

## My Thoughts for Sunday, January 12, 2014

### “Just Say No”

While recently reading the December issue of *Forward in Christ* I was drawn to an article by a teen writer, Brittany, regarding peer pressure and ‘standing out.’ She emphasized the difficulty in staying true to her faith and her Savior in spite of classmates, always trying to get her to go along with less than Christ like activities. She pointed out that saying no is the most powerful thing a Christian can say in a peer pressure situation. I, as an adult, feel that it is sometimes also the hardest thing to say. She very aptly pointed to Peter’s admonition about being a witness for Christ written in 1 Peter 5:8, “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

Prior to becoming a true Christian and a Lutheran, I was involved in an extremely decadent life style, definitely not Christ pleasing. Now, as Christ has turned my life around, I still have the problems shared by Brittany, “Peer Pressure.” Peer pressure does not go away with adulthood, especially from friends that knew me before. I still join our coffee bunch on a regular basis at our favorite coffee shop (for the last 30 plus years). Many of my ‘friends’ have died or moved away; but the conversations still tend to go to the worldly views and manner. I have often been asked why I spend so much time with the church instead of joining in more secular, manly activities, and I still attempt to share with them the blessings I get from my church life. They feel ‘good’ people don’t need that much church. I attempt to share with them that no one is good. They rarely want to listen to Scripture; however, I continue to focus myself on Romans 7:14-20, that because of the sin in me I can do no good.

I have had some success in sharing with them the analogy that church is like a hospital: people go to a hospital because they are sick, not because they are healthy. Church is, in like manner, the same; people go to church because we are all spiritually sick in our sins and we receive the healing from our Lord thru His Word and Sacrament.

Along with Brittany I have to ask the same questions. Why do we feel like we need to give in to temptation when we know it is clearly a sin? Is it worth doing all those sinful acts and sharing the sinful thoughts just so we don’t come under judgment by our peers? Shouldn’t we instead be more concerned with the coming judgment of our Holy and righteous God?

The judgment by our peers we can live with; it only shows that they recognize that we really are not a part of this world. On the other hand, if we are not constantly on the watch, the judgment by our just and righteous God we may not be able to live with. Having just celebrated *the Word made flesh*, we need to focus all our attention on that Word and continue to strive toward the Holiness that God demands of us. (2 Peter 3:11)