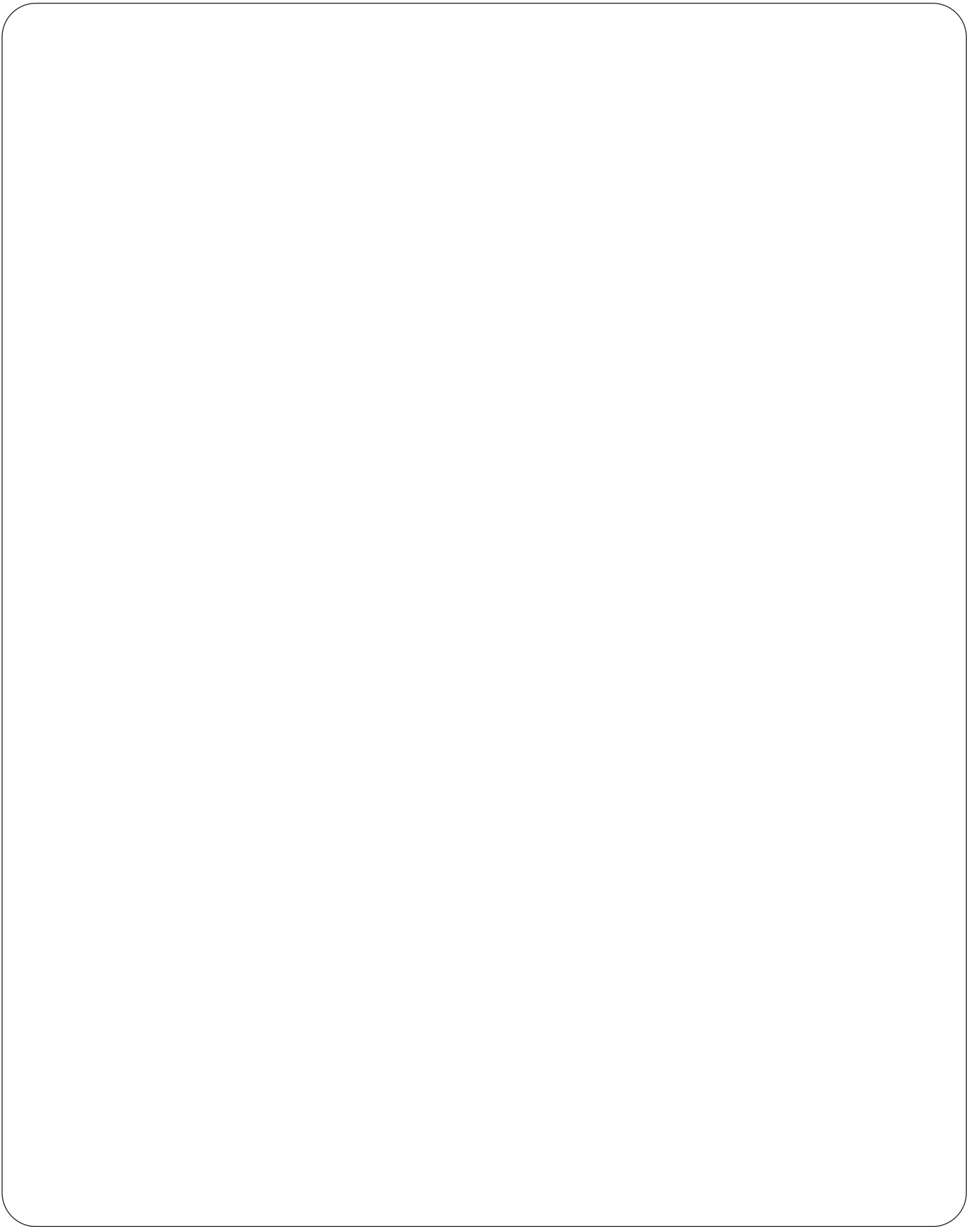




LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES  
*People Of Christ With The Message Of Hope*

# WALKING WITH JESUS





*Brought to you in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries*

## God's Return Policy

*Joel 2:13b - ... Return to the LORD your God for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity.*

Returning things can sometimes be difficult. Certain electronic items can't be returned for a full refund once the box has been opened. Sometimes we lose the receipt for an item and can't get reimbursed the full price we paid. Perhaps a store won't even take an item back if the tags have been removed. Maybe you're like me and regularly lose the tags and the receipt. Good luck then!

There are other types of returns, also. Returning to a place that holds bad memories may be challenging. Returning something that doesn't belong to us to its rightful owner can make us feel guilty. If we've been away from church for a time, there could be feelings we have that make it hard for us to return. How about a strained relationship? It could be tough to return and face that person.

Many circumstances and feelings may get in the way of returning, but God's "return policy" is wide open, no strings or guilt attached. He always wants us to be with Him.

Today is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, a season of repentance, of turning around and coming back to God. During Lent we retrace Jesus' walk to the cross, His suffering and death for us, and His resurrection that guarantees our own resurrection and life eternal with Him in heaven.

Is there something standing in the way of a return you'd like to make? I can't guarantee it won't be difficult, but I pray God will guide you in this process. Is a return to God what you desire? Here I can say with certainty that no matter what the circumstances, His love for you is immeasurable, and He is eager to have you close to Him again.

**THE PRAYER:** Father, thank You for the forgiveness that is ours in Jesus and for always welcoming us back into Your arms. Amen.

## End Road Work

*2 Corinthians 5:20b-21; 6:3a - We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. . . .  
We put no stumbling block in anyone's path. . . .*

Photography is one of my hobbies, and among my files of pictures is one labeled "Funny Signs." These are signs that can be easily misinterpreted, contain misspellings, or seem out of place. Occasionally, they're signs on churches. If it makes me smile or can be misunderstood or taken in a whimsical way, I snap a picture.

Last summer I came upon such a sign after miles of weaving and dodging orange barrels and waiting at temporary traffic lights that allowed only one lane of traffic to flow at a time in either direction. As I finally left the construction zone there was a sign that read, "End Road Work." My feelings exactly!

The words in today's text give me a similar feeling. God wants everyone to know there is nothing blocking our path to Jesus' love and forgiveness and that nobody should place such obstacles in the way of people coming to Him.

Some people would place all kinds of requirements in front of you to gain access to God's love, but God's Son became like us so that through Him we may be holy and acceptable in God's eyes. No stumbling blocks, no orange barrels or other mazes that we must navigate to gain God's favor. The path is straight and access free to God our Heavenly Father through Jesus our brother.

If God doesn't want others placing obstacles between you and Him, He doesn't want you erecting such barriers either. Is there something you are allowing to stand in the way of God's free access to His love and grace?

**THE PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to remove all barriers to Your love. Help us to accept that love and forgiveness that is ours in His Name. Amen.



# WALKING WITH JESUS

In *Walking With Jesus*, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod educator and author Chuck Strohacker adopts a conversational approach to drafting his devotion that addresses the ministry and mission of Christ's life. Walking with Jesus is not a thing to be taken lightly. It demands our full attention and requires constancy in prayer that our lives are directed by the Holy Spirit and made useful as such in God's service.

When conveying the message of Jesus' ministry and its meaning for believers, Strohacker makes his points with a style utilizing insight and observation. His Lenten approach is in keeping with his 2009 Advent devotions, *Who would have thought?* In those, he incorporated lessons won from the arena of everyday life to show how God is in the business of building relationships that begin and end in Jesus Christ.

In *Walking With Jesus*, Strohacker shows how it's in the nitty gritty of life that we need to walk closest to Jesus. And it is in that same manner—in the everyday and commonplace—that Jesus followed His Father—faithfully, obediently, sacrificially—so that through His life, death, and resurrection we might have eternal life.



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