

Devotions – September 28 – October 4, 2014
By Members of Trinity Lutheran Church, Ishpeming, MI

Sunday, September 28

“Jesus’ Great Choice” – by Colleen Collins

Text: Matthew 26:42

Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”

Anyone can only imagine Jesus’ feelings when things were coming to an end. Only he knew it which must have been terrifying for a man (which he was) to see what was coming and be unable or unwilling to change it. It would have been a temptation to walk away and let it all go. But he loved us enough to suffer and die on the cross. It certainly showed the depths of his love, devotion and courage.

Every one of us has been in a similar position at least once – when we had to make the choice to do it right or back away. It is very scary to see the possible consequences of our decisions, both for us and others. But God is there to help show us the way – to give us the courage to do the right things and hold our heads up. May we always remember how Jesus handled it and that he will give us the strength and courage to do what is right and just.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, thank you that your Son sought to do your will for our sakes. Help us always turn in faith to you, seeking your will. Amen.



Monday, September 29

“Answered Prayers” – by Kyle Saari

Text: I John 5:14

This is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

“Sometimes I thank God, for unanswered prayers...Just because he may not answer, doesn’t mean he don’t care...”

Those words may be familiar to you from a popular country hit by Garth Brooks. But, some may not know that those lyrics have a foundation within I John 5:14. It is human for us to be persistent in thinking we know what's best for us. Yet, sometimes our human motives and reasoning are not embedded in God's will. Rather, our wants and wishes are more of a reflection of our worldly values and with most consideration to the present. Thankfully, as He always does, God is present to save us from ourselves. Certainly I, and likely all of us, can think back to a thing or two that we asked for and now we are quite thankful God didn't grant it, or take us down that path. That realization alone calls for a moment of thankfulness.

Still, God realizes that through our imperfection and moments of weakness we ask for many things. Some of which are good and in accordance with His will. The rest may be the opposite, and not so much in accordance. I John 5:14 is a snapshot of confidence knowing that our voice, silent or aloud, is heard and considered. Through that belief and confidence we should gain peace of mind, knowing that someone greater than us is in full control – even in our moments when we feel most vulnerable, unconfident, or amid chaos. Therefore, with confidence knowing you are listened to, take a moment to give thanks, as you loosen your grip of control to one who willfully guides us all – even as we sometimes waver through our lack of understanding the present.

Let us pray: Dear God, we give you thanks for always lending us your listening ear. We apologize for acting and asking for things by our own will, rather than your own. Help align our thoughts, words, and actions with your truth of what is best for us. Strengthen our confidence in knowing that you are in control and we are never alone. Thanks be to you. Amen.



Tuesday, September 30

“Pleasing in His Sight” – by Gina Niemi

Text: Hebrews 13:20-21

Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

In this passage from Hebrews, the writer is praying for us to receive the goodness of God into our hearts, rendering us instruments through which He may show his mercy and grace. Let us not forget the greatest sacrifice given for our salvation – his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Years ago, I was living with little hope and even less trust, causing me to make unhealthy choices. I sought out sordid places, material things, and craved instant gratification, only to end

up face to face with fear and emptiness. I had no peace. I was at a dead end road. In desperation, I asked God for help.

My life began to change that day. I took God's hand and started a purposeful life of faith. What a relief to know our "Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep" will give me everything I need. I love the Lord our God today and cherish the peace I have found. I can take no credit for the change in me. All the glory goes to God.

Let us pray: Dear God, I pray that my thoughts and actions be pleasing to you. Let not the ways of the world influence me to wander from you. Amen.



Wednesday, October 1

"Obedient to God's Will" – by Marilyn Andrew

Text: Hebrews 5:8-9

Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

In reading these two verses, I picture Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane as he said, "Father, if Thou are willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42). I also picture Him nailed to the cross and suffering in agony for many hours.

The central message of Christianity is that Jesus died to save for eternity those who believe in Him. Even though He is God's Son, He willingly and obediently submitted to a long and painful death. Jesus trusted His Father, knowing that His submission to His Father's will was a crucial part of God's plan for Him and for mankind. In the same way, we must try to obey and to accept our trials in life, knowing that God does have a plan. I have a friend who continued to write in the middle of many hardships and illnesses, "All in God's good time."

Christ's crucifixion and then resurrection three days later are part of the mystery of His being made perfect and one with the Father. Because of this, He leads all those who believe in Him and obey Him to eternal life. If we have the faith to say, "All in God's good time," we'll find that this trust brings everlasting rewards.

Let us pray: Dear Father in heaven, please help me to have faith in you and to accept the gift of the wondrous sacrifice that your Son made for me. Help me to be obedient to your will as your Son showed obedience and forgive me for those times when I am not obedient. Thank you for sending your Son as the source of eternal salvation. Amen.



Thursday, October 2

“*Jesus the Servant*” – by Kevin Price

Text: Philippians 2:5-8

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.

The biggest thing that I take out of this passage is God wants us not only to think about what we can do for ourselves but what can we do for others. While Jesus walked the earth, he had the power to be one of the highest people in the land, but did he do that? No, when Jesus went from town to town, he went to do the work of God and to help other people.

In our world today, there are certainly people who put others before themselves. Whether or not that person’s story is told seems to vary, and to me nobody’s work will ever match up to the work Jesus did while he was on earth. Today’s culture has a “me” feel to things rather than a “you” feel. What this passage is trying to get at is to take a step back and look for what you can do for others rather than what you can do for yourself.

Let us pray: Lord, thank you for all the good that you have given us in our lives. You have blessed us with so many things that we cannot begin to repay. Help us find the courage to go out and continue your work. Help us as we try and put others before ourselves in our day to day life. In your name, Amen.



Friday, October 3

“*In His Steps*” – by Pastor Kenneth Lahners

Text: I Peter 2:21

Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

“What Would Jesus Do?” These words, which gained renewed popularity in the last 10-15 years, were originally from a mediocre, though best-selling novel called *In His Steps*, written in 1897. They are words that have led to much silliness, as many have imagined they need to try to figure out what Jesus would do in every situation of life, how he would handle every single choice, and model their lives accordingly. Thus, some people have asserted that Jesus would drive such and such a car, shop here rather than there, spend all his leisure time working in a soup kitchen instead of fishing.

Jesus did not come to be our model of living. We have the Ten Commandments (which Jesus followed) to tell us to help our neighbor, and we have reason, experience, and many people's examples (not only Jesus') to help us figure out how best to fulfill the Commandments in given situations.

Jesus came to be our Savior. He walked a road that only he could walk. Yet, as we have faith in him, he is also our example. As his disciples we do follow in his steps, primarily, Peter tells us, as we suffer for doing good. If we are treated unjustly, we do not retaliate in revenge, but endure and forgive. If we undergo any type of affliction or sorrow, we remember our Lord's suffering and rely on the strength of the Holy Spirit. We are to bear the cross, knowing however that our Lord bears it with us.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, help us to trust in Jesus, that following in his steps, we may bear our crosses. May he give us strength to endure suffering as he did. Amen.



Saturday, October 4

"Not to be Served, But to Serve" – by Bruce Tippet

Text: Matthew 20:26-28

It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many

Throughout life we see Jesus as a great man, because of what he did for us. As we understand him more, we realize he was a common man. He went through life serving other people, just as we serve others. Many of our rewards are in the form of monetary or material things. Of these things, we give a partial amount back to God.

We also give our service back to God in many ways...by helping others, donating our time to organizations that help the needy and doing things out of the goodness of our hearts. We will surely not be as great as the Son of Man because he gave the ultimate gift for us, his life.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, grant us the wisdom to serve others as well as you have served. Help us to show your greatness to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

