

WORD ALIVE!

52 SELECTED SERMONS BY DALE A. MEYER



*A Celebration of Worship and the Word
from over 40 Years of Ministry*

Contents

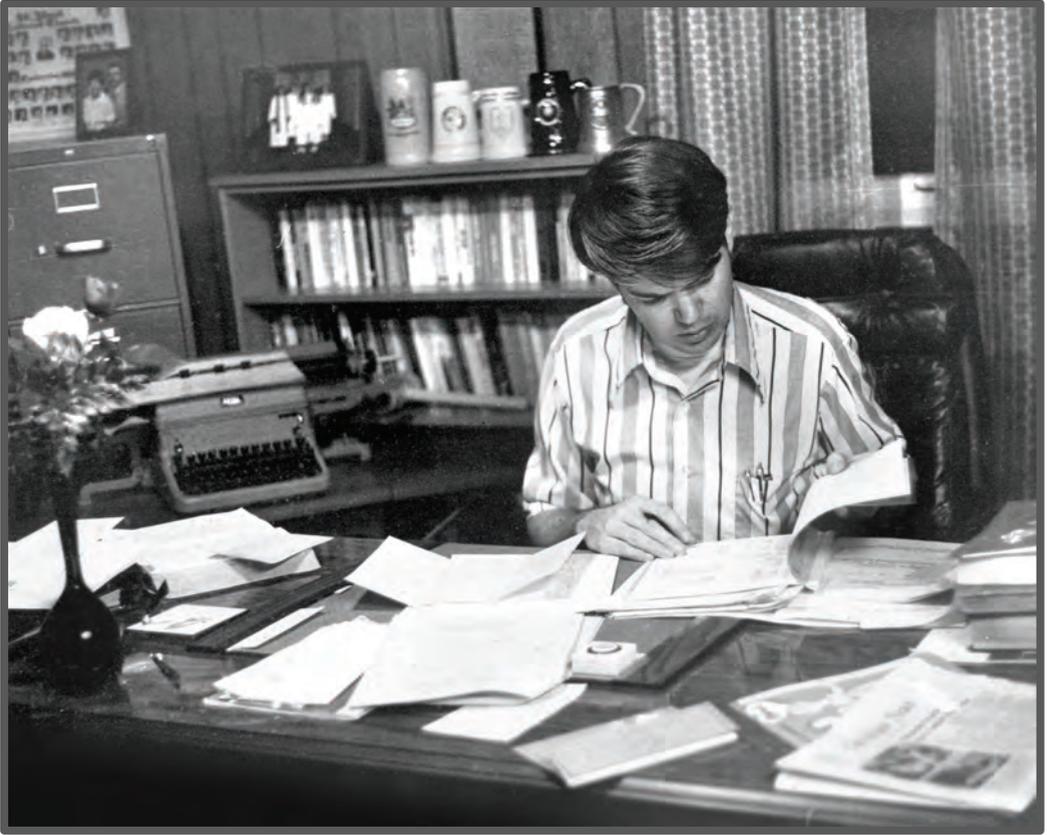
Acknowledgments	13
Foreword	17
Introduction	23
List of Images	29
Week 1 – Touching the Heart of Uncle Me <i>The Baptism of Our Lord</i>	33
Week 2 – My Best Two Paragraphs	45
Week 3 – Send up the Balloons! <i>National Lutheran Schools Week</i>	55
Week 4 – “In All Good Works Increasing”	67
Week 5 – The Flowers of Forgiveness <i>Valentine’s Day</i>	75
Week 6 – Baseball, Hot Dogs, Apple Pie, and Chevrolet <i>The Transfiguration of Our Lord</i>	83
Week 7 – Yearning for Home <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	95
Week 8 – Graced Toward Glory	103
Week 9 – The Lonely Battles of Jesus <i>Lent</i>	109

Week 10 – Time, My Temple	121
<i>Lent</i>	
Week 11 – The Triumph Song	131
<i>Palm Sunday</i>	
Week 12 – Your Identity: Forgiven by the Holy Cross	141
<i>Holy Week</i>	
Week 13 – Christ the Victor!	149
<i>Easter</i>	
Week 14 – Schedule Hope	157
<i>(Funeral Sermon)</i>	
Week 15 – Happy Coping	163
Week 16 – Who Is Your Hireling?	169
<i>Good Shepherd Sunday</i>	
Week 17 – When You Raise Your Heads from Prayer	177
Week 18 – A Pastor’s Prayer for His People	181
<i>Ascension</i>	
Week 19 – “Mom!”	189
<i>Mother’s Day</i>	
Week 20 – Word Alive! Connections and Conversations	197
<i>Pentecost</i>	
Week 21 – Your God, My God	205
<i>(Wedding Sermon)</i>	
Week 22 – You and the Centurion	211

Week 23 – The Angels Laugh; the Devils Weep	221
Week 24 – A Man and His Toys <i>Father's Day</i>	229
Week 25 – Let the Lambs Leap <i>Nativity of St. John the Baptist</i>	237
Week 26 – Cross and Country <i>Independence Day</i>	245
Week 27 – Kindling the Commitment	253
Week 28 – Nearer God's Heart	263
Week 29 – Jesus, Huh?	269
Week 30 – God's Mouth House <i>(Church Sanctuary Dedication Sermon)</i>	277
Week 31 – Come Ye Apart	283
Week 32 – The Gift of Anger	291
Week 33 – Don't Forget!	301
Week 34 – Do Not Grumble!	311
Week 35 – By Grace Alone, Grace in His Son <i>Seminary Academic Year Opening Service</i>	317
Week 36 – Touching People	325
Week 37 – Remember the Homeless <i>Mission Sunday</i>	333

Week 38 – The Glove Compartment God	339
Week 39 – Surely the Lord Is in This Place <i>(Pastor Installation Sermon)</i>	349
Week 40 – It Is Well with My Soul <i>LWML Sunday</i>	361
Week 41 – Jesus, Abide with Me! <i>(Congregational Anniversary Sermon)</i>	369
Week 42 – A Tattered Security Blanket	375
Week 43 – Freedom in Christ <i>Reformation</i>	383
Week 44 – Live with Forever in Mind	393
Week 45 – “God Setteth the Solitary in Families” <i>Thanksgiving</i>	401
Week 46 – Castles Crumble When Christ Is King <i>Christ the King Sunday</i>	407
Week 47 – The Darkness God Sends <i>Advent</i>	413
Week 48 – Stir up Thy Power, O Lord! <i>Advent</i>	421
Week 49 – “Not a Creature Was Stirring” <i>Advent</i>	429
Week 50 – The Common Things <i>Advent</i>	435

Week 51 – Company for Christmas	445
<i>Christmas</i>	
Week 52 – The Old Shall Be Merry	453
<i>New Year’s Eve</i>	
Dr. Dale A. Meyer Biographical Information	461
Dr. Meyer’s Recommended Reading List	463
Topical Index	469
Scripture Passage Index	479
Endnotes	511



List of Images

Photograph of Dr. Meyer, working at his desk in Venedy, Illinois	28
<i>The Lutheran Hour</i> transcript page for “Touching the Heart of Uncle Me” (1998)	43
Typed page of original sermon, “Baseball, Hot Dogs, Apple Pie & Chevrolet” (1978)	91
Scan of original bulletin (St. Salvator Lutheran Church, Venedy, Illinois, 1978)	92-93
<i>The Lutheran Hour</i> transcript page for “The Lonely Battles of Jesus” (1992)	119
Bulletin illustration of Saint Salvator Lutheran Church, Venedy, Illinois (1978)	187
Bulletin illustration of Saint Peter Lutheran Church, New Memphis, Illinois (1978)	219
Typed page of original sermon, “Let the Lambs Leap” (1984)	243
Dr. Meyer’s hand-drawn flower sermon diagram for “Don’t Forget!” (1970)	308
Scan of original bulletin (St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois, 1970)	309
Typed page of original sermon, “Installation Sermon” (1978)	359
Typed page of original sermon, “Freedom in Christ” (1976)	391
Handwritten page of original sermon, “Live with Forever in Mind” (2013)	399
Typed page of original sermon, “The Common Things” (1979)	443

Week 33 – Don't Forget!

*Delivered at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois
August 23, 1970*

Text – Luke 10:27

And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”



Prayer

Lord, help us to love You more and more with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. You haven't forgotten us but we often forget You as we go about our daily lives. Our forgetfulness shows when we don't love our neighbor according to Your commandments. Forgive us for Jesus' sake, and give us Your Holy Spirit so that we will remember You as we go about the tasks of this new week. Amen.



Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ!

Our sermon this morning is based upon both the Gospel and Epistle lessons which were read before. I call your attention especially to these words: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

One of the most common questions in our day-to-day living begins with, “Did you forget...?” Wives ask their husbands, “Did you forget to cash your check?” “Did you forget to make a doctor's appointment?” And parents ask their son or daughter, “Did you forget what time we told you to be in last night?” This morning in our sermon, we're going to ask whether God has forgotten you and me, His children, and then we will hear His answer. May the Holy Spirit be with

us in the coming minutes, that we may grow stronger in our faith and remember more and more to put our faith into practice during the week.

First, then: Has God forgotten you and me? In the hustle and bustle of modern life, it often seems just that way. We were created to live in the peaceful and green Garden of Eden, but today we live in the noise and smoke of concrete and steel cities. We were created to live at peace with all creatures, but today we can't even live at peace with ourselves. We were created above all to live as children of our heavenly Father, but today all too many people have forgotten the God who created them. It doesn't seem to make sense. The Church has always said that God is good, but look at all the troubles in the world today. Has God forgotten us?

Or perhaps we should ask: Have we forgotten God? The trouble with the world today might not be that God has forgotten us, but that you and I have forgotten God. Have you? Many times in our lives, we have made promises to remember God and His will for us. We've often thought, *Yes, I want to love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, and with all my mind. And I want to love my neighbor as myself.* But have we always remembered to do that? If you're like me, the answer is *no*. We forget God so many times every day. For example, do you remember yesterday when you swore? Yet God has told you, *don't forget*, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain" (Exodus 20:7). Or do you remember yesterday when you were idly gossiping about so-and-so behind her back? Yet God has told you, *don't forget*, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16). Or do you remember yesterday when an immoral thought crossed your mind? Yet God said, *don't forget*, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). We could go on and on and on. It comes down to this: You and I haven't loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind. And we haven't loved our neighbor as ourselves. Yes – all too often, we have forgotten God.

God's Law tells us that the trouble with the world today is with us, and not with God. God is still good, and He still offers His promises of life. But God's good promises of life are given in only one way – through our Savior from sin and death, Jesus Christ. This is the Good News for you and me and our troubled world. The answer to finding the fulfillment of God's promises is not by ending pollution, or stopping a war, or anything else we might come up with to solve.

The only answer for modern living is the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He came down to earth and lived the kind of life that you and I could never live. Where we break the commandments, our Lord has kept them all. Where we deserve to die the death of sinners, Christ died for our sins so we might live as God's forgiven people. Where we should fear the grave, Christ was raised by the Father to overcome the grave. No, God has not forgotten you and me. The proof is present for all to see – the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

God hasn't forgotten, and you and I know this by faith. We hear again and again the words of God's promise of forgiveness in Jesus Christ as they are preached and taught – and we believe. By faith we remember that God never forgets His people. No longer do we think quite so highly of ourselves, but by faith we believe the Good News that Jesus Christ lived and died for us. We need to guard and strengthen that faith. That's why we come to church each week – to strengthen our faith in our Savior. That's why we read, or should read, the Scriptures every day – to strengthen our faith in our Savior. That's why we pray, or should pray, every day – to strengthen our faith in our Savior. For the promises of God are given to those who have faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, we have said so far that God has not forgotten you and me, but has sent His Son to die for us, and by faith we remember this Good News. But what does this mean for us when we have to face a rough world every day of the week? It means: *Don't forget God this week!* Put your Sunday morning faith into practice Monday through Saturday. Our Savior tells us just how to do that: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Don't forget your God. He suffered and died for you. Let your love for Him guide you in all you do this week, whether it be working, playing, or praying. And don't forget your neighbor. When he needs help, lend a hand. If you can cheer her up, do so. If you can share his sadness, do that. If you can tell her about your faith, do that. And who is your neighbor? Her, and him, and her, and me, and people who aren't Lutheran, and people who aren't even Christian, white people, black people, and yellow people. Our Lord tells us that everyone is our neighbor.

People often tell each other not to forget this or that. This morning, the Holy Spirit is telling you and me, *don't forget to* "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,

and your neighbor as yourself.” Don’t forget – because your Savior Jesus Christ didn’t forget you, but loved you enough to suffer and die for your sins.

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.



For Further Reflection

“You shall have no other gods.” (First Commandment)

- Put yourself in the story – Genesis 17:1; Exodus 32; Isaiah 42:8; Proverbs 8:13; Matthew 4:10; Luke 16:19-31
- What God does for us – Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:13-17; Hebrews 9:14; 2 Corinthians 13:14
- Therefore, “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.”¹ – Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Proverbs 3:5; Psalm 139:23-24; Psalm 73:25-26.

*Lord, Thee I love with all my heart;
I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart,
With tender mercy cheer me.
Earth has no pleasure I would share.
Yea, heaven itself were void and bare
If Thou, Lord, wert not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break,
My trust in Thee can nothing shake.
Thou art the portion I have sought;
Thy precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,
Forsake me not! I trust Thy Word.²*



Retrospective

Ordinarily, a seminarian preaches in churches only after having completed the first course in homiletics, a fancy word for preaching taken from the Greek word for conversation (Luke 24:14). I had that first course during the 1969-1970 academic year, and preached this sermon the following summer, just before beginning my second year at the Seminary. I'll never forget how scared I was when I first began preaching, but I got into it. I thank the pastors who gave me opportunities to substitute for them. This was one of those preaching opportunities to help me get my "pulpit legs." What students learn in preaching classes needs to be practiced, or their newfound skills and learning will slip away. So thanks to every pastor who welcomes our seminarians into his pulpit!

About to read this sermon almost 50 years later, I was anxious. What will I find? Relieved to find the doctrine correct, I also noticed several "tricks of the trade" – the preaching techniques that I learned as a young student, and still use and teach to seminarians. One example: There are many parallelisms and antitheses in this sermon. That simply means you say something positive with several similarly constructed sentences, though using slightly different wording (parallelism). Similarly, if you're saying something negative to highlight the positive, you make that contrast with several sentences, again with slightly different wording (antitheses). This device of oral style has several benefits. It makes the task of memorizing easier for the preacher because in delivery you know you're about to say the same thing in several ways, rather than several different thoughts. Most importantly, it makes it easier for the hearer to get the point. Just because I've said something once, doesn't mean you've heard it. If I say it several times in different ways, you will hear the basic point. I don't expect the people to work through the sermon with me. They pay the pastor to do the work! Our job is to be as persuasive as possible, so the Holy Spirit can plant and nurture faith in their hearts. "Tricks of the

trade,” used in service of the text and pastoral care of souls, can give the Spirit more room to work on hearers’ hearts.

These days, students sometimes ask if I’m nervous when I’m about to preach – nervous because it’s the Word of God. No, I say, that fear of God should be dealt with in my studies and devotion. I usually enter the pulpit eager to preach. My anxiety is that I’ve studied, outlined, written, and memorized well, and that I’ll execute to the best of my ability so the Spirit can work conviction. Martin Luther said that you should never pray the Lord’s Prayer when you leave the pulpit because you shouldn’t pray “forgive us our trespasses” after preaching God’s Word.³ Entering and leaving the pulpit, the focus is on the audience, that they will “fear, love, and trust in God above all things.”¹

How interesting, this flower outline! (See next page.) A homiletics (preaching) professor, Andrew Weyermann, taught it to us and I still teach it to students. In school, we're taught outlining that starts at the top of the page, Roman numeral I, then II, and so on. That's fine for something to be read, but for people who are not reading but listening, and listening at the mercy of the speaker, it's important to keep bringing the hearers back to the central thought of the sermon. The flower outline does that. Each petal should relate in an obvious way to the center, the central thought. Furthermore, if one "petal" does not relate directly to the central thought, you don't need it. Take it out. These days, almost 50 years later, I usually don't draw out a flower outline for my sermons, but I'm disciplined to make sure each paragraph relates directly to the central thought. That's one of the benefits of aging in preaching or any craft; you instinctively and more efficiently do things that in earlier years took more time and work. The moral for young preachers: Do the details you've learned in seminary until they become your own instincts.

The church bulletin (p. 309) brings back memories. Rev. Weber, the pastor of St. Peter's, wouldn't have known me from the man in the moon, but he was a friend of my 3rd- and 4th-grade teacher, Mr. Clifford Braun. Hence the invitation to preach. I'm glad to know that St. Peter's is still serving its South Chicago neighborhood. Take a look at the youth car wash. \$1.25 per car, but if you had whitewalls, 25 cents more! By the way, that car wash was August 29th, Diane's birthday. We would meet two years later, and the rest of the story is history!

“FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE...”

Hebrews 4:12

From the pulpits of small country churches, large urban congregations, and the seminary chapel — and across the airwaves as Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour* — Dr. Dale A. Meyer has been bringing God's Word to the people for over 40 years. These 52 inspirational sermons, spanning decades of Dr. Meyer's ministry, will encourage, comfort, and challenge you through God's living and active Word!

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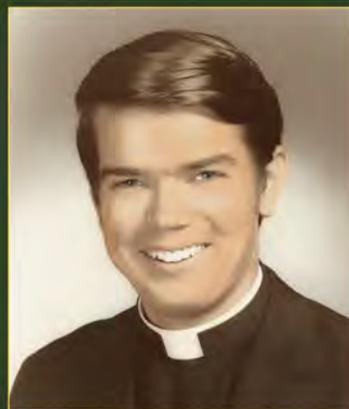
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- Rev. Craig Reiter, Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Ste. Genevieve, MO; 2017 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis



Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer currently serves as President of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO. He was the Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour* radio program from 1989 to 2001. Dr. Meyer continues to be a beloved and well-known preacher and conference speaker. He and his wife, Diane, have two grown daughters and five grandchildren.



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