



A note from LCMS Missionaries, James & Christel Neuendorf

This month for our newsletter article, we wanted to share a translation of the funeral sermon of the first member of our church-plant to fall asleep in the Lord. The text for the meditation is Mark 10:13-16.

13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." 16 And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

In the name of Jesus,
Amen.

I have had the privilege of being Luis Enrique's pastor for the last 3 years, of getting to know him, walk through struggles, doubts, and fears with him, and ultimately of preparing him for today. I have sat with him at his bedside in the hospital, in the home in which he at last went to be with the Lord and spoken with him of this day for some time.

He is the one who chose our readings for today, and he is the one who, in a manner of speaking, wrote this sermon. I asked him what he wanted me to preach to you on this day about the hope that he held in Christ.

Those of you who know Luis Enrique well, know that he was a simple and kind man, with a childlike heart and faith. For Kike, as his friends called him, he liked to keep things simple.

Our Lord taught us that a child-like faith is the only kind of faith that counts. It is not complicated; it is the faith that recognizes that because of our sin we are in deep trouble. It is a faith that realizes that the demands of the law are too much for a sinner to keep, and that only faith in Christ who gives us his own righteousness will do. Kique trusted firmly in that righteousness of Christ. He believed completely that he could not save himself by his own good works, but only through the saving work of Christ. What he loved about being a part of the Lutheran church was this simplicity in the message of the Gospel based on God's trustworthy Word. When I asked him what he would like me to say to you when this day came, his words were as simple as his faith:

Prayers:

- Thanksgiving for the resources from the LCMS Disaster Relief Grant for our church facilities.
- The family of Luis Enrique
- Catechism Classes

"Tell them that I am saved because of faith in Jesus, and they can be saved in Jesus too."

Is it really as simple as that? Jesus promises that death is defeated through His cross, and that through faith in Him, and by our baptism into His death, we will rise again? Kique believed it.

Is it really that simple? Sins are forgiven not because we have earned it, but because Jesus has had mercy on us and forgiven us for all our sins? Kique believed that.

He believed those things because His Lord Jesus said them. He believed this because he knew that there was nothing for him to do except allow Jesus to lift him into his arms, and bless him, because there is no better place, no safer place, than in those arms. Like a little child, he took Jesus at His word, as Jesus lifted him into glory.

It is therefore my privilege to confidently announce to you that Luis Enrique is saved because of his faith in Jesus, He is with the Lord who keeps all His promises, and He will rise again to eternal life. There is nothing left to pay, there is no more to do, Jesus has done it all.

And Luis Enrique wants you to know that Jesus has done all of this for you too.

It is that simple.

We do not grieve like those who have no hope, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. Amen.



A few weeks ago, as a congregation, we painted and made a banner of Matthew 28:20 "I am with you always." Many of the members were good friends with Luis Enrique but due to COVID and other challenges they were not able to visit him. This gave us all an opportunity to remind him of the love and fellowship he had and now has in Christ, his Savior!



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