

**5/3/18**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

To live in certain parts of Siberia means to live in some extreme conditions. Over the years, observers of people who live in those extreme conditions of Siberia have described an unsettling phenomenon. The phenomenon has come to be known as “Siberian Hysteria.”

A Japanese author has described Siberian Hysteria in this way. He says, “Try to imagine this: You’re a farmer, living all alone on the Siberian tundra. Day after day you plow your fields. As far as the eye can see, nothing. To the north, the horizon, to the east, the horizon, to the south, to the west, more of the same. Every morning, when the sun rises in the east, you go out to work in your fields. When it’s directly overhead, you take a break for lunch. When it sinks in the west, you go home to sleep. And then one day, something inside you dies. Day after day you watch the sun rise in the east, pass across the sky, then sink in the west, and something breaks inside you and dies. You toss your plow aside and, your head completely empty of thought, begin walking toward the west. Heading toward a land that lies west of the sun. Like someone, possessed, you walk on, day after day, not eating or drinking, until you collapse on the ground and die.” This is a description of Siberian Hysteria.

It is also a description of your life and mine without Jesus.

Think about that for a moment. Isn’t it true that the worst part of living as a lost soul in a broken world is just the sheer emptiness of it all? I can do things to occupy my time. I can find enough to eat. I can find a place to sleep. But if I am doing all this in a vacuum,

if I am doing all this surrounded by emptiness—emptiness of meaning, emptiness of hope, emptiness of anything that matters—isn't it true that I am just a case of Siberian Hysteria waiting to happen?

That's why God chose to invade my emptiness. ...*you were redeemed from the empty way of life...* 1 Peter 1:18 He invaded my emptiness in the Person of Jesus. Where once was the awful nothingness created by my own sin, there now is my Savior. His perfect life and death on my behalf destroyed the chasm that had surrounded me, isolated me, made me so alone.

Then he rose from death to assure me that my days of emptiness were over; to assure me that I would never be alone again. Ever.

And he has done the same for you.

***Prayer:*** Lord Jesus, apart from you, my life is empty. But now you are here. My sins are forgiven. Heaven is mine. The emptiness is gone. Thank you. Amen.

*(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)*

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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