



Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

IT HURTS TO TALK

By Chaplain Steve Stern

As I came into Jennifer's room, I judged her to be somewhere between forty and fifty years old. I noticed that she had a pain pump on her IV pole and it seemed to me that she was a little groggy from the pain and the medications. This told me that she probably had a pretty serious cancer and that possibly she was in a situation where the doctors were dealing more with pain control than they were with trying to cure her cancer.

I sat down beside her bed and I asked her a few things about herself and what the doctors were doing for her while she was in the hospital. After a few minutes Jennifer said to me that some of her pain was in her throat.

"It hurts to talk," she said.

Even though there were many things I wondered about in terms of where she was at with all of the things that were happening to her, I said, "I won't stay long then. I don't want to make you do something that is uncomfortable for you. Would you like me to pray with you before I go?"

"Yes," said Jennifer. "I would like that."

"Is there something special that you would like me to pray for," I said before I started my prayer.

Jennifer was silent for a moment. Then she said, "I would like you to pray for

my daughter, Jackie. We just lost my daughter, Julie, recently. I'm worried about Jackie right now. I don't know if she can handle losing her sister and then something happening to me also."

Now Jennifer's words, "It hurts to talk," took on new meaning for me. As much as her throat hurt, it was nothing compared to the hurt in her heart over the loss of her daughter and her concerns for the daughter she might have to leave behind.

So in spite of her sore throat, I asked Jennifer some more things about the daughter that had died. I asked how she felt she had done in her role as a mother. I wanted to see if she felt guilty. If maybe she felt she hadn't done enough for her daughter.

Then, when I felt that I had somewhat of a picture of where Jennifer was at, I was ready to pray with her and to en-

trust to God this tender, hurting soul who needed to be relieved of her burdens.

I think there are a lot of Jennifer's out there. You hear people say, "It

hurts to talk. I don't want to talk about that right now. I can't talk about that."

In various ways, people let us know that their hearts are wounded. Their hearts are heavy. Their pain is almost more than they can bear.

I believe that our task is to be sensitive

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"I don't want to talk about that right now."

BREAK YOUR MIRROR . . . It's No Big Deal!

Maria Shriver Schwarzenegger, first lady of California, once related a story about her father, Sergeant Shriver, at a time when he was addressing a group of college graduates. His advice to them was, "break your mirror," for when you look into a mirror the focus is on yourself and how you will perceive yourself.

I recall the words from the animated movie, *Snow White*, "mirror, mirror on the wall who is the loveliest one of all?" If we break that mirror, we are forced to focus outside of ourselves and zero in on the needs of others.

It's even better advice for the Christian to break your mirror, get your focus away from yourself and focus on your Lord and Savior Jesus and how He wants you to live out your faith.

I don't suggest you go around the house, literally, breaking all of your mirrors, but in a figurative way you can do exactly that.

As little children the focus already is on what we want, right now, and if we don't get our way we pout or cry or jump up and down for attention. As we grow older, some individuals never graduate from the, "me, myself and I," stage of life.

It's easily said, "break your mirror and refocus your life away from yourself to the needs of others." How do we accomplish that? Turn to Scripture which is replete with examples of the focus our lives should take.

First we are directed to the mirror of God's law. A mirror that points out our sin, make us conscious of our sin and the need of a Savior from sin.

"I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people." Words recorded first in Jeremiah 31:33 and then again in



Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

Hebrews 8:10.

What does Jesus tell us? *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind, and then love your neighbor as yourself."*

We look to the mirror of God's grace that is to be reflected in our lives. Our attitude toward others is to be one of compassion, kindness, humility, patience, gentleness, godliness, understanding and brotherly love.

That, of itself, will get us away from the mirrors of pride and selfishness, arrogance and of trusting in our own good deeds. Then, only, will we be that light of the world and that salt of the earth Jesus wants us to be.

Paul writes in 2Cor. 6:16, *"We are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their God and they will be my people."*

Break your mirror, its no big deal, and, its not bad luck!

Franklin Gauger
Lay Ministry
Coordinator



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Call the WLIM office to set up an appointment @414-259-8122.

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Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

I remember how good the kitchen smelled when my mother baked bread. It was even better when she made and fried raised doughnuts and loaded them with sugar. Perhaps that's why I still hang around bakeries. If they would make a perfume with the scent of fresh baked bread or of yeast coffee cake, I'd buy a gallon for my wife!

There are many smells that are pleasant and many smells may recall fond memories for you, too.

There are even smells that are pleasing to our God. When Noah built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings on it, we're told in Genesis how, "the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma." Noah's worship and thanksgiving, proof of true faith, were pleasing and acceptable to the Lord.

However, there are smells that just stink and are most offensive.

My wife, Donna, and I had an old reed pump organ in our first parsonage. It still played and we kept it in the dining room. Once a mouse, probably the largest mouse that ever came into the house, got into the bellows, couldn't get out and died there. I'm not mechanically gifted and didn't try to take the bellows apart. The stench of that decaying mouse was so bad, we had to move the organ out to the front porch.

Sometimes we really don't smell very good, we even stink!

The hot, humid, muggy days and nights of summer make our correctional institutions smelly. I've written before that neither our state nor its budget can afford air conditioning for our prisons.

Inmates are not able to shower or even change clothes every day, and many do not have money for deodorants.

During the "dog days" of summer, some who come to my Bible studies are really bedraggled, sweaty and embarrassed by the way they look and how bad they smell. But I'm one of those of whom the Psalmist says, "They have noses, but they cannot smell." Ps. 115:6 The Lord has blessed me with allergies. So, often, my

nose is stuffed up and most of those odors don't bother me.

Think how we must smell to our holy God because of our sinfulness and sins. Daily showers and gallons of deodorants; doing more good than evil; good words and deeds; none of these can cleanse us and make us sweet smelling to God. Only Jesus precious blood can wash away our sins. Only by faith in Jesus, our Savior, are we justified and sanctified to be God's sweet smelling people.

It's a special privilege for me to be able to bring the Gospel of Christ to hurting, sin stinking, dying souls and offer them Jesus' cleansing which makes them sweet smelling and acceptable to God.

Your prayers and gifts to support WLIM will also help keep me in smelly prisons for another hot summer.

HOW DO YOU SMELL?

"Only Jesus . . . can wash away our sins."

Chaplain David Tetzlaff



In reporting to Detention yesterday and during the process of going through metal detectors, one of the guards told me that one of our mutual friends had recently lost her husband. The guard told me that she gave that lady a big hug and that in giving the hug she received one as well. We agreed that hugs can do a lot for a hurting heart.

This brought to my memory another conversation about hugs.

Angela had been at the treatment center a few times before. At times, she looked very sad, but she was a girl of few words. She did have a temper that reared its head when she felt that one of the other kids was provoking, teasing or threatening her. Then the quiet girl could turn quite vocal.

It almost seemed that Angela felt stuck between two extremes: being a good, quiet church girl on the one hand, and a loud, uncontrolled naughty girl on the other.

Our subject that week was the story of Jesus blessing the children. I love to share the idea that even when people didn't think that Jesus would want to waste His time with the young ones, He rebuked them and desired to do just that; spend time making contact.

Who knows exactly what that scene must have looked like, but I love the image of Jesus connecting with those children physically, emotionally and spiritually.

It just so happened that one week, Angela was the



Photo by Mrs. Kevin S.

only child on the detention unit. I felt that God must have a very special personal time designed for Angela.

We talked about the hug from Jesus. We talked about how awesome it would have been to

had felt in her short life.

Angela then asked, "You mean Jesus hugs me when I'm bad too?" I had to think a minute. Perhaps years ago my gut reaction may have been to say, "No, Jesus doesn't like you to be bad." But that

The hug that lasts

actually be on Jesus' lap and what a special blessing those children had.

And then I said, "But you know, Jesus has us in a special hug now, too. He is with us and hugging us now, even though we can't see Him."

Angela's eyes showed her joy and peace in hearing that.

I'm not sure if she had ever lived in her real home and I was unsure what home she would be going to. I didn't know how many hugs she

wasn't the question. Does Jesus stop hugging us, loving us when our actions don't deserve it?

And then the Holy Spirit brought me back to that loving Word; I have loved you with an everlasting

"Jesus is always hugging me, right?"

love, nothing can separate us from the love that is in Christ

Jesus, nothing can snatch you out of my hands.

God, you are so good. I can tell this confused hurt girl, longing for a hug,

that Jesus' love does not depend on her actions. I could tell this gave her comfort. And in this loving embrace, she can grab hold of His power to live a new life and hand her emotions without making sinful choices.

During our visit the next week, Angela asked me again, "Jesus is always hugging me, right?" I gave her a firm, "Yes."

I haven't seen her at the Treatment Center since and I just pray that God's love and power help her to make her life better. And, that whomever she is with and wherever she lives, she can live life God's way with Him by her side.

Deaconess
Sarah Owens



IT HURTS TO TALK

(Continued from Page 1)

to this emotional and spiritual pain. It is our task to be slow to speak and quick to hear. If people want to talk about the pain, let them get it out. If they are not at that point where they can open up about it, respect their inability to talk at that time and let them know you are aware of their pain.

Above all, may the people you come into contact with know that you believe in the truths expressed in Romans 8:26-27, "In the same way, the Spirit helps

us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

What a comfort it is to know that even when we can't talk about it. Even when we can't put it into words. The Spirit intercedes for us. He interprets our groans. He translates the

unspeakable into a message that the Father can read and will gladly receive.

So do the best that you can with the wounded hearts in your care to let them know God knows their heart. God understands their heart. God hears their heart. God will heal their heart even when the pain is unspeakable.

Chaplain Steve Stern



WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT!

What the Lord Jesus asks of those whom He calls into the holy ministry is that they will be faithful in carrying out the calling and work He gives them. St. Paul put it this way: "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." 1 Corinthians 4:2

This describes well the sixty year ministry of Chaplain Elwood Habermann who recently announced his retirement from part-time retirement service for WLIM.

After forty-two years in the parish ministry, Elwood accepted a Call to serve as the Institutional Missionary of the Northern Wisconsin District of WELS (NWDIM).

He began this calling by completing a rigorous study and training program at the Atlanta Chaplaincy Training School in Atlanta, Georgia. Then he visited officials in each state institution located in the area of the Northern Wis. District. He received authorization from them to serve as a nationally certified volunteer chaplain of WELS in cooperation with each of the institutions state chaplains.

As time went on, Elwood was

able to expand his missionary outreach to correctional institutions in central and western Wisconsin. The Lord gave him even more opportunities for outreach when he began work at Dodge CI in Waupun. Dodge CI is where every adult male offender is taken for evaluation and assessment before being transferred to other correctional institutions.

This enabled Elwood to have contact with, follow up and minister to male inmates as they were sent to other institutions he served. He was able also to minister to women at Taycheedah CI in Fond du Lac and at the Winnebago Mental Health Institute in Winnebago, WI.

Elwood and his wife, Linda, bought a home in Oshkosh which became his home base. From there he traveled to the various institutions and to WELS churches and schools in the Northern Wisconsin District giving presentations and preaching in behalf and in support of NWDIM.

The Lord led Elwood to decide in 1995 to serve a part-time ministry only at the chapel in Oshkosh Correctional Institu-

tion where he became an assistant chaplain helping staff the chapel office and conducting orientation sessions, services and one-on-one counseling.

When NWDIM joined with WLIM in 1998, Elwood was called to the WLIM staff and continued his retirement part-time ministry at Oshkosh CI.

It was early this year that Elwood and Linda felt it was time for him to enter the ranks of full retirees after serving eighteen years as an institutional missionary. They sold their home in Oshkosh, bought a home two doors away from their daughter, Grace, and moved to McAllen, Texas.

As Elwood begins his full retirement, we say with our Lord, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" We praise and thank our Lord for His many mercies showered upon us as well as upon Elwood and Linda and for enabling Elwood to celebrate sixty years in the holy ministry.

We are grateful to Chaplain Habermann for his service to our Lord and to WLIM. We wish them both God's richest blessings in their new life and home in Texas.

A few years ago I was dealing with a man named Doug who was in jail awaiting trial for his part in a murder.

He and a few other men looking for dope money had attacked and robbed an old man waiting for a bus, and the old man died of injuries they inflicted on him.



Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

MONSTERS

One of the other men arrested in the incident was trying to get a lighter sentence by putting the blame on Doug for the murder. Doug denied it, and in fact felt terrible about it.

"It was the other guy that kicked the old man," he told me. "I was only interested in robbing him; killing him was the farthest thing from my mind."

Doug had a phrase he kept repeating almost like a mantra during the talks we had: "I'm not a monster. I do monstrous things, but I'm not a monster."

He said it with a kind of desperation, as if it was vital that he convince somebody that this was true. I wasn't sure if that somebody he was desperate to convince was me or him.

He got transferred to another facility and I lost contact with him before I was able to get very far with him. But his phrase – "I'm not a monster."

I do monstrous things, but I'm not a monster" – has continued to haunt me.

I understand that despair. I know what it feels like to have a frantic need to believe, "I'm basically a good person. The bad stuff I've done isn't the real me, because I'm a good guy."

The job of trying to keep believing I'm a good guy, in spite of all the evidence of my meanness and self-centeredness and cowardliness, is an over-

whelming job. When I try to take on that job, I get just as desperate as Doug.

"He had learned to let go of the image of himself."

It's a joy to get together with other people who are learning to be honest before the God of grace, which I get to do constantly as a chaplain with WLIM.

At a prison Bible study I facilitated recently, we were talking about this very thing. One of the guys in the study, Kevin, talked about getting a letter the week before from an old friend who told him in pretty harsh terms how disappointed she was in him for committing his crime and how her respect for him had been shattered.

Kevin told us about what a relief it was not to have to try to defend himself to his friend. He said he wrote back and told her she was perfectly right to disrespect him, because this crime was simply evidence that he was in fact a very bad man.

Kevin was able to say that with a kind of joy in his voice. He is learning to let go of the image of himself as a good guy, because he has come to believe in the God who accepts and loves him just the way he is; the God who, "justifies the wicked."

Romans 4:5

And with that new perspective, Kevin is learning to work with God on the exciting task of starting from scratch on a new life, rather than the hopeless task of trying to patch up and prop up a crumbling image of himself as basically a good guy.

In some ways you could say Kevin, Doug and I are monsters, which is why we do monstrous things. But the point is: if we are "monsters," we are monsters who are loved, forgiven and accepted by God.



Chaplain Phil Merten

Bible classes for prisoners are always interesting and challenging, no matter how many years of experience one has had in conducting a prison Bible class.

The class that day was small. One of the prisoners, Javon, was scheduled to be released in a short time. Since this was his second incarceration, he was anxious that this would be his last.

We hadn't even gotten into a Bible study, when Javon went on to detail his whole messed up life, drunk during most of his high school years, then pot, then cocaine coupled with various forms of criminal activity. He was sick and tired of that lifestyle and years in prison. He wanted to start a whole new life. That's why he came to Bible class.

The whole class heard his testimony. I briefly summarized a life as a Christian - a life of forgiveness, peace, joy, and above all, the promise of eternal life in heaven.

"That's the life I want!" he declared.

I mentioned the fact that a life as a Christian would not be easy. In fact, Satan would oppose him and try to destroy his faith in Jesus.

At this point I asked the class what they thought Javon should do to maintain his faith when he got out.

One man said, "it won't be easy." He went on to say he had a Christian upbringing, but this was his fourth incarceration. Each time, he said, he was determined not to go back to his old lifestyle. But, he went back to his old friends and hangouts. He sadly admitted that it didn't take long before he went back to his old devilish lifestyle and back into prison again.

"Frankly," he said, "I don't have the answer."

A drug dealer said he has had a similar experience. All agreed it was not easy. All felt they were failures. They couldn't help him.

Now the problem was back in my court. We never got into my prepared Bible study that morning. I looked at my watch and realized that I had about 20 minutes to try to help this troubled prisoner.

I decided to quote Phil. 3:13 -14, "Forgetting what



Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

A few prisoners said they did go to church a few times after their incarceration, but there was no commitment.

I said the Apostle Paul maintained his Christian faith by picturing himself as a runner in a race. If they had ever seen a competitive race, the runner has one focus, the goal and the prize. He didn't stop to wave at Mom and Dad in the bleacher or pick some flowers along the pathway. The goal and prize meant everything. For Paul, his one and only focus was Heaven through his Lord Jesus Christ.

I told the men that I believe focus and commitment are the answer to maintaining a Christian faith like a runner in a race. I suggested to the prisoners that they actively join a Bible preaching church like the WELS, serve wherever and whenever possible. Yes even teach a class.

I suggested that young people may learn more from their struggles and experience than from an old preacher like me.

I know much more could have been said, but remember I only had about 20 minutes. I let the Holy Spirit

guide my mouth to speak the words which He knows will bear fruit.

How would you have handled the situation? What would you have said under the circumstances?

I'm still learning!

Chaplain Ken Lenz



"For Paul, his one and only focus was heaven through his Lord . . ."



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To Share God's Law And The Saving Gospel of Jesus Christ With People Who Are Institutionalized.

Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc.



Matt. 25:34

“...I was in prison and you came to visit me.”



Plan to Attend WLIM's Annual Meeting & Conference

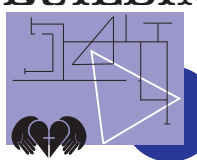
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BUILDING ON THE PAST... PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

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Attendees will have an opportunity to attend and participate in a number of stimulating sessions on a variety of ministry related topics during the day.

You'll enjoy the opportunity to spend a full day learning and sharing information about the mission opportunities to do

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