2 Corinthians 5:7	June 17, 2018
"We Live By Faith, Not By Sight"	Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
4th Sunday af. Pentecost	Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Fathers
And Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[***Introduction***]
You have heard it said, "I'll believe it when I see it with my own eyes."
OR… "Seeing is believing," they say.
BUT If we live by sight, what we see is what we get.

You know, we are so aware of our bodies.
I see the world by opening my eyes and in so doing, I feel the motion of my eyelid.
I feel that my legs are crossed and that my arm is raising.
I feel tired and thirsty.
I feel cold.
I feel my teeth begin to chatter.
My back itches.
We can feel our heart beat and hear our stomach "growl,"
but who has such personal experience with their liver or kidneys?
We can't feel them, can't hear them, can't see them,
but we couldn't live without them.

And all too often a tumor grows undetected in our bodies.
Oh! How we would love to live without them.

And unbeknownst to us…
Enzymes in our bodies perform functions that we can neither see nor feel.

Oh! How it is so true … blessings of life come from what we don't see.

So, it is for us as Christians.
As Christians – *REAL LIFE* for us is dependent on things we can't see.
In other words…
As Disciples of Jesus Christ, We Live by Faith, Not by Sight.

[***Sight is not always reliable***]
We live by what we can trust.

The following letter was found in a baking-power can
wired to the handle of an old pump
that offered the only hope of drinking water
on a very long and seldom-used trail across Nevada's Desert:

This is what the letter said:
"This pump is all right!
I put a new sucker washer into it
and it ought to last five years.
But the washer dries out and the pump has got to be primed.

NOW, under the white rock I buried a bottle of water, out of the sun and cork end up.
There's enough water in it to prime the pump, but not if you drink some first.
First, pour about one-fourth and let her soak to wet the leather.
Then pour in the rest medium fast and pump like crazy.
You'll get water. The well has never run dry. Have faith.
When you get watered up,
fill the bottle and put it back like you found it for the next feller.
(signed) Desert Pete.
P.S. Don't go drinking the water first.
Prime the pump with it and you'll get all you can hold."

Would you live? Would you trust? Would the person after you live?

[***More than Sight***]
In court, better than eyewitnesses, better than sight is hard evidence.
Today, fingerprints, threads of clothing, even DNA
are used to convince juries of the facts of a case.

And we have hard evidence!
Our faith relies on the Word and promise of God.

"We *know* we have a building from God" (v 1);
we know, even though we haven't seen,
because God has promised it to us in Scripture (2 Tim 3:15–17).

The way we conduct ourselves is by spiritual sight,
seeing things through the Spirit with an eternal perspective.

NOW, just a few verses before our text, Paul wrote something quite similar:
He said, ***"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.***
For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (4:18)

A faith perspective marks all mature disciples.

Paul also wrote:
"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Peter said,
"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." (1 Peter 1:8)

The unknown author of Hebrews said:
"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)

AND…***"Jesus told [Thomas],***
'Because you have seen me, you have believed;
blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" (Jn 20:29)

We live out our lives here on earth
tethered to heaven by the umbilical cord of the Holy Spirit,
guided by the teachings of Jesus and his apostles,
and expectant that God's promises will surely come to pass.

By His Word and the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit is given us as a pledge (v 5).
He creates faith through the means and is himself evidence of God's promise.

There is no harder evidence than this—
God's own Word, God's own promise, God himself as a pledge!

[***Result***]
Therefore our faith becomes the basis for life as it really is.

This is what makes Good Friday – GOOD!
In no way can the sight of a man crucified upon the cross look good.

The man is dying.
The man is agonizing.
The man is gasping for breath
– literally suffocating under the weight of his body.
And that man…
and that true God … Jesus – was covered, literally bathed in blood.
The blood, the sacrifice…

Look! The lamb of God who takes way the sin of the world!
That is what is good. The sight is bad, but by faith, through spiritual eyes we see GOOD.

[***Conclusion***]
Living the unseen (but real!) life is being confident (vv 6–8).
Living the unseen (but real!) life is seeking to please him (v 9).
Living the unseen (but real!) life is doing good works, not to earn our salvation,
but as a reflection of our faith (v 10).

The great musician George Frideric Handel lost his health (his right side was paralyzed), his money was gone, and his creditors threatened to imprison him.

Handel was so disheartened by his tragic experiences that he despaired for a brief time.

But his faith prevailed, and he composed his greatest work, "The Hallelujah Chorus," which withstands the test of time.

Even in those darkest of days, there was something there for Handel that he couldn't see.

The apostle John named it:
"This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 Jn 5:4).

That is what we can see when we live by faith, not by sight. Amen!

"Now may the God of peace… equip you with everything good
that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.
Amen." (Heb 13:20-21)