

Life Week 2026 Devotion - Day 5

Not Against, but For Life by Rev. Dennis Norby



Many people, including Lutherans, have a tendency to define themselves by what they're against. If I were to ask a group of average Lutheran churchgoers what it means to be Lutheran, I know I'd hear something along these lines: "We don't believe that we're saved by good works. We don't believe that the pope is infallible. We don't believe in purgatory. We don't believe in believers' baptisms." As if being Lutheran just means not being Catholic or Baptist. Well, that's all fine and good. We don't believe those things. But what *do* we believe? Many Lutherans probably couldn't answer that question nearly as well. It's not enough to know what we're against. We have to know what we're for!

If all we ever focus on is what we're against, we can easily lose sight of what we're for. And that can lead us down some dark roads. An extreme example of this is when a person is so against abortion that they're willing to burn down an abortion clinic. Or perhaps, for an example closer to home, when being against abortion leads us to devalue the life of the mother who commits abortion, and we shame her out of church instead of offering her the forgiveness of Jesus as if her life isn't worth as much as the child she carried. Sadly, both of these examples are true to life.

It's not wrong to say that we're against death. Jesus Himself is against death. He views death as the enemy. But let's never forget why: because Jesus is For Life. He loves the lives that He has fearfully and wonderfully created. In John 10:10, Jesus says that the reason He came and was incarnate in human flesh was to give life and to give it to the full. That's a beautiful thought! The abundant life Jesus describes isn't necessarily a life of prosperity and wealth and pleasure. The abundant life He talks about is the life He designed for us: a life of communion with God, lived under God's order and guidance; a life of love and faith and hope; and a life that never ends.

That is what Jesus was *for*. And He was so for it that He was willing to suffer and die, bearing the sins of the whole world on His shoulders. Jesus isn't just against death. He's for life, to the extent that that He doesn't kill murderers and the sexually immoral, He dies for them and invites them to have true life in Him, which is good news, because it includes every one of us as much as it includes those outside the Church.

So let's not just be *against* something, such as abortion, sexual immorality, assisted suicide, etc. If we do that, we might very well lose sight of the big picture. Let's be *for* something. By the strength that God supplies, let us stand alongside Jesus our Lord and be For Life—for the unborn, for godly families, godly sexuality, godly living, godly suffering, and godly dying. Let's be *for* the life that Christ died to give each and every person. Amen.



Pastor Dennis Norby has served as pastor at Grace and Zion Free Lutheran Churches (AFLC) in Valley City, North Dakota, for the past seven years. Dennis and his wife of 24 years, Samantha, have nine children ranging from twenty to four years old. He has been glad to serve for the last few years as President of the Lutherans For Life of North Dakota as well as the state representative to the National Board.