually you lose motor skills—and mental functions. It gets worse. You can't see. You can't hear. You become paralyzed. You don't respond to all the things going on around you. And by the time you are just 5 years old—you go to Heaven! It's national Tay-Sach's disease month. I didn't know that. But then—there are lots and lots of things I don't know. I haven't learned them yet—from painful experience. But I do know the most important thing in the whole wide world. I know about Jesus. I know the way to Heaven. I know as you do—whenever I die—however I die—I will open my eyes to see Jesus. I will see Jesus because he died on the cross to wash away all my sins. God knows everything. Even on the days when I don't feel forgiven I am—because Jesus loves me. God knows everything. He knows we are forgiven. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz