



WOW: Word Of the Week

Example

July 22, 2020

Jan and I couldn't help but notice—the car sped up the entrance ramp and merged onto the interstate at a very high rate of speed. We had just passed Firelake Casino. My first thought—I wondered if the driver was angry because he had just lost a lot of money. A second thought, "Just a coincidence. The driver probably lives nearby."

Nope! He has a bumper sticker on his car: "Follow me to Firelake!" Oh, wait! There's a license plate frame as well: "1 Thessalonians 5:17". Jan and I knew the Bible text without looking it up: "Pray without ceasing!"

We got a good laugh. I guess if you're going to try your luck at the casino, a little "prayer without ceasing" can't hurt.

The biblical description of casting lots may puzzle us. A New Testament example is found in Acts 1 with the choosing of a replacement apostle. What was happening? Spanish translations literally say, "casting luck." It sounds a lot like throwing dice or drawing straws. The only difference – God was involved, God was in control.

I think that was what the driver was hoping for. It cannot hurt to pray without ceasing if you are going to visit the casino.

Many people go through life depending on luck. Even Christians tend to use the greeting, "Good Luck!" A protestor recently attributed the events of his life to luck – "if I'm lucky, I won't get the virus. If I get the virus and am lucky, I won't die."

Christians who can see our faithful God in the midst of life view life differently. We know that the events of our lives are not the result of sheer luck. God is present, concerned, at work. We are called to be examples. God's faithful work does not relieve us of responsibility. We must "tune in." We must demonstrate the meaning of faithful discipleship.

I was recently asked about my greatest concern during this unique time. My greatest concern is that I as a disciple of Christ will fail to follow his example and fail to reflect him into the world about me. Claiming to follow the Christ who was reviled and did not reply, the One who unjustly suffered and did not retaliate, the One whose concern was always for others and their well-being certainly holds me to a higher standard. He left us an example that we should follow in his steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

Especially to my brothers and sisters in Christ – watch your words, your attitudes, your actions. You do not have to put everything you think or feel on Facebook. Consider your example and you will be less likely to put your disgust and reactionary statements on display. Yes, life is difficult, unfair, unjust. But we follow a different leader, we live by a different standard, we follow His example. We endure without words, even suffering difficulties without responding, always concerned with the well-being of others even when we must sacrifice.

We Christians have the right not to exercise or demand our rights! What an example! The gospel will advance much more quickly when we learn how to communicate our love and concern for others. The results of life (and of the pandemic) are not luck. A faithful God is at work through the lives and examples of his faithful people!