

Lyons Muir Church
1074 Olmstead Rd
Muir, MI 48860
P.O. Box 218
Muir, MI 48860-0218

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A Blinding Cynicism

“...some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” But overhearing them, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. Then Jesus threw them out.

And he took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha kum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about. She was twelve years of age.

At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.”

Mark 5: 35-43

Dear friends,

We’ve been working our way through several readings in Mark’s gospel over the last few weeks, and one theme we have not yet picked up on is that opposition to Jesus often comes in the form of cynicism. We had the blasphemous scribes (Mark 3: 20-30), whose jealousy of Jesus makes them cynical about the origin of his ability to cast out demons. Then we had the disciples in the storm (Mark 4: 35-41), who assumed that because Jesus is asleep he must not care whether they live or die. And in the passage above (June 27th), we find a group of people who are so cynical

Attendance:

*The average
attendance for
the month of
June was
30*

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS	Worship on the Lord’s Day, 11
MONDAYS	No regular events
TUESDAYS	Office Hours, 9-12
WEDNESDAYS	Bible Study, 6:30-7:30 Ionia First UMC, Cafe
THURSDAYS	Office Hours, 9-2 Bible Study, 12-1

UPCOMING EVENTS

CHURCH PICNIC
RON & SANDY IDE’S HOME
4895 WESTBROOK RD, IONIA
July 10, 2021
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
August 8-12, 6-8 PM
BACK TO SCHOOL BASH
August 28, 2021 3-7 PM

they laugh at Jesus when he invites them to consider that the death of the little girl might be avoided.

In each of these stories, cynicism prohibits human beings from *seeing* the power of God and *knowing* Jesus as Messiah. Jesus acts in love to save, to welcome, and to heal, but only those who risk believing witness what he does. It's almost as if cynicism disqualifies people from participating in the ministry of Jesus. This becomes particularly clear in the passage above when Jesus throws the people out of Jairus' house. Mark doesn't give us the dialogue there, but Mark chooses a violent verb to describe the Jesus' action: ἐκβαλὼν [ekbalon]. "Ekbalon" literally means "to tear or cast out." And one doesn't have to be a Greek scholar to picture the scene implied by Mark's text. Just as he calls out the scribes for their blasphemy, he calls out these mourners for their cynicism. You can almost hear the words if you listen with your heart: *Shall you laugh at the gift of God?! You think death is bigger than love?! Well then, get out! Get out! All of you... Out!* This is not the sweet Hallmark Jesus... with the perfectly laundered long white robe, and the perfectly coiffed wavy brown hair, the manicured beard, and the Birkenstock sandals... This is the Incarnate Living Word: a divine-human being of *terrible power* whose holiness and righteousness are unequivocal, and who isn't going to beg anyone to believe him. In the power of the Spirit, Jesus perceives the reality of God's everlasting life, a reality in which death has no claim on God's creatures. And Jesus reveals this power and reality to those who hope against hope long enough to witness the transforming effect of his love.

Cynicism is a spiritual cancer that eats us alive from the inside out. We must admit this if we're going to confront it. So often in our lives our suffering and doubt become unbearable; and too often our prayers seem to go unanswered. So we let go of our spiritual practices, we let go of prayer, and we slip into grief, then despair, and then cynicism. Cynicism robs us of the living faith in which the Spirit shows us the reality of

Christ's transforming love. Cynicism makes us believe that all is lost, and that there is nothing to be done about the Evil which continues to ruin God's creation.

But take careful note of the fact that Jesus invites everyone at Jairus' house to be part of what he's about to do. This invitation comes in the form of his proclamation, "The child is not dead but sleeping." The people who are weeping don't have to receive this statement the way they do. They could have been curious. They could have let their hope overcome their despair for just long enough to wonder what might still be possible. But they don't. They laugh. And in their incredulous laughter they reject Jesus' invitation to be part of his ministry. The interesting – and difficult – thing is that, whereas Jesus has pity on the fear of the father and mother, he does not have pity on the cynicism of the crowd. He offers them a pathway out of doubt, they refuse, and Jesus moves on. The question which Mark notoriously doesn't answer remains: how do those same folks respond when the girl and her parents emerge from the house to send Jesus and his disciples on their way. How does the crowd feel as they realize they have missed out on the miracle of Love's Redeeming Work?

I'll leave you to ponder how all of this applies to your own life. But I'll close by sharing that this text calls me to confess my need for Jesus and to find once again that his love for me is unconditional, inviting me to imagine a reality so much bigger and more beautiful than the petty troubles of the institutional church or even the great troubles of this wayward world. Echoing in Mark's text, I hear the Spirit calling to me: *Wait, listen, and watch for the invitation of your Lord. He will teach you repentance. He will show you that all is not lost. He will welcome you into his everlasting life. He will show you the heart of God.*

Praise be to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Jonathan



Grace Hospital, Haiti

July 18, 2021

Noisy Sunday Offering

Healthcare and empowerment are key to helping developing countries

International Child Care (ICC) began more than forty years ago, when James and Virginia Snavley made their first trip to Haiti. What began as a vacation became a mission of love, as they committed themselves to answer God's call to serve the least of all: the suffering and needy children whose eyes seemed to plea "Why me?"

From the seeds of love which were nurtured by the Snavley's whole-hearted faith in God, International Child Care has grown to be living proof that God is able to do much, much more than we can ever imagine. Through God's grace, the dedicated and caring staff members of ICC/Grace Children's Hospital continue to welcome and treat children in need, offering hope to countless families and providing every possible chance for a bright and blessed future for these precious little ones.

To bring not only health, but wholeness to children and their families through the compassionate love of Christ.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Almost half the world, over three billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day
- 1 out of 11 children in Haiti don't live past the age of 5 due to disease and malnutrition.
- Haiti is a 90 minute plane ride from Miami; about 700 miles.
- Grace Children's Hospital is the trusted source in Haiti for Tuberculosis treatment and sees 400 patients a day.
- Vaccines and community health clinics help prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as Zika and cholera.
- By educating about hygiene and nutrition, promoting healthy practices, preventing diseases, providing medical care for children and their families, and empowering the communities, ICC seeks to give health and wholeness for children and families in Haiti.



SATURDAY, AUGUST 28th

3 TO 7 PM

WE MISSED THE 4TH OF JULY
CAUSE IT RAINED
FrOgS & PoLliWOgS



JOIN US FOR AN AWESOME DAY OF FAMILY FUN & HOSPITALITY

WATER SLIDES & SQUIRT GUNS

BOUNDY HOUSE

WATER BALOON TOSS

THREE-LEGGED RACE

LIVE MUSIC

FREE BBQ SERVED @ 5

EVERY KID WHO RSVPs
GETS A NEW BACKPACK AND SUPPLIES!!

HOW WILL WE USE OUR FREEDOM?

In 2000, Cornealious Anderson was sentenced to 13 years for robbery. The 23-year-old was released on bail and told to await orders to show up to prison. But due to a clerical error, those orders never came. Some people might have taken advantage of such freedom and committed more crimes. But Anderson started a business, coached youth football and volunteered at church, earning respect in his community.

Thirteen years later, when Missouri officials discovered the error and put Anderson behind bars, an online petition called for his release. A judge

agreed that Anderson was a changed man and, again, he was freed.

What would *you* do with such undeserved freedom? What *do* we do with the unmerited freedom God grants us despite our sin, and with the freedoms we celebrate on July 4? May we follow Anderson's example and use our freedoms, social *and* spiritual to serve others.
—adapted from *Homiletics*



"IN DEPENDENCE" DAY!

Always live "in dependence" on God.

Directions: Use the vowel code to complete Psalm 16:8, NIV.

A= 	E= 	I= 	O= 	U= 
--	--	--	--	--

_ k _ p my _ y _ s
 _ l w _ y s _ n th _ L _ RD.
 W _ th h _ m _ t my
 r _ ght h _ nd,
 w _ ll n _ t b _ sh _ k _ n.
 Ps _ lm 16:8, N _ V

Answer: I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Psalm 16:8, NIV

MISSION STATEMENT

The Lyons-Muir Church is called to be God's healing and hope-filled congregation, and to make followers of Jesus Christ for the positive transformation of our community through lives of prayer, love, forgiveness, honesty, acceptance, and trust.



This year we'll have a "slimmed down" version of VBS with a mix of crafts, science, story-telling, music, and –of course–snacks! We're excited to welcome the children of this community to our church once more.

Questions?

Call Barb Davarn:

989-225-3849.

Week of August 8-12, 2021

June Finance Report

Thank you for your ongoing support!!

Income \$4,043.40

Expenses \$4,720.35

Surplus (Defecit) (\$676.95)

Year to Date Surplus (Defecit)
(\$897.58)

2021 Adopt-A-Highway

This year the Adopt-A-Highway dates are July 17-25 and September 25-October 3.

Our Adopt-A-Highway area runs down M-21 from the Maple River, through Muir, past our church, to Westbrook Road which is three miles. Volunteers are needed to help with the trash pickup, as the volunteers able to help are dwindling. Last year, there were four people to pick up the three miles and having more volunteers will help. If you would like to volunteer for this community service, please contact Barb Davarn at 989-224-3849.