

# THE CONNECTION

SPRING 2020





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FLY Beyond 2020



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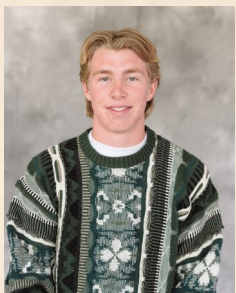


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your sins are forgiven



### **Forgiveness to Me, a Poor Sinner?**

Romans 5:8 says that “while we were yet sinners,” Christ died for us. Unable to go a day without sinning, it is challenging to comprehend that God looks at me and sees Christ’s forgiving blood instead of my sin. Christ willingly poured out His blood, enduring scorn and rejection from His own Father. Taking my sins upon Himself on the cross, Christ cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” In His holiness, God could not look upon Christ as He held the sin of the world upon Himself. Today, my old nature still trips me up in sin, but the Father does not turn His face away from me because Christ has satisfied the wrath of God toward sin. Instead of God turning His face away from me when I stumble in sin, He looks upon me as a father looks upon his child, who has stumbled over his own feet. The Father tenderly reaches down, picks me up, and sets me upon the straight and narrow path. Being restored in forgiveness, I do not go on sinning so grace may abound, but instead, I am charged to go forth in peace to serve the Lord! - *Nicholas Mathsen, FLBC Senior, Ada, MN*

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### **Daily Forgiveness**

“Dead man walking, slave to sin, I wanna know about being born again, I need You, Oh, God, I need You.” These are lyrics from the song *Holy Water*, one of my favorites songs right now because it has such a clear representation of the day to day struggle through life. This really reminds me of my high school days: I was dead to sin, a slave to my own actions, needing to be born again. Thanks to God, He got ahold of my life and through His mercy, I was able to humble myself to ask for His forgiveness. What a powerful thing that is the forgiveness of God, able to renew and restore. God's forgiveness is constant through the ultimate forgiveness given to us through His Son on the Cross. Isaiah 1:18 reminds us, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.” God's forgiveness and grace is something we are in need of every day and something we should all be aware of. - *Zach Westlake, FLBC Senior, Rogers, MN*

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### **A Personal Account of God’s Forgiveness**

There are a lot of times that I have experienced God’s forgiveness. High school was a big part of seeing His forgiveness work in my life. When I was a Junior in high school I was just finishing up my third year of Cross-Country when at the end of the season I found out that I tore my Achilles Tendon. I thought that my senior year of Cross-Country wouldn’t happen; I was really mad at God because I was trying to improve my time to make Varsity. I spent the summer trying to run and I could feel it acting up again and I had to make a decision. That made me think about why God had me do this. I looked back at the last year and I realized that during my junior season I wasn’t thanking God for helping me. I asked God to forgive me and I put Him first in my life. Everything in my life has been so much better since receiving God's forgiveness. - *Joseph Rios, FLBC Senior, St. Michael, MN*

# FROM THE COVER

## ***Matthew 9:2 “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.”***



First, notice that the Lord affirms that this man is not to be defined as a paralytic, or a depressed individual, or a beggar, or an inconvenience, or a problem to be solved, rather, he is a SON....and if a son, then he 1) BELONGS to someone, and 2) specifically in this context, has a FATHER, who is God Himself. So Jesus “locates” this man within a relational context.

But then secondly, having affirmed that this man is to take heart because he is a SON, and therefore loved and cared for, Jesus speaks the word that is almost too fantastic to believe: “your sins are forgiven” (or, to be more literal, “your sins have been released”). This is a word that seems too good to be true....how can it be? The ONLY THING standing between me and the soul-satisfying embrace of the Triune God is my SIN....and here Jesus says that sin—that sole barrier—is GONE....forgiven, released. “take heart my son”—why? “Your sins are FORGIVEN....the burden is gone...the barrier is removed...the weight is lifted—be of good cheer...”

And HOW is this wrought? Through the sin-bearing, wrath-absorbing, God-revealing death and resurrection of the Beloved Son. The words Jesus speaks into the paralytic’s soul are not cheap words....they are purchased at the price of God’s own blood....Which also means the forgiveness that Jesus gives is SEALED and ASSURED by His own blood. What can be more sure than that? The promise that those who cling to Christ are forgiven their sins by virtue of their union to the Son who died for their sin and rose again—that promise is assured by the WORD and sealed with the BLOOD of our Lord Himself...

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*To find out more about the cover art or the artist who designed it, please visit his website:*

[www.fullofeyes.com/project/matthew-92/](http://www.fullofeyes.com/project/matthew-92/)



# FLY FEATURE

By Gideon Johnson

## Restored

What is the weather like in your neck of the woods? Since a majority of AFLC congregations are located in the Upper Midwest—as is mine—I am hoping that by the time you read this there will be clear and evident signs of spring either present or on the horizon. However, if the presumed float-er in your eye is actually snow falling out of the sky, have no fear, spring will come (Genesis 8:22).

Spring is one of my favorite times of year—not because I hate winter and not because I thoroughly enjoy seasonal allergy flare-ups, rather, because spring is the season of rebirth, resurrection, and restoration. Spring is, as Andrew Peterson says in his song “Risen Indeed,” when “the winter dies with a blast of icy wind; like a mournful cry, it’s giving up the ghost again. ... [When] the flowers bloom like a song of freedom; [where we] behold the earth is new [again], if only for a season.”

Spring is when we are especially reminded that “all this darkness is just a small and passing thing” (again quoting Peterson). In other words, spring is the season when we are given a preview and foretaste of the truth and reality that when Jesus stepped into our world of brokenness, He came not only to save us from sin, death, and the power of the devil, but, in doing so, He also came to restore us and all things to Himself—to restore us to life and into the people we were made to be. This is why I think it is so fitting that Easter takes place in the spring—the season of restoration—because that is what Jesus’ death and resurrection are ultimately all about. This event was the first step in

His work to restore all things—a work that will ultimately come to completion at His return.

Over the last six months, the members of the 2021 FLY Committee have been busily planning the next FLY Convention, a tool for winning the lost, building the believer, and encouraging student discipling in the local congregation. Of course, in the planning process, one of the key elements is settling on the theme and text which will give a clear focus to this biennial youth gathering.

After prayerful consideration, members of the 2021 FLY Committee are excited to announce the FLY 2021 theme of “Restored.” Our theme text is Revelation 21:5-7, in which the Apostle John writes, “He who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ And he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.’”

We are excited to see what the Lord will accomplish at the 2021 FLY Convention. Like the restorative work that Christ is accomplishing, the FLY Committee’s work is not yet complete. Therefore, we would covet your prayers as we press on toward July 5-10, 2021.

*This article was originally published in the March issue of the Lutheran Ambassador magazine.*



*Pastor Gideon Johnson  
is the President of the  
2021 FLY Committee*



**MUSIC:** *"Used to Think" by FLAME*

What happens when a Christian artist becomes a Lutheran? Check out this song from rapper FLAME. Clear descriptions about Christ that are worth our attention.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qj23UwuBBro>

**MUSIC:** *"Jesus is King" by Kanye West*

What happens when a huge industry influencer focuses on being a born again believer? Check out this summary from Plugged In. Reviewer Adam R. Holz states, "Kanye West's laser-like focus on Jesus here is breathtaking."

<https://www.pluggedin.com/album-reviews/jesus-is-king/>



**MOVIE:** *"Just Mercy"*

What happens when a Christian takes on injustice in the legal system? This widely released major motion picture has some themes that you may enjoy discussing with friends or family. Please note that there is content some families may find objectionable (PG-13/ the link addresses), but the movie also paints a realistic view of human hardship whether brought on by oneself or by others.

<https://www.pluggedin.com/movie-reviews/just-mercy-2020>

**AFLC Youth Ministries exists**

- to Win teenagers to Christ through the Gospel
- to Build them up in God's truth and God's love
- to Equip them to live their faith and share their faith with others, which results in the multiplying of maturing teen disciples of Jesus



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*National Youth Director*

**Mr. Daniel Keinanen**

*FLY Convention Coordinator*

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