

CONVENTION OPENING DEVOTION

“We walk by faith, not by sight.” 2 Corinthians 5:7 It’s a joy to be with you at this convention, celebrating the walk of faith. And for a few minutes let’s consider *the walk* .

I live in a small community that has a lot of walkers—and from my living room window, where I have morning devotions, I see walkers—mostly women—who are out for morning exercise. You’ve seen them in your neighborhood.

Picture this gal:

She walks with back bent and eyes down, cautious, intent on watching her steps, careful to avoid stumbling, almost plodding their way, appearing burdened by worries and fears.

Now, see another walker:

This one walks with intention, chin up and eyes focused on a further object, arms pumping, movements swift and purposeful.

One kind of walker is near-sighted, self-focused, even self-preserving, and yet burdened.

The other is big-picture oriented, embracing the air--the discipline--the challenges, focused on the goal, trusting the benefits and positively enjoying the walk.

We could say that one walks by sight; one walks by faith.

Which of these is you?

If we are honest, we’ll admit that we have moments—of both.

In his article in the first issue of this calendar year’s **Voice**, LCMS Missouri District President Lee Hagan also considered 2020 Vision. He reminded us that our vision problems are the result of sin.

“Our vision is marred by the devastating effects of looking inward,” he said. “We have become incredibly nearsighted.”

And when we are guided by our own vision, we will always be “looking through a dark mirror,” being spiritually blind.

But walking by faith, on the other hand, is being led by the ear. It is accepting the words and promises of Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit, walking forward in confidence, chin up, shoulders back. It is fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the one who has gone before us and guides us on our way. It is believing that what He says is true and trusting that His Word will do what it says. In this world we will still have trouble, but with His Word in our ears, we can walk with a certainty of sins forgiven and the assurance of life eternal.

The benefits given are great—forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the devil, eternal salvation to all who believe and are baptized, as the words and promises of Christ declare in Mark 16:16. Not only were these blessings given at our Baptism, but they continue to be given every time we hear His Word of promise and forgiveness—in personal devotions, in group Bible studies, in divine services. What an awesome gift!! Faith trusts and lives in the power of God’s Word! Having faith is seeing IN the dark and grasping the unseen hand of God. Together we walk to eternity where we will truly see.

Oh, God, grant that we continue to walk in the power of your Word until we see You face to face.
Amen.

In His service and joy,

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