

Devotions – February 22-28, 2015  
Rick Pink, Synod Council Member  
Zion Lutheran Church, Manistique, MI

**Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Text: Matthew 11: 2-6 (NIV)

**When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”**

The Lord came to this earth to save us all from our sins. All he asks of us is that we believe in him with our whole heart and follow in his example as best we can. In our human frailty it seems impossible to love each other in the depth, strength and profound faith that God has commanded us to. Just as Jesus reminds John, if our faith is strong and we believe in the depth of our heart, all things are possible through our Lord.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, help us to remember that you love each one of us deeply. Help us to remember that you are always with us, in both our good times and our bad times. Strengthen us to hold tightly onto our faith and we will certainly weather any storm with your help and guidance. In Jesus name, Amen.



**Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Text: Psalm 10: 1-3 (NIV)

**Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord.**

After reading this passage one could certainly believe the words were penned down just today. With the news of tragic events we hear, and see, happening in the world everyday including the persecution of Christians; it is easy to feel deep sadness. Has God left us to our own devices? I certainly believe he has not forgotten his children and their misery. He most certainly strengthens and saves those that are caught in the tempest. We are not powerless in our faith and prayers. I believe God will restore

tranquility and reason to the vilified parts of the world according to his plan and schedule.

Let us pray: Lord, please be with those all over the world that suffer. Give them hope of brighter days to follow those they suffer at this time. Be with our military members, missionaries and aid workers, wherever they may be, to protect and strengthen them in their daily activities. We lift up our requests to you in Jesus name, Amen.



**Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>**

Text: Genesis 1:3-5 (NIV)

**And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day.**

One of the very special times etched into my memory from when I was very young was always waking up on the first day of summer vacation after the school year. It seemed that when I awoke I could smell all the different smells coming through the open window. I could hear every sound from each of God’s creations. I could feel the cool breeze and warm sunlight coming through the window. It was like a new beginning and I was filled with the joy of life and the wonder of it all! I always was in love with nature and was so very fortunate to grow up in rural western Pennsylvania so I could explore the woods, streams and fields. Along with my dog “Pixie,” who was about a fifteen pound terrier I would spend all day out-of-doors. Back then, your parents didn’t have to worry about not hearing from you all day.

I would capture mice, chipmunks, salamanders, frogs and such and developed my own little zoo for the summer. My point is that I was inspired by all of God’s creation and how it functioned. Because of this early experience I came to love science and especially the study of animals. Of course, early on, I sometimes was concerned that evolution and creation didn’t seem to mix together very well. This made me question both concepts.

It took many years but I came to realize that God is the creator of all things. Additionally, evolution and creation are not separate concepts. It is important to remember that God created the beginning of everything we know in the world. God created the world and people as an expression of his love. God desired to relate to and fellowship with the people he created.

Let us pray: Thank you Lord for the greatness of your creations and for giving us life and the ability to caress all things in the world. Help us to always remember and enjoy all you have made for us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.



**Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>**

Text: Psalm 103:1-5 (NIV)

**Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.**

We all can easily complain about life but David’s list points out the abundant gifts that God has provided us. God never has us out of his sight and cares for us with an unwavering love. God knows everything, before we even think it he knows what is in our hearts and minds. No matter how low we get or how badly we feel it is always possible to count our blessings.

Being my job is in health care, and for several years health care education, I have had the privilege of working in large University hospitals. Why has that been a privilege? Well, besides the possibility of giving another person comfort and understanding it has allowed me to look around and recognize someone always has a worse path in life than yourself. We can never understand or know the answer to God’s plan for each of us but we need to have faith so we can weather any occurrence.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, give us the strength to face each day with a resolve to move ahead in our life and proceed as you would have us do. Thank you for the abundant blessings you have provided each of us in our lifetime. In Jesus name, Amen.



**Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>**

Text: Proverbs 3:1-4 (NIV)

**My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.**

These words and directions are so important in our life and tell so much about our character. If we follow these words it is not only a benefit for ourselves but leads us to work for respect and justice of others. It is not enough in our lives to merely speak the words or have the thoughts – the way we live our lives will show if we measure up.

Let us pray: Father, guide us to always respect and help others to the best of our ability. Never let us lose sight of the fact that we are all your children and the earth is full of your creations. Let us not forget you have given the world to us because of your love. In Jesus name, Amen.



**Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>**

Text: 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NIV)

**Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.**

My privilege of serving on the Zion Lutheran church council and the Synod council has provided me enlightenments and the opportunity to see the good work of the local church as well as the Synod and national ELCA.

This last fall I had the chance to present the results of stewardship within our church by giving a few "Temple Talks" to churches in our Synod. When I first volunteered I was a bit nervous as I raised my hand, I certainly grew more nervous as the dates grew near and I prepared my text. I was worried how a presentation on stewardship would be received and if I would be met with disinterest by the members.

Well, I was overwhelmed by the warm and kind reception that I received at every church I visited. After services numerous members among the churches thanked me for coming to share my information with them. Several were happy to hear the good work of the church that their shared riches had helped support and create.

Sometimes I believe we forget to share not only our riches but also our talents and gifts with our brothers and sisters.

Let us pray: Most gracious Lord, please always keep in our hearts and minds the ability to see the needs of all your people. Help us to take action to help our brothers and sisters in any way we can. Give us the faith to realize that supporting your work in no way lessens the gifts you provide us. In Jesus name, Amen.



**Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>**

Text: Philippians 2: 1-4 (NIV)

**If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

I believe in this passage Paul is sharing the joy of giving of ourselves to others. I know that anytime I have helped someone with no thought of receiving something in return I have experienced an overwhelming feeling of goodness and satisfaction come over me. I can tell by a person's emotions and expressions when an act of compassion or help is truly appreciated. This is what Paul is trying to teach us so that we may all feel this rush each and every day.

It certainly is a cliché but "treat others as you would treat yourselves" is a definite way to carry out your life and actions to others. I don't believe you can go wrong using these words as a guideline. Once you follow this path the Lord will buttress your ability to carry this out more and more often. After all, this is the way he wants his people to live.

Let us pray: Lord, help us in our faith to believe in the greatness of kindness and compassion to our fellow woman and man. Let us see where needs exist and lead us to address those needs as best we can. Guide us to follow your teachings everyday and direct us in this vocation all the days of our life. In Jesus name, Amen.

