

Augustana College  
Chapel of Reconciliation

## Splendid Imperfections

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I made the quilt on the altar myself. At the end of the summer, I had about a week and a half between camp and school, so I decided to do something useful. I selected the materials, and painstakingly measured and cut each piece. I have never been taught how to quilt, or even how to sew, so this was quite the undertaking. As you can see, the quilt is not perfect. The pieces do not line up and the pattern is disrupted. However, these minor imperfections do not render this quilt useless. They do not make it any less warm, and they do not mean that it cannot be used as a blanket.

My life is like this quilt. It is not perfect and the pieces do not go together perfectly. However, in spite of my imperfections, God can still use me. Even though the quilt of my life is

not neatly lined up, I am still able to answer the call, and to reflect God's love in the world. We are all imperfect, yet we are still able to be disciples. Just as the quilt, no matter our imperfections, we are still useful.

Much like any other person, my life is full of imperfections. I am impatient. Born several weeks early, my family likes to joke that I have been impatient since the day I was born. I cannot cook. In my time in college, I have learned that tuna and spaghetti is not a good combination, angel food cake will explode out of a glass casserole dish, no matter what anyone tells you, a banana does not substitute for an egg and chicken needs to be thawed before you bake it. I get stressed easily. I hate citrus fruit. I enjoy cleaning bathrooms. I cringe when I hear nails on a chalkboard and I get frustrated when people drive less than 30 miles an hour. Most of all, I am scared. I am scared of what lies after College, I am scared to discern God's call and I am scared to get out of my metaphorical boat and follow Jesus into the depths of the unknown.

I will read again Christ's great commission. (Matthew 28). Jesus is clearly commanding us to be His light in the world. Jesus is commanding us to go therefore and make disciples of all nations. I see no clause for people who cannot make a decent dinner, hate oranges or have road rage. God does not put out a job description that prohibits impatient or frightened people from being disciples.

Jesus does not say, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, but only when you feel strong and courageous and only when you are 100% sure that this is the right thing to do." Jesus clearly puts forth a command. When Jesus commanded them, the disciples looked at each other in disbelief. Saying, "Me? Am I good enough? What use could God possibly have for me?" Even though Jesus appeared to them, they still doubted.

Just as we, disciples in this time, wonder to ourselves and to one another, "How could God use me?" Personally, I will be graduating in a couple months with a classical liberal arts degree. Communications is a nice broad field, which gives me a survey of a lot of things, but not a lot of information about any one thing. I could be a communicator, but so is everyone else.

How could God possibly need me? I am not really qualified to do anything!

However, friends, I am pleased to share the news that in Christ we are all a new creation and have been redeemed from our sinful selves. In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he writes, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" God does not care that I may not have the highest educational degree, God does not believe that my imperfections make me any less useful. God knows that we all can be impatient and distrustful at times, and the liberating news is that in spite of our imperfections, God can still use us. For in Christ we are made new. Christ has taken your sins and mine and purified our lives to be as white as snow. Our imperfections are splendid because through Christ we are a new creation and we can be used to reflect God's love and the story of Christ in the world!

Scripture is filled with people who were imperfect as well. Peter was one of the closest followers of Jesus, yet in Jesus' hour of trial, Peter denied him three times. Martha was too busy cleaning her house to sit and listen to Jesus like her sister Mary. The disciples fell asleep while praying with Jesus at Gethsemane. In the Old Testament, Moses initially refused the call of God, insisting that his brother Aaron be used instead. We look to these ordinary people as great leaders in our faith, and they have just as many failings as we do. However, in spite of their imperfections and mistakes, they were still used. God uses us in spite of us.

Over my years in College, I have erratically jumped from one future goal to another. My close friends can testify that while at Augie, I have applied and been admitted to the University of Alaska, have threatened to move back to Montana, have considered switching my major to religion, social work, nursing and government, have contemplated law school, graduate school in communications, social work, journalism or women's studies, seminary, or full time volunteer work in Germany, Denver or at Holden Village. I cannot imagine just picking one interest. However, I know that wherever I am, God will use me! Whether I go into the ministry, become an attorney, or just work in some as yet undisclosed occupation, I am still a disciple. My splendid

imperfections do not render me incapable of ministry, rather, through Christ, I am a new creation, as are you.

Think of the ordinary saints that you know. Of family, friends or even strangers, who by their very existence are doing God's work in the world. Parents are saints, in fact, call home and thank your parents tonight. And for those of you who are parents, know that you are a blessing. My parents are indeed saints, having lived with three teenage girls at once! They do not work in any sort of explicit ministry, but they are still working for God. Saints clean our dorms, cook our food in the commons, direct our music ensembles and administer tests. All of us are worthy to do Christ's work in the world. In spite of our failings and fears and bad days, we are still ministers in whatever our vocation. We are sinful, spiteful and jealous, but we are still worthy of God's love. God forgives our sins and commands us to be disciples.

Because we are made new in Christ and loved in spite of our imperfections, we are called to love others as Christ has loved us. Earlier this fall, I was sitting at my desk, working on a bible study for my youth group. I was struggling with and feeling disenchanted by the judgment passed by so many people on others in the name of religion. I have been judged, as undoubtedly, have many of you. However, in the midst of my frustration, the words "Love Radically" entered my mind, as clearly as if someone had spoken them to me. Someone did, and that same someone echoes the same words throughout the Bible. Because we have been redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in spite of our many imperfections and sins, we are called to radical acceptance and love for our neighbors.

Therefore, through this amazing and redeeming grace, we are called to be servants in the world. Go and live boldly and love boldly in spite of your imperfections! You have been redeemed and freed through Jesus Christ! Amen.

# MORNING WORSHIP

Friday, March 4, 2005

## PRELUDE

## INVOCATION

**SONG** "I, the Lord of Sea and Sky" WOY 752

**SCRIPTURE** II Corinthians 5:17-20  
Matthew 28:18-20

**MESSAGE** "Splendid Imperfections" Amy Hanson  
Hometown: Bozeman, MT  
Major: Communications

**SONG** "How Great Thou Art" LBW 532

## PRAYER

### BLESSING and DISMISSAL

L: The worship has ended.

**C: Let the service begin.**

L: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

THANK YOU to Kate Holmquest, Jon Larson, Peter Scholtz, Christy Hallenbeck, Kari Pabst, Kaija Swisher and Jen Gionnonatti, and Rebecca Lund for assisting with worship today.

## CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SPRING BREAK SERVICE LEARNING** - Registration deadlines are quickly approaching for the Pine Ridge Service Learning Trip which will take place over the second weekend of Spring Break. Please sign up as soon as possible if you are interested.

**APPLICATION FOR CAMPUS MINISTRY STAFF AND MUSICIANS** are available for 2005-06. Applications are due back to the chapel office before Spring Break.

### CHAPEL CALENDAR

Sunday	Distinguished Scholars Worship, 9 pm Worship, 11 - Prism Outreach Team
Monday	Worship, 10 am - Annette Ejsing, Religion
Tuesday	Taize Prayer, 10 am Koinonia - 10 :20 HOLDEN VILLAGE SILENT AUCTION - Common
Wednesday	Holy Communion, 10 am - Jen Abels, Hall Dir.
Thursday	Chair of Moral Values - Anna Madsen, Reli.
Friday	Worship, 10 am - Andrew Ellsworth, Sr. Spkr.