



October 2017

"For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free" Galatians 5:1

Freedom is one of those words that is easily misunderstood. Whether it refers to the freedom of the gospel or our country's freedom, it is a word that can easily be misconstrued or watered down. Like the word love, freedom is often turned into an abstraction or something purely subjective. It is neither of these for the apostle Paul.

One way to get at this is to pose a math equation. We all agree that $2 + 2 = 4$. That is an absolute. Paul challenges us with his own "math" question and another absolute. It goes like this: "Jesus + Nothing = Everything." To understand the equation, let's first get at the "nothing" part. What does "nothing" mean? Let's be clear about this. As we celebrate the 500th year of the Reformation, we recall that Martin Luther took up Paul's "math" question with his famous slogan: "Word Alone." The Word alone—that is, Jesus alone—cuts its own course in the world and in the believer's life—with nothing added to it. In other words, "Jesus + Nothing = Everything." To add anything to the equation shifts from freedom to bondage.

The Word *alone*—Jesus *only*—means that when the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us, it comes as a living word that gives all that is necessary in life and in death—with no additions to the equation. The Word of God does not need to be bolstered or propped up, given "relevance" or validity by us, or by religious traditions, new teachings, personal charisma, personal experience, one's sincerity or earnestness, or an office like pope, bishop or pastor. The Word *alone* accomplishes the saving work of God in the world and in the believer's life. If it is abandoned or amplified, all is lost.

Conditions, props and additions do not strengthen the Word, but only nullify Christ and place the believer in a bondage from which there is no release. That is a pretty big deal. This is why Paul is so hopping mad in his letter to the Galatians. The only other "math" equation that Paul will allow besides "Jesus + Nothing = Everything" would be "Jesus + Nothing = Freedom." As Jesus himself said, "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36)

Jesus sets us free every time He binds himself to you and me through his Word. He binds us to himself by promising to forgive, transform, take over, kill and raise to life, and then never let us go. In this bond of unconditional love, we are truly free, because we are securely in the hands of the *only* one who can give us life and salvation.

"Jesus + Nothing = Everything." This Gospel equation means there is *nothing* we can add to what Jesus has done and is doing for us and to us. It means that there is *nothing* in this life that can finally, ultimately threaten us or do us in. That is freedom and it is "for freedom Christ has set us free." (Galatians 5:1)

In Christ,
Pastor Randy Freund
Service Coordinator, Augustana District, LCMC





Theology, Church, Mission



Pastor, Our Saviour's/Fahlun Lutheran Parish and Chaplain, Minnesota National Guard

5 years ago, I started serving a two point parish in west central Minnesota near Alexandria. While very faithful and very generous "family-sized" congregations, they could only offer me, in the interview, a $\frac{3}{4}$ time call.

However, when I came to interview I told them that I had a solution for them. Indeed, I could serve this parish $\frac{3}{4}$ time because I also serve as a military chaplain in the Minnesota National Guard. This has provided me with several benefits both professionally and financially. First, I find myself developing my leadership skills in the Guard that I bring to my parish.

This call to be a military chaplain also has brought me in contact with many soldiers who rarely would darken the doors of the church. Here, I can speak God's Word of Law and Gospel to members of our military. Indeed, my first two baptisms as pastor were two soldiers in Kuwait.

Finally, the National Guard also provides some incredible benefits. These range from educational benefits, (I paid for my entire seminary education at Luther without taking on more debt.) to health insurance via Tri-Care, (only costs \$215/month for an entire family with a \$300 deductible) to the salary itself as a military officer.

As far as commitments, the Minnesota National Guard's chaplains meet in the Twin Cities on the second Monday of every month. Therefore, I do not have to miss a monthly Sunday to meet my National Guard commitment. Indeed, including all military commitments (annual training and a few other requirements), I average 4-6 Sundays a year that I am away for the National Guard.

In short, I have found being a National Guard military chaplain to be the perfect complement to serving a $\frac{3}{4}$ time rural two-point call. In that way, I would encourage those pastors and seminary students qualified (typically under age 40, US Citizen, can pass a military physical and can ascertain a secret security clearance) to consider this call. If interested, you can e-mail me at jpedersen001@luthersem.edu for more info.

Have a blessed day as we all consider how to serve our Lord in this 21st Century context.

In Christ,
Jeremy Pedersen
Pastor, Our Saviour's/Fahlun Lutheran Parish
Chaplain, Minnesota National Guard

"I can do all this through Christ who gives me strength." (Phillipians 4:13)



Theology, Church, Mission

Save the Date

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE 2018

"Shaping the Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders"

Monday, February 5 - Tuesday, February 6, 2018

This coming year's event will be held at the Sioux Falls Seminary, 2100 Summit Ave., Sioux Falls, SD.

A block of rooms have been set aside at the ClubHouse Hotel and Suites 2320 S. Louise Ave.

Call 866-534-8700 and refer to the Augustana District to receive the blocked room rate of \$119/night

Block rooms not booked by January 4, 2018 will be released.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONFIRMATION RETREAT 2018

Friday, March 2 - Sunday, March 4

Luther Crest in Alexandria, MN

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONVENTION 2018

Saturday, May 5, 2018 (Please note the change in date)

Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, MN

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT WOW (Women of the Word) ANNUAL GATHERING

Saturday, September 15, 2018

Peace Lutheran Church, Watertown, MN

Go to the Augustana District Website or Facebook page for registration information on these events as it becomes available. You can sign-up for regular e-mails from the AD by sending an e-mail to: office@augustanadistrict.org and requesting to be included.

You can support the Augustana District financially via the website. Just look for the Multiply x2 Magnify Logo.



Multiply x2
Magnify

Acts 12:24 "The Word of the Lord continued to grow and be multiplied"