

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

[1] This is the last weekend of the church year.

And if this was the last day of the year 2020,
the television, the airwaves, and the internet
would be filled with countdowns.

Countdowns on the best and worst of 2020.

I'll let your imagination fill out that list,
but let's be clear about what top's the church list,
your faith filled list of 2020

The text for today emphasizes that Jesus Christ is our Lord.

St. Paul wrote this to his friend Timothy:

[2] *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing”* (2 Tim 4:7–8).

“I have kept the faith,” St. Paul said.

The Christian faith is the faith that Jesus Christ

[3] *“is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person; purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold and silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death, that I may be his own”* (Luther's Small Catechism II, 2).

The text for today emphasizes that Jesus Christ is our Lord.

He is our “number 1.”

He is “On Top of Everything.”

That is a fact, AND that is also the goal.

[4] [Christ a FACT]

Christ on top of everything: that is a fact (v 20).

From the beginning, God is number 1.

The Ten Commandments assures it...

“I am the Lord your God. . . . You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20).

Adam, the first human, was not God.

He was made, in the image of god (Gen 1:27; Ps 8:5–6).

He lived in God's presence.

That was Adam's special place (Ps 56:13).

God was Adam's God. God loved Adam, and Adam loved God

While God is always number 1,
there are those would-be number 1s,
those who fight to be number 1 in our lives.

(1) [5] The devil (Mt 4:8–9).

The devil fights to be number 1 in our lives.

The Bible is quite clear – he prowls around like a roaring lion
ready to devour (1 Peter 5:8)

The devil tries to be number 1.

(2) [6] Our Adam: in you and me, our sinful nature
tries to take the number 1 spot of our lives,
by inheritance and by choice
our sinful nature tries to rule.

(v 22; Rom 5:12; Ps 51:4; Lk 15:21).

Our Adam tries to be number 1.

(3) [7] Then there are those Adams:
all humanity, collectively,
this community and this world (v 22; 1 Jn 5:19).

They fight to be number 1.

(4) [8] Finally, sin fights to reign in our lives. (Rom 5:21)

Sin of omission. Sin of commission.

Habitual sin. Occasional sin.

Sin constantly fights to reign.

But God has an answer to these would be wonders.

God's answer to the would-be number 1s:

He put "Christ on Top of Everything" (vv 25, 27).

By election (Ps 2:7–8; 110:1).

By incarnation, life, death (Is 9:6; 53:5–6).

By life, by death.

By the resurrection (vv 20–21; Ps 16:10–11).

By proclamation of the Good News (1 Cor 1:23–24; 2:1–2; 15:1–11).

By justification of the sinner

through faith in Christ

(Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 1:30–31; Acts 10:42–43).

[9] [*Christ a GOAL*]

Christ on top of everything: that is a fact (v 20).

AND Christ on top of everything: that is the goal (v 25).

God's goal:

“he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (v 25; Ps 110:1).

Now we do not see everything subject to him (v 27; Heb 2:8–9).

Instead we see the would-be number 1s still very much at work:

in the world around us (2 Cor 4:3–4; 1 Jn 2:15–17);

in all the works and ways and wiles of the devil (Rev 12:12; 1 Pet 5:8)

in our own lives (Rom 7:7–25; 1 Cor 10:1–12; Psalms 32, 51).

Yet the Word of God is there:

“I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill” (Ps 2:6).

“God has put all things in subjection under his feet” (Ps 2:1–12; 8:6; 110:1; v 27).

[10] Christ rules as King here and now, “putting his enemies under his feet,”

not with secular pomp and power (Jn 18:36),

not with the transcendent glory of his coming on the Last Day,

BUT by the content and power of his Word (Is 55:10–11),

by the heralding and teaching of his cross and resurrection

(Mt 28:18–20; Lk 10:16; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 1:22–24),

in and through his “little flock” of believers

who are called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified,

by the Holy Spirit,

by the faith and the hope of resurrection and eternal life (1 Cor 15),

by the Office of the Keys (Jn 20:21–23),

by the water of Baptism (1 Pet 3:21–22)

by the bread and wine of the Holy Supper (1 Cor 11:23–26),

by “daily contrition and repentance,”

through which “the Old Adam in us . . .

with all sins and evil desires” is “drowned and . . .

a new man should daily emerge and arise

to live before God in righteousness and purity forever”—

(Small Catechism IV, 4),

by the imperfect but continuing works of love of his disciples

that's you

by our patience and suffering for his name (1 Pet 2:19–25),

by our prayers

for the Kingdom, for one another, and for the lost.

[*Conclusion*]

[11] Christ on top of everything: that is a fact (v 20).

AND Christ on top of everything: that is the goal (v 25).

Knowing that truth, we then live each day as good stewards.

Using our time, talents, and treasures for Him and His kingdom.

As we celebrate the end of the church year,

I am certain that Christ is number one on every countdown list.

Christ is on top of everything.

And for that... I am thankful.

Oh yeah, we are getting ready for Thanksgiving too.

I am thankful for Christ in my life. That is number one.

But did you know that you make my Thanksgiving countdown list too?

Right up there towards the top is you – the members of Our Redeemer.

I am thankful for your encouragement and support.

I am thankful for your dedication to the gospel.

I am thankful for your volunteering –
for all that is done around here.

Year after year, I hear from the Vicars

how impressive it is to have so many active at Our Redeemer –

active in teaching, active in servicing, active in planning,

active in preparation, active in activities, active in clean-up,
and just simply active.

I also remember how impressed LCEF was

with the stewardship of our congregation.

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund conducted a survey

and found the stewardship of this congregation to be quite high.

Praise be to God. I am thankful for your stewardship.

That is on my thanksgiving list.

BUT Christ on top of everything: that is a fact (v 20).

AND Christ on top of everything: that is the goal (v 25). Amen.

So we... Declare his glory among the nations,

his marvelous deeds among the people. AMEN! (Psalm 96:3)
