



Bethany Lutheran Church  
& Early Childhood Ministry  
5051 McCarty Road  
Saginaw, MI 48603

[bethanysaginaw.com](http://bethanysaginaw.com) | 989.793.9579

## Viewpoints

*Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.*

### Forces of Nature ~ January 13, 2017

*Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to this nature's raw power.*

[Online Version & Archive](#)

As torrential storms lashed the western states earlier this week, authorities rushed to caution people who ventured out to view swollen rivers. Authorities used Twitter to warn spectators: "Don't cause an incident, look from a distance!" The warning I saw was accompanied by a photo of a man (presumably seeking a photo) who was nearly standing in the Yuba River.



Obviously the man knew that the Yuba River was flooding. That's what attracted him. But did he know it was running approximately forty times higher than normal? To put that into perspective, imagine if the Saginaw River was running at a rate forty times greater than normal. That's a lot of unforgiving power that does unpredictable things. My quick research guesses that such a level would greatly exceed Saginaw's "Great Flood of 1986."

So back to the man standing so close to the raging river. If he falls in, he's a goner. But if he slips so only his leg goes in, he's probably still a goner. That's because one cubic foot of water weighs 62.4 lbs. Did the man realize that only six inches of fast moving water can sweep a man off his feet? Did he realize that only 18-24 inches would wash away most vehicles? And the Yuba River was far above the "fast moving water" mode as it raced down the mountains at a rate of 20,000 cubic feet per second!

Since we live in a modern society that offers so many built-in protections and creature comforts, most of us tend to be ignorant of the raw forces and unpredictable power of nature. So take to heart the word of the authorities. Ignorance can quickly get you killed when dealing with Mother Nature, or when dealing with the sinful nature.

Not one of us knows the raw forces and unpredictable power of temptation and sin, unless we've been taught by God from the Scriptures. And even then, we tend to consider it an exaggeration because the arrogant pride of our sinful nature<sup>1</sup> scoffs at these revelations. For

this reason, Luther pleaded with fellow Christians to wise up. “The inborn sin of the flesh is so deep and such a horrible corruption of our human nature that no amount of logic or reason can understand it. And so it must be learned from the revelation of Holy Scripture.” Luther also pointed out that when a person first begins to realize “how very low his nature has fallen, becoming fundamentally and utterly corrupted” that he or she “begins to become enraged at God and to angrily attack his teachings.”<sup>2</sup>

God is so marvelous, however, that he patiently waits as this anger grows and then collapses under the weight of realizing that God is true, and that unless God has mercy, we’re lost. At which point God immediately rushes to the rescue with the healing and comforting gospel message that Jesus came into the world to pay for our sins and to give us peace with God now and forever.<sup>3</sup>

Our forefathers in the faith, including Luther and many others, kept the confession of sins and announcement of Christ’s forgiveness as a foundational element of worship. We at Bethany still rely on this worship feature today. Why? It’s a Biblical tool that God uses to keep his children wise to the raw forces and unpredictable power of temptation, sin and our sinful natures... from which point God renews us in the knowledge of the peace and protection of our Savior Jesus.

It might be easy for you to recognize the danger that the man was putting himself into, by his proximity to nature’s forces. But don’t pat yourself on the back. Instead, use your hand to open scripture and study where you might be underestimating the power of temptation and sin, and especially of your own sinful nature. Then fold your hands in prayer and praise as you thank Jesus for his forgiving and protecting love.

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

<sup>1</sup> The sinful flesh, or sinful nature, refers to how the sinner’s heart and mind can only produce sinful desires. See [Romans 7:18](#) and [Romans 8:7](#).

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, transliterated (Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art I.3 & II.4)

<sup>3</sup> God uses the condemning law message to tear down, so that he can recreate a Christian from the gospel’s comfort and joy.

[Authorities Warn: Don’t Cause An Incident, Look From A Distance](#) @ sacramento.cbslocal.com

*To become a recipient of Viewpoints, please email [mike.nitz@bethanysaginaw.com](mailto:mike.nitz@bethanysaginaw.com) and simply type the phrase "VP please" in the subject line. Or if you wish to no longer receive Viewpoints, type the phrase "discontinue VP" in the subject line. Thanks.*

*Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz*

