

From: Michael Birnbaum <michael@islonline.org>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 9:11 PM
Subject: Living the Word This Week

Dear Brother and Sisters of Living Word Family,

It's been nice to see the church slowly building back up again as a worshipping family. I especially enjoyed our "**Burying of the Alleluias**" -- can;t wait to see what "happens" to them on Easter Sunday morning!

I miss you guys! I know there are still many in our church family that need to hold back due to health concerns, but **we are hoping Easter will be our big "Homecoming" !**

1. The text for the week is **Hebrews 4: 14-16.**, a letter written to encourage the new Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. Please pray then reread. There were **three main points** we are going to "live" this week -- and yes, you can forget my failed attempt to recycle my genie joke....🙄.

2. Verses 14a . The writer of Hebrews puts the Gospel in Jewish terms when he says that Jesus is our great High Priest. Jewish listeners would immediately understand the intermediary role of the High Priest and see that Jesus therefore is now our **ONE AND ONLY** necessary connection to God the Father. **Jesus is our bridge to heaven!**

3. Verse 14b. Hold FAST! Whether it was the first Christians in Jerusalem or us today, there is always a temptation to give up when things get tough. We must encourage each other and **NOT BE DISTRACTED** by peripheral issues -- as times get tougher for Christian in the U.S., and it's already started, **HOLD FAST to the singularity of the Gospel:** Jesus' sacrifice to be full payment for our sins so we can have eternal life is all that matters, in the end.

4. The balance of the text brings us **comfort and encouragement** by reminding us that we can always run for refuge to our Heavenly Fathers welcoming Throne of Grace where He awaits His children to come to Him. Verse 16: there, with Him, we receive **MERCY, GRACE AND HELP -- and ALL of us need that right now!**

Weekly reminders:

- Don't forget **Lenten Devotions** at 6:30 pm this Wednesday. Bring friends or neighbors to share this informal time of worship and sharing.
- Come hear **AFLC President Korhonen** preach this Sunday. Come early at 9 am for a special presentation about the Association of Free Lutheran Churches.
- **New Men's Fellowship Bible Study** group meets again this Saturday 9 am.

May the Lord bless and keep each and everyone of you as you **Live the Word** this week!

Pastor

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