

The Short Circuit of Faith

✠ **hard wired for death** (vv.1,2a)

✠ **rewired for life** (vv.2b-5)

In the name of our Savior God, dearly beloved saints and citizens of heaven, triumphant in Christ:

One of the great blessings of COVID is that more people are praying fervently the last prayer in the Bible. Jesus says, *“Yes, I am coming soon,”* and all God’s people are praying more earnestly, *“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”* Distressing pandemics make us want to be home in heaven, safe at last.

So what would you see if you could look inside heaven right now? No need to guess. We’re blessed with seven visions on a single Sunday in the Bible Book of Revelation. God’s cameraman is Jesus’ disciple John: *“I looked and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing in front of the throne and of the Lamb....”* That’s Jesus! They were *“clothed with white robes...with palm branches in their hands.”* They’re praising God for Jesus saving them. At the same time countless angels worship in what sounds like our liturgy: *“Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and might belong to our God forever and ever. Amen.”* But it’s one of the elders answering his own question that truly touches our hearts on SAINTS TRIUMPHANT Sunday: *“Who are these in white robes?...These are the ones who are coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Because of this they are in front of the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. They will never be hungry or thirsty ever again. The sun will never beat upon them, nor will any scorching heat, for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”* (Revelation 7:9–17 EHV) And every last one of them was once...

✠ **hard wired for death** (vv.1,2a)

So many things we take for granted these days, especially when it comes to electricity. Our son Joel, researching century farms for New Ulm’s Brown County Museum, discovered that early farmers were fearful of this strange current running through wires. At first, they would only put electric lights in the barn because houses were burning down from short circuits. Eventually, someone invented fuses to blow when wires got crossed instead of catching fire. Older folks remember how aggravating it was not to have the right fuse on hand. Breaker boxes are so much more convenient to deal with short circuits.

Who remembers such things while everyone is fixated on COVID? You’d almost think a vaccine will solve all our problems. No more house fires either, right? An end of all sickness – if only! How easy it is to ignore the fact that whether COVID can be neutralized or not, something else will eventually claim the life of every citizen of every country, culture and language. **Death** does not discriminate.

Paul’s first three chapters in Romans have been devoted to the fact that every single soul is by nature **hard wired for death**. Chapters 4 and 5 extoll God’s grace in His absolutely 100% effective cure – not like pharmaceuticals claiming 90% , but only for one virus. God has a cure for the cause of **death**. God’s solution is so powerful that the greater the infection, the more overwhelming God’s answer.

With a vaccine would someone seriously say we need more infections? Ridiculous, right? When does that ever stop humans from proposing foolishness against God’s grace? Paul just wrote, *“Where sin increased, grace overflowed much more.”* So someone suggests, “Maybe we should keep sinning so grace can increase!” Maybe we should short more circuits to prove breaker boxes! Maybe God’s grace is

just a license for sin. Many just yawn and change the subject or tell you you're paranoid when you mention the immorality that certain groups keep trying to force into our public schools. Then along comes COVID and now many parents are horrified by what they read in the required textbooks. Any wonder God mercifully keeps kids at home with their parents lest **hard wired for death** ends up eternal?

If a credible medical authority said the virus was done today, would everyone come back to worship God in thanks and praise next Sunday? Or would millions rush back to life the way they wanted without God – just like before? Would OMG (Oh, My God!) stop taking God's Name in vain? Would children of all ages honor their parents in God's promise of long life on the earth? Or forget the elderly in nursing homes like before? Would babies finally be safe in the womb? Would states that legalized infanticide rewrite their laws to protect babies that survive abortion? Would gross, disgusting movies stop being produced because no one would watch them? Would government officials and city neighbors preserve and protect everyone's property and business? Would the airwaves be filled with God-honoring good talk? Would everyone be content with the blessings God gives? We don't have to look at everyone else, do we? I see in me sad truth I cannot escape. I am by nature **hard wired for death**. I need to be...

✝ **rewired for life** (vv.2b-5)

A young electrician was rewiring a bathroom. The homeowner asked, "You don't trust the wiring? Your name is going on this job, right?" Without a word the tradesman showed where the previous handyman had run a sheetrock screw right into his own wiring. A hazard all set to short circuit.

Thank God that with His Name on you, He would not trust the old, but instead has you **rewired for life**. John sees the saints are shining as they come out of earth's shadows into heaven's glory.

Listen to the Lord's Apostle Paul and see this new life of discipleship bright and shining even now. God takes us right to Baptism as **The Short Circuit of Faith** that flips the switch on **life**. We don't ever worry that a tested and approved light switch might short circuit. We need light; we get it! Unfortunately, many don't trust God's approved miracle switch called Baptism. They insist it's nothing more than a command of God that must be obeyed. The treat Baptism like a crude custom, something like the time a ranch hand started a tractor by shorting the solenoid to the battery with a garden rake. Not sure how, but it worked. Not sure how a computer tech can change one tiny bit of code to switch an app to run instead of crash. But why argue with God's awesome miracle? **Rewired for life** – this is great!

"We died to sin. How can we go on living in it any longer? Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him by this baptism into his death, so that just as he was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too would also walk in a new life."

Baptism is God's connector, wiring you to both Jesus' death and resurrection. ***"For the wages of sin is death,"*** wages owed us, but paid with Jesus' holy precious blood. Now ***"the undeserved gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** (6:23) Every day because we are baptized we rise again with Jesus to a whole **new life** of thanks and praise to God alone. Jesus gives everything you need to stay safe and secure outside earth's short circuit of sin in pure and honest gratitude **rewired for life** eternal.

"For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection." Word and sacrament give amazing power to walk with Jesus like one of our SAINTS TRIUMPHANT. Dorothy Lindig taught Sunday School at old Trinity Lutheran in Saint Paul. Baptism's **Short Circuit of Faith** was shining when her pastor asked, "Dorothy, do you ever feel lonely?" She was an only child living single long after her parents passed. "But, Pastor," she said incredulously, "Don't you know? I'm never alone!" She wanted to fulfill her father's dream to build a school. So she donated their combined estates to fund most of our Education Wing in 2004. Almost to her last breath Dorothy was asking about travelers needing a place to stay. Depression had to run from Dorothy. She'd just say with Luther, "I am baptized!" ***"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"*** Amen.

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