

Make Church a Part of Your Life

WEEKLY SERMONETTE



“Can God Forgive Him?”

By Pastor Rick Rostek, Immanuel Lutheran Church

The bombs exploded and soon our nation, even the world, was riveted on the terrible events at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Many people are angry at what has happened. Not surprising. Four people are dead and almost 200 were injured, some in life-changing ways. Anger often accompanies grief. In the case of the Boston bombings, we want justice to be carried out.

By most accounts, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and his now-dead older brother Tamerlan were caught up in a radical form of Islam bent on inflicting harm on the United States and our way of life. Dzhokhar is currently in a hospital recovering from injuries he suffered in various shootouts, and awaits his fate from the judicial system. But what of when he meets his Maker one day. Is it possible he could find welcome and forgiveness?

Saul was a zealously religious man in the 1st Century. He particularly persecuted Christians. The Roman government gave Saul permission to round up Christians and put them in jail. So intent

was Saul that he even entered people's homes and dragged poor Christians off to prison (Acts 8:2). If that wasn't bad enough, Saul also approved of the execution of Stephen after Stephen had chastised Jewish leaders for rejecting Jesus, the Son of God.

Was Saul beyond salvation, even after these treacherous acts toward Christians? No. In fact, Jesus selected Saul to be His instrument of taking the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. Saul (also known as Paul), became one of the great evangelists, bringing salvation in Jesus to many places

in the Roman Empire. Saul understood the depth of God's mercy, that while he was yet sinful, Christ died for him as well as all people (Romans 5:8).

Does that mean God can forgive Dzhokhar Tsarnaev? Absolutely! The blood of Christ covers his sin. Will Dzhokhar come to believe this and receive forgiveness? Only God knows. Does it offend some to think that God could forgive Dzhokhar for what he has allegedly done? No doubt. But Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). By faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus we have this promise: if we confess our sins, God will forgive (1 John 1:8-9).

The blood of Christ covers your sin, too. No matter what you've done, you can find a Father's welcome by faith in Jesus Christ. Yes, we may suffer the consequences of our sin in this lifetime, as Dzhokhar will if found guilty. But faith in Jesus assures us that we are safe for eternity. Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life!

Calm Before the Storm

Why don't we search for the flashlight while it's calm? Instead, we often wait until the storm is raging and the electricity has gone out only to find ourselves rummaging around in the dark. Where's the light when we need it? It's not much help having a light you can't find in a power outage. It's better to be prepared. It's the same in life. We can be prepared for the storms if we look to our Lord. "You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light." (Psalm 18:28) Worship at His house this week and store up the light of God's love in your life.



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Weekly Scripture Reading

2 Peter 2:1-22	2 Peter 3:1-18	Romans 8:1-17	Romans 8:18-39	Romans 12:1-21	Romans 13:1-14	Romans 14:1-23
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Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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Sudoku Solution #2887-M

9	7	6	8	1	2	5	3	4
4	2	3	5	9	6	7	1	8
1	8	5	4	3	7	9	2	6
2	9	8	6	4	1	3	5	7
6	1	7	3	2	5	4	8	9
3	5	4	7	8	9	2	6	1
7	3	1	9	5	8	6	4	2
8	4	9	2	6	3	1	7	5
5	6	2	1	7	4	8	9	3

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H	A	H	A		A	R	I		A	S	K	E	D						
O	V	A	L		L	A	S	E		S	T	A	R	R					
B	I	L	L		B	I	N	G		C	H	E	R	R	Y				
O	D	O	R		I	S	T	O		R	O	S	S						
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D	I	N	G		D	O	N	G		S	C	H	O	O	L				
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S	L	I	D	E				N	E	A			S	T	O	W			

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