

Church Office

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Meeting location

Marshall Middle School  
25 S. Pontiac, Janesville

Pastor:

John Swanson

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*Declaring the greatness of God and serving  
others for joy and His honor (II Cor. 4:5)*

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February 1, 2001

Dear Friend,

Due to the generosity of this church at Christmas, we were able to purchase a computer. Why did we buy a computer? There are a number of reasons for buying the computer. Most importantly (At least to Jane and I.) it is an educational tool for our children. It is also a tool to help us in managing our finances. There are entertainment functions. It will help me in my work both in research and in writing. While there are many purposes, what they all have in common is that they are our purposes. We chose to buy this computer. We exchanged something of value to us, money, in order to obtain it. We intend to use it for our purposes. The computer did not contribute to the purchase, nor does it determine how we will use it.

There are many ways that the New Testament describes the reasons for Christ's death and resurrection in behalf of his people. Titus 2: 11-14 gives us one of those descriptions. In v. 14 we are told that Jesus "gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." The word "redeem" is a word from the world of economics and slavery. It means to purchase someone out of slavery and to set them free. Jesus chose to buy us, we didn't choose him. Jesus exchanged something of value, his life, in order to obtain us. He "bought" us for his purpose. What is that purpose? He died for us to take us out of wickedness and to make us a pure people who are eager to do what is good. Notice it was "for himself" that he did this.

Jesus displays the greatness of his power and mercy by taking wicked men and women like us and paying the price of our redemption by dying in order that we might abandon a lifestyle of wickedness and become a pure people who are eager to live good lives. The difference between computers and people is that computers come ready to be used. They are by nature useful to our purposes. However, humans are by nature not useful (Romans 3: 10-18, John 15:5, etc.). So the work of Christ not only purchases us but actually makes us useful. The evidence that we have been bought by Christ and made useful is that we abandon a wicked lifestyle and live purely and with eagerness do good.

What is the good we are eager to do? In its summary form it is obedience to the two great commands: to love God with all that we are and to love people as we love ourselves. If you are a Christian this is what you are eager to do. "Eager" is such an important word. We do not do good as a duty, like children do the dishes when asked. Rather we love God and we love people because we love to do so. We are delighted not merely at the prospect of escaping hell and gaining heaven but of escaping a wicked lifestyle, being made pure and pouring out love on God and others. Here is the purpose for which Christ died and rose again. We are his people, purchased to show off his greatness by overcoming sin and pouring out love. Oh that God, for the sake of Jesus, would pour out his Spirit on us that we might pour out love and worship and obedience to the glory of our great Redeemer.

Eager to do good with you,