

Devotions – February 8-14, 2015
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Sunday, February 8

Text: Psalm 139:1-6 (NRSV)

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

God knows everything. His knowledge is endless. He knows everything about each of us; our good points as well as our less desirable. When we are young we are like sponges absorbing all that is around us and all that is told to us. Then as we grow in age, sometimes we begin to doubt and question those things that we were taught. This is where our faith foundation helps us to believe in something that we cannot see; and helps us to hold on to that image of guidance and hope.

And so even though I am an adult now, I still remember and recite often the prayer that I was taught so many years ago...some things never grow old...

Let us pray: Heavenly Father hear my prayer; keep me in your loving care. Guide me through my live long days, in my work and in my play. Keep me pure and sweet and true in everything I say and do. In Jesus name, Amen.



Monday, February 9

Northern Lights

Text: Psalm 89:5-6 (NRSV)

Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD...

I don't know what makes the Northern Lights. I read the scientific explanation somewhere but I don't remember. I'm not sure I want to know anyway. I prefer to think of them as God's paint brush.

I saw them just last week. What a show. Great misty green shafts shooting up from the Northern horizon, like a battery of search lights run by the Master himself. It wasn't just the Northern horizon; they were all over, and all the way to the top of the sky.

When the lights are bright like that, it's impossible to watch them standing up. You must lie down on the beach, a boat dock or your front yard. That's the only way to watch the whole show. That's what I was doing when they began to whirl and swirl across the sky, from one horizon to the other.

Don't bog me down with talk of protons and ions. This is mystical stuff, the true work of our Lord all over the evening sky. I'll admit that every time I see the Northern lights I wonder all over again what makes them happen. But that's where I leave it. Some things are better with the wonder left in them.

Like the awesome wonder of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives among us each and every day. And for all of us blessed to live in Grand Marais, it's right out our back door.

Let us pray: Father, we thank you for the heavens...for the wonder of the Northern Lights, and for your gift of grace to us. In your most holy name, Amen.



Tuesday, February 10

The Compass

Text: Proverbs 3:5-6 (NRSV)

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.**

When I was a little boy, I followed my Grandpa everywhere when he walked in the woods. He had a little brass compass that he pinned on my coat. He loaned it to me every time we went on an adventure in the deep dark forest. I knew I could never be lost as long as I had my Grandpa's compass with me. Boy, was I wrong. You see, getting lost is never fun. It can be very scary to be making your way through the woods only to realize you're lost. That you no longer know where you are. For us hunters, being able to locate your exact position or be in the areas that the big bucks frequent is very important. At times it could even be a matter of life and death. For many, many years, hunters and fishermen have utilized a little pocket compass or one like my Grandpa gave me to orient themselves, but it was often less than ideal because it requires some interpretation and skill to figure out. It can be affected by other metal objects that may come too close. My Grandpa taught me that as long as I had my shiny brass marbles compass and paid attention to the sun, the wind and which side of the trees had moss, I would never be lost.

Well, let me tell you, I crossed my own tracks more than once using that little compass but I found my way out sooner or later and it means the world to me, not so much for the navigational function, but because my Grandpa gave it to me.

There is a guidance system available to us believers. It may not necessarily help you find your truck from deep in the forest when you're lost, but it will guide you out of the spiritual darkness of a fallen world. Those of us that know Jesus Christ have been given an internal guidance system. He is known as the Holy Spirit, and his mission is to guide us into truth. It is a gift from God that will help guide you when you are lost, comfort you when you are lonely, inspire you when the going gets tough, convict you when your course is set for destruction, and direct you onto God's path for your life. This guidance system cannot be purchased at any price. God gives it freely to those who give their hearts to his Son. Trust me...believe and trust in him and you'll always find your truck.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for your guidance in life. Help us to follow the path you have set before us, and the peace in our hearts only you can give. May you be the direction we follow on our life's journey home. In your most precious name we pray, Amen.



Wednesday, February 11

Just One More Cast

Text: Genesis 2:3 (NRSV)

So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

Every summer when I was a little guy, I remember my Dad would take me fishing. We'd go for three or four days, just Dad and me. An old army tent, camp stove and some grub; a boat that leaked just a little and two oars that didn't match. We set up camp on the shore of a secret lake that only Dad and I knew of. However, there were often other people around, but that didn't matter. It was our secret lake. This was the greatest adventure of my life. When you're seven years old these things are important. I'd spend the previous week digging worms and checking equipment. Everything had to be just right and ready to go when my Dad got home on Friday. My Dad would load the boat in the back of the old Chevy pickup, put our gear in the boat, and we were off, just me and my Dad.

We'd set up camp on a hill just up from the shore where we could see the whole lake. Sleeping bags rolled out, camp stove on the picnic table – and we were ready. Time to go fishin!

We fished the whole lake. Dad ran the oars and I caught bluegill after bluegill. Boatloads of bluegills. The sun would set behind the trees. The bullfrogs would start to croak and the crickets were so loud it would hurt our ears. No matter, cause we were fishin. Dad would say, "Well, son, time to go in and make dinner. Got to gather wood for a camp fire." I would reply, "Just

one more cast, Dad?” “Okay,” he’d say and he’d light his pipe. I’d fish until we couldn’t see shore because it was so dark.

Those were the days...memories that fuse to your heart for a lifetime. In later years when I grew up and had children of my own, Sharon and I would take my Dad and his two brothers fishing. The circle of life, I guess. We’d take off to a lodge in Canada and fish from sunup to sundown. We got sunburn and blown away, lost lures and ate like kings at shore lunch, we laughed and laughed and did it all again the next day...for four days. It was like our secret lake all over again.

Now my Dad is gone, my kids are grown and I’m a grandpa...the circle of life, I guess. I take my granddaughter out on Grand Sable Lake in the afternoon. We fish until the worms are gone or the sun settles behind the trees. She’s eaten the lunch and caught enough rock bass to feed China. It’s then Abby looks up at me and says, “One more cast, Poppy?” I can smell my Dad’s pipe smoke and hear him say, “Okay...just one more cast.” And we stay as long as she wants to. Those are the days that she and I will never forget.

May God bless you with those special moments that turn into priceless memories that last with us a lifetime.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the memories. For times with friends and family, and knowing that with you, those who have gone before us are waiting until that wonderful day when we’ll all be together again. Amen.



Thursday, February 12

Text: Philippians 4:13 (NRSV)

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

This is my favorite Bible verse. I say it to myself many times throughout the day. It helps me to stay focused and grounded to the fact that my Lord God is in control.

Sometimes we run in graceful bounds of confidence and many other times we stumble and trip over the obstacles that come along in this journey of life. Without his constant guiding hand leading me and caring for me, I know that I would become lost and lose my way.

Let us pray: So it is in the freshness of a new day that we give thanks for all that we have and all that we are, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Friday, February 13

Abby

Text: Matthew 19:14

...but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

I know that the Lord has truly blessed me. I have someone who likes to walk the woods with me. She loves the goofy stuff I like. Pocket knives, little pieces of string, wet muddy feet and the funny looking dog that follows us along. She doesn't care if there's mud on her boots or if it's cold out. She has the eyes that see all the things I used to. She loves to fish for those stunted little perch on Sable Lake until we run out of worms, the lunch is gone or it gets too dark to see.

You see, I'm a grandpa. My little five year old shadow has taught me more about life than I could ever imagine. It's funny how she asks so many questions and is so eager to learn, but it's me who's the real student. Five years old is just about right. She has just about the right blend of wonder and smarts. A five year old is usually honest, funny, polite, and very interesting. I figure it's about the last year that she can hear me cuss and not repeat it right away. She trusts everything I say. How deep the lake is and how fun it is to explore the woods right by the house. Abby is youth at its best, budding in every direction. She still thinks being wet and dirty is a natural condition. It makes it fun for Poppy, too.

I've learned that five year olds have the right sense of size. They think ponds are as much fun as lakes. She thinks one fish is as good as a limit. So when we leave a few today we can catch tomorrow, it just makes sense.

God gave me someone to walk the woods with. Abby thinks it's the first day of fall not the last day of summer and that rain is something to go out in, not come in from. We should all think that way. I have a new outlook on life. Getting older is not that bad after all. It's really kind of fun. I can play on the monkey bars and no one thinks I've lost my marbles. Most of all, if the Lord calls me home tomorrow, I'll be smiling the whole trip because I got to be a grandpa. And you know what? I'm sure that at the end of an October rainbow the pot holds a few special rocks, a horse, a short piece of string, and some candy - just part of the treasure of being five years old.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the little children, for the love and wonder they bring us all. We ask that you watch over all of us...the children of God. Amen



Saturday, February 14

Let's Go Sit By the Fire

Text: 2 Corinthians 1:4

...who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

As the winter drags on and the holidays are over, our hopes turn to spring. We long to put away our snow shovels in Grand Marais. We know the weather will turn warm and the wild roses on the beach will bloom...but for now, "Let's go sit by the fire."

Pick any fire, any friend. I'm sure you can think of quite a few fires you'd like to sit by again. Reliving a special day that time will never tarnish. Some of our friends may be gone, but shared fires are still remembered as being as bright and warm as friendship.

A fire is a symbol of being home – wherever that fire is. A fire is a place where we are welcome and find comfort among our friends.

Our fires warm our spirits as much as our bodies. They dry our cares as much as our wet socks and carry our dreams in the flames.

As we endure our long winter, let the warmth of our Lord Jesus surround you in his loving care. And together we'll look forward to spring and a new beginning. While it snows outside, let's share what we have of life right now. I know of no more welcome phrase than when a friend says to me, "Let's go sit by the fire."

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the warmth we find in you on a cold day, surrounded by your love, the true comfort knowing you are with us each and every day. Amen.

