

He Cares for You

- † to rescue you from anxiety (vv.6-7)
- † to keep you standing firm in faith (vv.8-9)
- † to bring you to His eternal glory (vv.10-11)

In the Name of Christ, high ascended, dearly redeemed, especially you dear children of God:

Finally after two years of study you get to be communicants of New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church. How much good is your membership? Depends on how you use it. Card-carrying Christians often stumble into pride like a State Highway Department worker who stopped at a farm to talk to an farmer. “I need to inspect your farm for a new road.” The old farmer said, “OK, but don’t go in that field over there.” The state employee interrupted, “Do you see this card? This card gives me the full authority to go wherever I wish on any farm in this state.” So the farmer shrugged and went about his chores. A few minutes later, loud screams from his field revealed the Department of Highways worker running terrified for the fence. Close behind was the farmer’s prize bull, madder than a nest of hornets, and gaining fast. The old farmer couldn’t help it. He shouted, “Show him you card! Show him you card!”²

Today our loving Lord Jesus warns you and all of us that we’re not in danger from a raging bull, but from the roaring lion of hell. Membership by itself does no more good than a business card. In fact, because you are Christians confessing your faith in Jesus, Satan targets you. The world laughs at you. And the sinful traitor inside wants to give up, slow down, be lazy. What we need is all right here in God’s Word and sacrament. Jesus reassures each of us individually today: **He Cares for You.**

† to rescue you from anxiety (vv.6-7)

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, in order that he may exalt you at the right time. All your anxiety, cast on him because he cares for you.” (TPA)

Humility the most elusive of Christian virtues. Think you’ve got it? Then you’ve lost it! God alone can look at humility without ruining it. On life’s road after Confirmation, pride easily flares up. Rely on yourself, and you’re in trouble. Humbling yourself is really hard if your parents and pastors were warning you, but you didn’t listen. You may think, “I got myself into this mess; I have to get myself out of it.” But like a horse in quicksand, all your strength only sinks you deeper into guilt and sin. Be still. God is watching. *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”* (NIV84) God says through Isaiah: *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”* (Isaiah 41:10 NIV84)

Jesus **Cares for You** in times of trouble and heartache. He carries them all on His blessed heart. *“Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows....the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”* (Isaiah 53:4f KJV updated) Worry is like an old woman on a bus clutching her load on her lap. A kind girl finally told her, “Lady, if you put your bags down on the floor, the bus can carry you and them too!” *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”* (Matthew 11:28–30 NIV84)

¹ Confirmands: Abigail Harper, Jaden Keller, Kendra Valleau

² Received by email. Author unknown.

† to keep you standing firm in faith (vv.8-9)

“Have sound judgment. Be alert. Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him by being firm in the faith. You know that the same kinds of sufferings are being laid on your brotherhood all over the world.”³

Our Father has warned us before, hasn't He? But like children, we listen, then rush off to our fun with instant memory loss. Children have a hard time staying concerned about a danger they can't see. So do we. That's our biggest problem. Sometimes we can't hear him. But he's out there. We don't always see him. But he's prowling around. It's the noise of the jack hammers, cars and buses, crying children, arguing parents, and rattling grocery carts that dulls our sense of hearing him. The bright signs and flashy cars, the well-stocked shelves and foamy barrels keep us from seeing him. But he's out there. He's **roaring**. On an unsuspecting victim he will pounce.

Did you catch that command and promise combo, God's one-two punch? ***“Resist him by being firm in the faith.”*** Faith is like the hand that receives all God's blessings. But first God has to give you the hand, then open it from its clenched position. You received salvation by grace through faith in Baptism. It's in the pipeline that we call the Means of Grace. As long as you keep drinking the Gospel in Word and sacrament, Christ's caring will **keep you standing firm in faith**. As Jesus says through James (4:7), ***“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*** ***“The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God”*** (Ephesians 6:17), the one weapon that sends the roaring lion running terrified from our Lord Christ.

† to bring you to His eternal glory (vv.10-11)

“After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you.” (EHV)

Jesus literally lives to ***“restore, establish, strengthen, and support you.”*** He's like a shepherd setting a cast sheep on its feet. He seeks until he find his sheep flat on its back, belly to the wind and sun, in deadly danger. He kindly lifts it up and scolds a little, “You silly sheep. On your back again? When will you ever learn? I'm here now” Straddling its back, he holds it on its feet until the blood returns to its feet. So our Good Shepherd seeks us when we are cast down, lifts us back on our feet, holds us steady until His blood flows once more through our bodies and souls. Christ's Holy Supper of His body and blood returns circulation to our souls and makes us strong again. The whole body of Christ is blessed when all its members are standing strong in the Lord on the one solid foundation of God's Word.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5 NIV84)

Young children sometimes run bases and come to a stop with a triumphant, double-footed stomp on *home plate*. It can be a long way around the bases of life for little legs. But our gracious God always keeps the *home plate* in mind whenever He allows trouble or heartache into our lives. He uses these ***“light and momentary troubles”*** to achieve for us ***“an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”*** He helps us ***“fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*** (2 Corinthians 4:17f NIV84) Soon it will be our turn to round the bases and reach our eternal *goal* with a double-footed stop on *home plate*. I look forward to the day when I see each of you come home because of the home run our Lord Jesus slammed and His training that put us all on base.

Then with Peter we will shout: ***“To [God] be the glory and the power forever and ever.”*** Solid, sure, certain! All God's people say, ***“Amen.”***

³ *Evangelical Heritage Version, EHV*® © 2017 The Wartburg Project. www.wartburgproject.org. Quotes unless noted. For *The Preacher's Apprentice (TPA)* sermon study or copies: m.cordes@comast.net. New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at www.wels.us/newlife. 180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126