

we might be forgiven and restored in our relationship with God. Thank you that we now can live with God as our loving heavenly Father. Thank you that we don't simply face life doing the best we can, but that we now face life knowing you're with us and we can begin living the best you can. Thank you for adopting us as your children and for giving us the confidence to live knowing we are the

children you love and are proud of. Thank you for not excluding us but for opening your heart through Jesus, and coming to us through the Holy Spirit. Grow us to greater maturity that our lives reflect Jesus character and nature. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
 Pastor: Tim 0427326553
 Edmund 0429041957



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

29 April 2009

HEAVEN'S 'WHOEVER' POLICY.

John 3:16



“For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son that WHOEVER believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
 John 3:16

What an amazingly welcoming person God is: 'WHOEVER' flings wide the door to God's heart. 'WHOEVER' believes in Jesus is welcome to share living life with God, enjoying his friendship. There is a wonderful certainty in this 'WHOEVER' policy. I don't have to spend my life wondering if I'm good enough, but now my focus is on living God's life together with him.

God certainly doesn't want people trapped, living to hopefully, one day, gain another's acceptance. I've found living to be accepted is a stifling way to exist.

Living to gain a parent's approval. Playing up to get mates recognition. Working hard to be acknowledged as worthwhile. I've found in life most of the time there isn't a 'WHOEVER' policy, but a standard you've got to meet to be accepted.

Growing up the standard was long hair and rock-n-roll music. Nobody listened to the classics, only the squares. There was the in-crowd and the others that nobody wanted to be like. Life in many ways was a struggle to be accepted, to feel wanted and part of the group. Which meant insecurity ruled.

Today we are reminded that God isn't into having insecurity rule your life. 'WHOEVER'

rules out insecurity and ushers in certainty. Thank God for that!

Thank God he doesn't impose on us some level of perfection we have to reach to be accepted, but Jesus through his sacrificial death on the cross has opened the way into sharing God's life right now and into the future, with absolute certainty.

What's your reaction to people who ridicule you, who want to crucify you? You might be surprised that my initial reaction isn't to put them on my Christmas card list! My initial reaction is to foreclose on my 'WHOEVER' policy and expect them to change before they get a favourable response from me.

In our reading from Acts today Peter was speaking to some of the people who had cried out for Jesus death and had stood their condemning him. If anyone was going to be left out you'd think it would be these people. If someone killed me out of hate, envy, jealousy, they'd definitely be off my Christmas card list.

But what is being offered to these people? If you work really hard and are really sorry then just maybe, just maybe God won't roast you for murdering his one and only Son. Is intimidation, standover tactics used? No.

Peter offers Jesus' 'WHOEVER' policy: "Repent, then, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

The very people you think would deserve to

cop it sweet are being offered hope. They are being lifted out of their guilt and offered life in God's love, through Jesus. They are offered times of refreshing, not the oppressive, life sapping demands of a vengeful God. You hurt me, now just see what I can do to you if you don't grovel, you scum

WHOEVER believe in Jesus will be saved

of the earth.

No, Peter offers Jesus' 'WHOEVER' policy. 'WHOEVER' places their life in Jesus' hands, accepting his sacrifice for their sins is invited to share life with him, with his Father, with God.

And on the day of Pentecost 3,000 people took up the offer, and are now enjoying being the Father's loved children.

The certainty of heaven's 'WHOEVER' policy was expressed beautifully in the reading from first John; "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1) 'WHOEVER' believes in Jesus is now a child of the Father. God is no longer some great unknown, but our loving Father. In Jesus, that is what we are, the Father's children.

Notice God doesn't say; 'that is what you'll become', conditional, but that is what you are. When we come to God in Jesus, we come as his children. The children he loves as much as he loves Jesus, which is more than his own life. Jesus' death shows the extent of God's love; he pays the ultimate sacrifice that we might live. That we might live at peace with God as his loved,

precious children who he is proud of.

Does that mean we can now do whatever we want? Of course not. No loving parent lets their children do whatever they want, but out of love they seek to protect them from harm, their goal is to grow their children to maturity, to be people of character, people who know they are loved and precious so that they are empowered to treat other people with respect, loving them as they are loved.

That is why Jesus is able to call us to love our enemies, because we are already loved by the Father. We are already the Father's loved, precious children who he is proud of. So we live from the freedom of our Father's love and not from the hurts of our enemies, and their insecurities.

I certainly would rather have my life shaped by

the certainty of God's love for me in Jesus, than from another person's hurtful words and actions.

And now Jesus calls his brothers and sisters to invite others to share in the Father's 'WHOEVER' policy. "Then Jesus opened their minds so they

Jesus doesn't want anyone left out

could understand the Scriptures. He told them, 'This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to ALL nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witness of these things.'" (Luke 24:45-48)

God doesn't want anyone left under the oppressive regime of

conditional existence. In Jesus God's goal is that everyone hears about heaven's 'WHOEVER' policy, and lives life with God as their heavenly Father, who loves them, and hold them as precious and is proud to be their Father. God wants us living from the security he offers us in Jesus and not being slaves to our insecurities, always trying to prove we're worthwhile.

Jesus sends out his brothers and sisters as witnesses of the Father's love, living life with him now, living in his loving presence, knowing his forgiving grace, sharing God's life in his power and authority.

What a great offer Jesus sends us out to offer; 'WHOEVER' believes in Jesus shall not perish but have eternal life.

Let us pray. Jesus thank you for offering yourself that