

Sermon: October 25, 2009
“**Either you get it ... or you don’t**”

Can’t believe it ... I’m quoting the Bible again ... this time, it’s the first lesson:
“*The day is surely coming ... says the Lord. I will make a NEW COVENANT with my people ...*”

This one won’t be written on tablets ...

It won’t be negotiated in board rooms or hammered out in closed session ...

This covenant is not Republican or Democrat ... it’s not about who is right and who is wrong ...

No one can take credit for this ... this covenant is not Jewish or Christian or Islam, nor is it known
by any other name ...

It’s not slave or free ... male or female ... gay or straight ... conservative or liberal ...

When you buy into this covenant ... you won’t have to teach people to know the Lord or try to convince
them to believe WHY???? ----- because this covenant is written inside your heart ... it’s inside
your soul ... it’s in the very guts of who you are.

With this covenant ----- *you either know the Lord or you don’t ... you either GET IT or YOU DON’T ...
because this covenant is an inside job.*

I’ve been doing a lot of thinking, reflecting, and praying lately.

In life ... it’s really true: YOU EITHER GET IT ... OR YOU DON’T.

When it comes to being a parent ... you either get it, or you don’t.

When it comes to working in an office, working for a company ... when it comes to your church ... being a
coach ... when it comes to teaching & caring & reaching out to others ...

when it comes to being the governor of Illinois ... or a senator ... or a church deacon and school board
member ... when it comes to being a friend or neighbor, a musician, or entertainer ...

when it comes to being an athlete, singing in the choir, being a soldier who fights for his country,
serving in the Peace Corp ... yes, WHEN IT COMES TO LIFE -----

you either get it or you don’t!!

Going to work everyday ... filling out your time sheet honestly ... running cross – country
or playing in the band ...

whether you live in Roseland, Beverly Hills ... a trailer park, Tinley Park, or Forest Park ...

In life ----- there are no seminars on decency.

There are no classes on love-buckets.

There are no seminars on listening to others and putting your neighbor first.

Yes ... in life ---- ***we either get it or we don’t.***

Time and time again ... people are coming up to Jesus and asking: “what do I have to do to inherit eternal
life ... or to be one of your disciples????” What are the rules? ... the guidelines?

Jesus’ answer is always basic and to the point:

*All you have to do is continue in my word. For my followers, for my disciples -----
the truth will always set you free!!*

This is Reformation Sunday ... the so-called “birthday” of the Lutheran Church. Reformation Sunday isn’t
what it used to be. For life-long-die-in-wool Lutherans ... this was the day when Lutherans and Catholics
plain-and-simple didn’t like each other. Your youth-groups played the annual “Reformation” basketball game,
trying to beat the “snot” out of each other. Yes ---- those were the “good ol’ days”!!

Honestly ... Martin Luther didn’t want to start a new church. He simply wanted to breathe new life into the
church he already loved.

And Jesus? ----- he wasn’t trying to start a church named after him. He loved his Jewish faith ... he just
wanted it to be more true to its roots and foundation.

I don't know what the "key to life" is. None of us knows the secret to goodness and peace in the world. Maybe this is why we are here on Sunday ----- trying to "un-lock" the key ... trying to find a bit of goodness we can hang-onto during the week.

Someone asked me the other day: "Don, have you ever had an *out-of-body* experience???" Well --- not me. I guess some people can "step-outside" their own skin ... and look at their world from afar. This is way too spiritual for me. Of course, at my age ----- there are times when I'd like to get "out of my body."
But I have had those experiences ... when *I'd like to get my body out of here!!*

Has it happened to you??? You are somewhere ... maybe a meeting, a church service, a family function, an event ... and you wish you could JUST DISAPPEAR. You just want to get OUTTA HERE!!

I'm at a meeting the other day. Clergy, counselors, teachers ... all kinds of us "do-gooders" ...
Supposedly we are to share ideas about how better to serve *the youth of our community*.
To me ... it's pretty simple. Give kids toys every Sunday at church ... have some retired guy cook them breakfast between services ... ***and they will come!!***

Anyway ... we are talking ... and it's like ----- EACH PERSON IS TRYING TO OUT-DO AND OUT-SHINE THE OTHER!!

"This is what I do."

"This is what my church does."

"This works for me."

(If I hear "it works for me" one more time!@!>>>>>>>>)

I just wanted to disappear ... leave ... re-locate.

I got kind-of sad ... why do we have to try to impress each other ... can't we just listen?
So, I look at my watch ... I tell the person next to me ---- "I'm sorry I have to leave ... but I have to be at a funeral at 11:00." Quietly ... I slink out the door.
(Then I start to worry ---- will I go to hell for lying???)

I come back to church ... sit in the sanctuary for a while ...
I think about the "covenant" ... written inside our hearts. I think of those words: "in life ... we either get it or we don't" ...
Yes ... when it comes to being Lutheran ... or Christian ... or just being human ... hey, when it comes to being a follower of Jesus ----- **we either get it or we don't ...**
I realize more and more ----- we don't listen to each other. We say the word "I" way too much.
Our neighbor's heart-song unfortunately takes a back-seat to our own.

Maybe someday we'll learn.
Life is about the covenant ... down-deep-inside each one of us.
We either "get it" or we don't.
I want to "get it" ... I know you do, too ...

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