



One Page Sermon

By Rev. Robb McCoy

November 3, 2024

Linus, the sage

Recap of sermon from November 3, 2024

Scripture: Proverbs 3:1-12

Linus Van Pelt is Lucy's little brother and Charlie Brown's most loyal friend. He is featured prominently in some of the most beloved Peanuts specials. *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown!* focuses mostly on Linus' naïve faith in the titular mythical figure who Linus claims will come deliver gifts to the most sincere pumpkin patch on Halloween. In *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, it is Linus who provides the climactic resuscitation of Luke 2 that reminds us all of the true meaning of Christmas.

In other comic strips and specials, he perseveres torment from his sister, deflects the adoration of Sally, provides sage advice to his friends, and often quotes Scripture. Through it all, his most prominent feature is the light blue "security blanket" that never leaves his side.

This term was not actually coined by Schulz, but it was transformed by him. The first use of the term security blanket was describing a product that was used to strap babies to their mattresses and keep them secure. Then, during WWII, it became a military term describing security measures around cities, bases, or particular secrets.

In the 1950s, at the same time some child psychiatrists were starting to explain the phenomenon of "transition object," Schulz referred to Linus' "security blanket." It is a term that remains in use today to describe a child's attachment to a blanket, stuffed animal, or other object.

Linus is put under a lot of pressure to give up his blanket. Everyone around him thinks he is ridiculous for carrying his "security blanket." Lucy hides it. Snoopy steals it. Charlie Brown encourages him to give it up. Linus's own grandmother is the main antagonist in several story lines involving his struggle with his blanket.

Truthfully, security blankets are good for children. They are a normal part of development and can have many positive impacts on the growth of a child. Attachments to objects help children differentiate and form their own identity.

Attachments to objects often do not go away in adults. They may not manifest in blankets and teddy bears, but adults have memorabilia, collections, a certain chair, a photo album, a particular piece of clothing, or any number of things to which they make emotional attachments.

There are many coping mechanisms that people use to deal with stress and anxiety. Some are unhealthy, like substance abuse. Others can help tremendously, like petting a dog, tak-

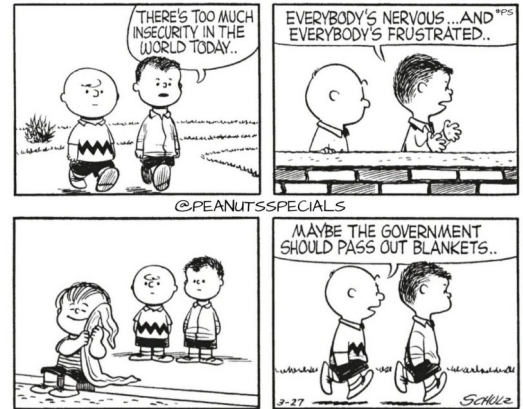
ing a walk, creating art, listening to music. Holding a blanket would certainly fall under the "harmless" category.

In the special, "Happiness is a Warm Blanket, Charlie Brown," Linus confronts his grandmother, who is demanding that he give up his blanket. He says to her, "How is my blanket different than the 12 cups of coffee that you drink?" While she is not convinced, the climax of the special comes when Linus is confronted by all of his friends. He shouts, "Who among you is secure? Who can throw the first stone?" And then points out the many insecurities and foibles of the other kids.

We all have insecurities. And while Linus's coping mechanism is a blanket, that doesn't make him any less faithful or wise. Linus has faith. He is loyal to his friends. He cares for his sister. He carries a blanket, but he also carries wisdom that is beyond his years.

Is his faith in "The Great Pumpkin" naïve? Possibly, but faith is hope in something that is yet unseen. His faith is also why, when the Christmas pageant is devolving in chaos, he is able to stand on the Gospel and restore order. Linus might be naïve and insecure, but aren't we all? There is an element to faith that is foolish. It is foolish to hope for God's peace to reign on earth as it does in heaven, yet that is the bedrock of our faith.

There is insecurity in all of us, but Linus's wisdom is that he has found something that helps, and he clings to it. So cling to the healthy things that help. Cling to our hope. Cling to our faith. Cling to one another. We can hold onto hope like a warm blanket, finding security in the midst of an anxious world.



**Next Week: The Gospel According to Peanuts
Franklin, Marcie, and Peppermint Patty**