

**10/1/18**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

He was almost forced off the road and muttered, “How could anyone drive so recklessly?” She read about the senseless murder and muttered, “How could anyone be so brutal?” After seeing another politician or athlete confess a sin, we mutter, “How could they lie, take performance enhancing drugs, text such lewd photos?”

*Now the tax collectors and ‘sinners’ were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” Then Jesus told them . . . “there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” Luke 15:1-3,7*

Luke 15 is the great chapter about the lost—the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. It begins with some muttering. Awful sinners had gathered around Jesus to hear his message. But some of the religious elite muttered. They wondered how Jesus could welcome “sinners” into his presence and even sit down for a meal with them. If Jesus were truly God, he would know who they were. He’d know better than to associate with them.

But those “sinners” were people who recognized their sin. Those “sinners” understood how awful they had been, how they had hurt people, how they had said shameful words. They knew they were sinners who needed the forgiving love of Jesus.

How different those sinners were from the religious elite who thought they were so good that they didn’t need the forgiving love of the Savior Jesus who was right there in their presence.

Next time you mutter, remember the religious elite who thought they were so much better, who believed they were so much more righteous than the sinners around them. When you mutter about a lousy driver, remember those times when you drove recklessly and

endangered the lives of those in your car or others outside of it. Next time you mutter about someone's brutality, remember the times when you said shameful words or thought brutal thoughts, all of which your Lord heard. Next time you wonder, "How could someone . . . ?" remember what you have done, how you have been that someone who lied, who took something you shouldn't have, who texted words that you shouldn't have, etc.

When you're tempted to mutter, don't be judgmental about the sins of others. Repent of your sin. Rejoice in that Savior who came to forgive the sins of "sinners" no matter who they are, even sinners like you and me. Give the angels a reason to rejoice in your repentance, rather than shake their heads in dismay over your judgmental self-righteousness.

***Prayer:*** *Dear Lord, keep me from being judgmental. Help me to humbly and daily repent of my sin. Help me to rejoice in your forgiving love for lost sinners, even sinners like me. Amen.*

*(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)*

...See you in worship.

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

Pastor Alan W. Gumm