



Reflection for October 14

**Devotions for the Wisconsin
Annual Conference**

Redemption at Space Aliens

By Scott Carlson



"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

One of my favorite restaurants in Bismarck and Fargo, North Dakota is called Space Aliens. It is a family friendly restaurant with all kinds of things for kids to do. Once when I was standing in line to pay my bill, I saw the sign that got me thinking. It was right before my eyes. I had to look a second time at it. Yes, it was still there, in big green letters the word REDEMPTION.

I looked a third time. Yep, it was still there, still in big green letters. The last time I heard the word "redemption" it was in church, but I was now standing in a restaurant.

I must admit however that I was caught off-guard by their offer of redemption in the entryway. "Space Aliens" is in the business of redeeming tickets one can win at the games in the back. They redeem the tickets for prizes.

"Redemption" is a word that according to the American Heritage Desk Dictionary means: 1. to recover ownership of by paying a specified sum, 2. to pay off, as a promissory note, 3. to turn in (coupons) and receive something in exchange, 4. to set free; rescue. to save from sin and its consequences.

Now of course, Space Aliens wants to use definition number three for their offer of redemption. The church wants to use definition number four for their offer of redemption.

Our faith tells us that God is all about redemption too. God wants to touch us where we hurt. God wants to set us free from what binds us. God wants to set us free from the addictions we face. God wants to set us free from the fears we face. God wants to set us free, so we can know the joy of living in a meaningful relationship with God.

When Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah (see the scripture from Luke quoted above), he was reminding us as people of faith, what we are to be about. He was reminding us how the redeemed of God are called to live in this world. May we give ourselves wholly to the God who has given God's self wholly to us.

Prayer: Dear God thank you for searching us out. Thank you for caring for us so much that you take initiative to come to us. Help us to open our eyes

and to see you and your presence all around us. Be with the members of our Annual Conference. We are gathering soon, virtually. Let your Spirit breathe through us to touch each other and this world. In the hope Jesus offers us, Amen.

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May this devotion provide you with a moment of faithful reflection and care. You are involved in ministries of justice and witness, in ministries of standing up and standing with people working to create better systems and communities, in ministries of learning and searching and researching to become more aware and awakened, more technologically savvy and proficient, more virtually and personally present in your churches and communities and world. Each of us who serve as members of your Wisconsin Cabinet write these devotions in grateful prayer for you – for sustenance and buoyancy, for strength and courage, for safety and just actions, and for faith and love to be full and fulfilled in your daily lives. God’s grace and blessings, God’s challenge and healthy discomfort, God’s Spirit and energy be with you, in the hope Christ offers us all.

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