

**Devotions – May 4-10, 2008**  
**By, Eighth Grade Confirmands – Calvary, Rapid River**  
**Samantha Peterson, Ashleigh Monticello, Heather Sanderson,**  
**Zach Anderson, Kade Gudwer, Jace Gudwer,**  
**Dylan Holzenkamp, and Travis Pigott**

**Sunday, May 4**

“Cast all your anxieties upon God, for he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5: 7

It’s a funny thing that the older I get, the more things I have to worry about. Shouldn’t life get easier the more you learn and the smarter you get? But I worry twice as much about things in eighth grade as I did in fourth; what will happen when I get to college? I really need to remember that God promises to take care of me no matter what happens– that my worries about good grades and sports and band and peer pressure are all something that God can take care of.

It helps to remember that everyone has the same kind of pressures and anxieties, even grown ups like my parents. But what really helps is to know that God is bigger and stronger than anything in my life, and that he loves me and all his children.

*Lord, you care for each one of your children, and you promise to protect us. Give us the faith to trust your love, and to give all of our worries to you. Amen.*

## Monday, May 5

“Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kind of trials.” 1 Peter 5:8

I plan to visit Africa when I grow up, because I really want to see all the wild animals we keep in zoos in their natural surroundings. I think it would be the adventure of a lifetime. But I don't want to go one on one with a wild lion– I know how dangerous they can be! I like the safety of living in the United States, of going for a walk in the forest and knowing that there is nothing to fear. Well, maybe the occasional moose or wolf, but they are still pretty rare.

But then there is the devil, and the Bible says he is just like a wild lion, looking for people to destroy. And he is everywhere, even in the U.P.! Having friends at church helps me to keep my life safe from the temptations of evil– this reading from 1 Peter even says that we can take strength from knowing that we share in the experience of Christians around the world, even in places like Africa, who are working against the powers of that hungry lion, the devil. We all need to find strength in the community of God's people, and to remember to support one another in our own battles with the lion.

*Dear God, help us to know and to resist the power of the devil. Give us friends who can hold us up when we are tempted, and let us be strong for them. Amen.*

**Tuesday, May 6**

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,  
serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.”  
1 Peter 4: 10

Different people have different gifts. Sometimes my friends amaze me with their musical ability, or the way they can make twenty free throws in a row. This passage from 1 Peter reminds us that our abilities are all gifts from God, and that we please God by using them to serve other people! Our gifts are not just for our private entertainment. Just as God has blessed us, we should use them to bless one another.

Here is a good place to talk about the purpose of the church: it gives us opportunities to use our gifts for the glory of God, but also for the blessing of others. And it is also a place where we can be blessed by the gifts of our friends— a mutual exchange in which everyone is helped and enriched. God made us for serving one another, and he gives us the gifts we need, each one with their own special abilities, to carry out that service.

*God of grace, help me to serve with the talents and abilities you have given to me. Amen.*

## **Wednesday, May 7**

“He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son, and has placed all things in his hands.” John 3: 34

Jesus is talking about himself in this passage. He connects his message with God’s purpose and sending, and he promises already the gift of the Holy Spirit. The whole Triune God is at work in the life of Jesus! I think this is a real source of strength for all of us who follow Jesus. By listening to him, and learning from his life, we know God the Father’s will. By listening to Jesus, we learn to see the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

Maybe you know the song “He’s Got the Whole World in his Hands” from Sunday School or VBS. God has placed the whole world in the hands of his Son Jesus, and we can take real strength and comfort from knowing that Jesus gives us everything we need. When we have questions about the future, or when we wonder what God is up to, we just remember Jesus and everything he has taught us.

*God of the universe, help us to remember that everything in heaven and earth is held in the loving hands of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## **Thursday, May 8**

“All of the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” Acts 2:4

This is so cool! The disciples never had to study a foreign language in school, but the Holy Spirit let them speak in any language they needed. Greek and Latin, Persian and Babylonian, whoever was in the Temple for Pentecost, the disciples could speak their language. I wish it were that easy today! I would like to speak Chinese and Russian, please. Don't ask me to spend years studying them.

Of course this story is not so much about the gifts of the disciples as it is about the power of the Gospel of Jesus. The message is for all people, of every language and race. And God makes sure that the Gospel is shared: through missionaries, through translations of the Bible, through deeds of love and caring. If the disciples could do it, so can we. We just might have to go to school for a few more years, but it is the same Holy Spirit at work.

*Spirit of God, help us to be eager witnesses to the life of Jesus. Amen.*

## Friday, May 9

“When we cry, “Abba, Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our Spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” Romans 8:16

How do we know if the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives? How could the disciples be sure? Paul tells us that knowing God is our loving Father is a gift of the Spirit. Or that knowing that Jesus is Lord is a gift of the Spirit. Faith itself, and the confident hope that God cares for us, comes from the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

It reminds me of the explanation to the Third Article from Luther’s Catechism: “The Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.” I may not know the future or walk through a burning fire, but I do know that God is my Father and that Jesus is Lord. With all of the other children of God, we will receive the inheritance of God’s kingdom. You can’t ask for much more.

*Abba, Father, I thank you for the gift of the Spirit in my life and in the lives of all your children. Help us to celebrate all the ways in which you bless us and keep us. Amen.*

## **Saturday, May 10**

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, you shall have no other gods before me.”

Ever since I saw the *Indiana Jones* movies, I have been a big fan of ancient archaeology and the stories of the Pharaohs of Egypt. The Old Testament is an important part of the ancient world, and it also has lots of good stories about kingdoms and rulers. But the most important of all of them is the story of God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Without the Exodus, there would be no Old Testament story.

And at the very heart of that story is the giving of the Ten Commandments to Israel. God has rescued Israel, and claimed them as his people. The entire law depends upon this relationship: I am the Lord, who brought you out of slavery: You shall have no other gods before me. The God of freedom is also the God who commands our loyalty and obedience. Even today God promises the gift of freedom to those who honor and worship him. We need to put God first in our lives, just as Moses taught the ancient Israelites to do.

*God of freedom, I thank you for the blessings you have shared with our country. Help us to see your goodness at work in the gifts of freedom. Amen.*