

Pastor Brian's  
Mid Week Message  
May 8, 2019

**WHY ARE WE HERE?**

*"Ask not what your country can do for you-ask what you can do for your country."* Those were the words of President John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1961...almost 60 years ago. What a wonderful idea, if only people would actually put those words into action. If you substitute the word church for country you would come up with an almost identical sentiment; and one that is consistent with the teaching of Jesus. "Ask NOT what your church can do for you-ask what YOU CAN DO for your church." The earthly life of Jesus was one of complete sacrifice and service. He continually gave of himself for the sake of others, not expecting anything in the way of earthly return. He gave His life for all of us...and for all the world. As He has ascended back to His heavenly home and throne, He sent the Holy Spirit to establish the Church, His ongoing and continuous presence in the world. That's what we are, the Church; the Body of Christ. We are His physical eyes and ears, His heart and mind, His hands and feet, His tongue that speaks into darkness and brings about light empowered and emboldened by the Spirit. Christ established His Church, not to be a club for the collective benefit of its members, but for the benefit of those who are still lost in darkness. God has established the Church of Jesus Christ, that's us and all the believers worldwide, and given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). That ministry is declaring that we are reconciled to God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those are our marching orders. That's our job, and it is the job of every one of us; collectively as congregations and as individuals as we tell our family, friends and neighbors about what Jesus has done for us and what He has also done for them. That's why were here! That's why God has established Trinity Lutheran Church of Southwest Florida and planted us in this location. He didn't do it for us to exist for ourselves and our own comfort. He did it so that we would carry out His Gospel mission in this area; in and around Gulf Cove, into Port Charlotte, Englewood and North Port. He did it so we would focus our hearts and minds outward toward others, rather than inward at what we might want. As we come together in worship Christ is present with us and working in Word and Sacrament to make disciples of us and transform us from worldly ideas and desires to those that align with Jesus; His thoughts, His words and His actions. When we are tired and hurting, discouraged or sick, the Church is here to recharge, restore, re-energize and re-equip us to get back out there into the world of ministry and continue the work our Lord has given us. We may or may not see rewards while we're in the world, but we can be certain of the eternal reward that God has for us in His heaven that is freely given us by our Lord Jesus. That's what the Church has done for us; given us the gift of eternal life in Christ. There is nothing in this world that can come near to the value of that!