***The Mission Central Meyer Minute***

“Who did Jesus die for?” I’ve heard Missionary Gary ask that question, and if the answer is “He died for all people,” Gary pushes back. We must take Lent personally, “Jesus died for me.” I remember one of my old Seminary professors, Dr. Robert Preus, sharing what a woman said to him, “It was nice that Jesus died, but he didn’t have to do that for me.” No, ma’am. He died for me; He died for all.

You’ve seen how America has changed in the last decades. One change is a decline in going to church. In 1993, 68 percent of Americans said they had attended church in the last week. By 2019 that weekly number declined to 40 percent (Lutheran Hour Ministries, *The Reluctant Witness,* 25). Lifeway Research put this statement before participants in a recent study: “Worshiping alone or with one’s family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church.” 66 percent of respondents agreed. Only 10 percent of respondents strongly disagreed. What does this mean? More and more of us think that faith is something personal, I can be spiritual on my own, it’s only me and Jesus, or even worse, me and whomever.

“Jesus, I will ponder now On Thy holy passion.” This is the most important paragraph in my Mission Minute. If you and I think that Lent and Lenten worship and Lenten devotion is only about “me and Jesus,” only about Jesus dying for me and my sins, we’re not getting it. Yes, He died for me, but He also died for all. “He died for all” (2 Corinthians 5:14). “There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). And when you go to the Lord’s Supper, it’s not just you and Jesus. “This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28). Faith in Jesus isn’t only private spirituality. Faith goes out in mission to the world. “God…through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

A final survey finding. Lifeway said, “Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth.” 59 percent agreed. Only 19 percent strongly disagreed. Not Normal People strongly disagree. The truth is, Jesus died for me; Jesus died for all. Hence, Mission Central!