



***Faith, hope, and love abide, but the greatest of these is love.  
I Corinthians 13:13 (RSV)***

Last month you may recall that I wrote about a song that I remembered, learned, knew, sang as a kid that was titled, “Fervent In Spirit, Serving the Lord”. There are probably not very many persons who would remember that. It was a new hymn at the time written by Paul Kretzmann in 1923 about seven years before the first and only hymnal of which I know it was used in 1930. A person almost can’t find the hymnal any more. The last verse goes,

*Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord: Not for world’s gain of the hope of reward,  
Only to minister, humble and meek, Only in all things His glory to seek,  
Living to labor that others may live, Ready to love and to serve and to give. (ALH #224)*

In lots of ways what and the way that we sing has changed in the last 80 years. For example, I would be sure that we have and sing a lot more “international” music today that comes from the Church in Africa, Japan, the Islands of the Southern Pacific, etc. Today we would be more likely to be singing songs like, “Listen, God Is Calling” from the Tanzanian Lutheran Church and , “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” from the black Christian community (we did sing “Were You There When the Crucified My Lord” and “There Is A Balm in Gilead” and some of the other spirituals) than “Fervent in Spirit” which we don’t sing at all any more and haven’t for years.

I mentioned in the sermon last Sunday that we could probably add a song like “Would Jesus Wear a Rolex On His Television Show” to the collection in our Songs of Praise book and sing it some more but no-one has taken up the cause at this point.

Some of the songs would have to be re-interpreted like, “Love, or Something Like It’s Got a Hold on Me.”

We have been told that the Reformation did that...

Be that as it may, some of you may also recall it. Don’t ask me why that song from long ago came to my mind in the early morning hours. Also don’t ask me why it was left out of subsequent hymnals the church produced and why it didn’t survive the cuts to be reproduced in newer editions of the Lutheran hymnals. A person might think that might have happened.

Maybe it was because the song is too intense. This is not a “sloppy” Christian faith that is pictured here. This is a song that is (to use a popular poker term today) “all in”. Maybe that “all in” doesn’t fly in this age of laid back millennial. Or maybe as the coaches say even after a win, “We’ve got lot’s of things to clean up....”

Sloppy only works in athletics if your opponent isn’t very strong. Then you can make some mistakes in the game and still get off the field with a win. But make no mistake, what opposes the Christian faith is not (as Hayden used to say) “The Little Sisters of the Poor.” He used to talk about games that were “real slobber knockers”. The other day the football coach at Iowa State talked about the loss to Oklahoma last Saturday and said that while many things had gone well, what had resulting in the loss was what he referred to as “the little things” What Christians face can easily overwhelm us if we get sloppy, are not focused and giving our best effort.....”fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

Give that matter some thought. Ask yourself if you are putting together a real and fervent focus on the Lord’s service.....

God bless us all,        Pastor T.