

Devotions – July 16-22, 2017

By The Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp Staff
Crystal Falls, MI

Sunday, July 16, 2017

By Wade Crevier

Text: Matthew 6: 7-8

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Before coming to Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp I was a person who, much like the Gentiles, would heap up empty phrases for prayer. I had not really experienced the power of prayer, the intimacy one can have with God. However, during family camp of last summer all of this changed. I was stationed on a prayer walk to have people find a rock and while holding their rocks use it as their communicator with God. An elder gentleman that was here with his wife and granddaughter sat next to me and began to pray aloud. I was not prepared for what was about to happen. This man communicated with God like I had never experienced before. By the end of his prayer I felt that Jesus himself was with us comforting us and letting us know that he hears our concerns.

So when you pray, do so knowing that God is next to you hearing your words. You are not alone in this process. Share actual concerns that you have, and thank him for the blessings you receive every day. God loves you very much and wants to hear from you, so take the time to pray and let him know what is on your mind.

Let us pray: *Dear God, we give you thanks that you hear our prayers no matter what is on our heart. You hear our cries for help and shouts for joy. We give thanks that you are always with us. Amen*



Monday, July 17, 2017

By Peter Lund

Text: Psalm 42

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, “Where is your God?” These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you

disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

Psalm 42 always reminds me of my mother. Every night when we were kids she would sing us a song to help us fall asleep. She would sing songs like “You are my Sunshine” and the appropriately named “I Love You” song. But one of these songs was not the like the others and we called it the “Deer Song.” It was not a happy go lucky children’s song, but rather a beautiful and longing cry to God. Later, I would discover that the song was inspired by Psalm 42 and my mom learned it at Bible Study group.

One of my campers this week was homesick. Actually, he was so homesick that he felt like he needed to puke. I have never seen homesickness like this before so I brought him to our nurse and asked for help. Unfortunately, the nurse could not do anything about his homesickness. The boy was just tired and longing for his parents. He felt like only his parents could make him feel better. That day the boy received a letter from his parents which lifted his spirits back to normal levels. This reminded me that I too missed my mother. Just as the deer longs for flowing streams, we all are a little homesick. We are homesick for our parents and we are homesick for our heavenly father. Unfortunately, there is no easy cure for homesickness. When we are in distress it can be hard to find God. We can pray and wait for our heavenly father to hear our cry.

Let us pray: Dear God, just as a deer longs for the flowing streams, so we long for your love in our lives. Cure of us of our homesickness, knowing that wherever we go, you go with us. Amen



Tuesday, July 18, 2017

By Nadia Krista

Text: Deuteronomy 31:6

‘Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.’

For the third week of camp, I was assigned to be a camp counselor for high schoolers. It was completely unexpected, and I was not feeling confident that I would do a good job as their counselor. So many thoughts came to mind - Would the campers respect me as a counselor? Would they think I am uncool? Would they enjoy camp? How should I be around them? There was so much uncertainty. As I saw the names of the campers in my cabin, I realized that I am familiar with two of them. Both campers were volunteers in the first week of camp, and they were really sweet. Knowing that they would be in my cabin gave me a huge sigh of relief and assurance.

Before camp starts on Sunday, we always begin with a staff meeting. Pastor Tracy had reassigned me to the other high-schooler cabin. Well that's no big deal right? It's just another cabin. Well not exactly. I found out that there would be a difficult girl in my cabin. I tried not to

panic, but I could not help but become anxious. It was barely 2 hours till the campers would arrive to camp. As I was making the door decorations for my cabin, I was talking to a fellow counselor who was also feeling nervous as well. Songs always helped to calm me down so I started to sing a camp song called 'Be Bold'.

The lyrics go like this:

*Be Bold, Be Strong
For the Lord my God is with Thee
Be Bold, Be Strong
For the Lord my God is with Thee
Be not afraid, be not dismayed
For the Lord my God is with Thee.*

I held tightly to the lyrics of that song and prayed before I met the campers. Fast forward to the end of my week with the high-schoolers. I learned a lot, and my campers told me that they had a great week. To my surprise, a few campers even told me that it was their best camp experience yet. God certainly always blesses beyond expectations. Even though I felt inadequate, and certainly struggled during the week, He was faithful.

If you are going through a challenge, remember that we have a good and faithful Father who will never leave nor forsake us. Therefore, be bold and be strong because the Lord your God is with you!

Let us pray: *Dear Jesus, renew my spirit and empower me with your strength. Even if I am going through the fiery furnace of challenges in life, remind me that you are with me every step of the way. Thank you for being my loving Father. Amen.*



Wednesday, July 19, 2017

By Sophie Carlson

Text: Proverbs 27:17

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

Have you ever done something to change someone's life but at the time you didn't know you were doing anything at all? I had met a camper, who during the week I had not had personally as a camper, but I sat with her and her family during some meals and got to know her. As the week went on she became kind of like a shadow, which I didn't mind. Well, one day her grandma had come up to me and thanked me and I was very confused as to why. She said that she had seen me and her granddaughter at the beach and wanted to know what I had done to get her granddaughter in the water. I was still very confused and told her I didn't do anything, I had just told her granddaughter that I was going to the beach and she decided to tag along. As it turns out, her granddaughter had a fear of water because when she was younger she fell into a

pool and almost drown. Someone had thankfully pulled her out of the pool and she was resuscitated but she was left with a major fear of water. This information surprised me since the granddaughter was very carefree and had a blast on the beach and in the water.

I pray to God that even if I don't know it, with his help I will continue to touch the lives of those who come to this camp. Whether it be something big or small, I hope it is something that they will remember and know that they can find a place of grace with anyone and in anyone.

Let us pray: *Dear God, help us to reach out to be your hands and feet in this world, even when we don't know that we are doing it! May our lives be a witness to your love and grace. Amen*



Thursday, July 20, 2017

By Grace Tahtinen

Text: Matthew 6:34

"So do not worry about tomorrow. For tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

We were at the beach having a party, and it was my cabin's turn to go swimming. I wasn't going to get in, but something about the water and how hot it was made it seem like a good idea. As I walked down the dock to get into the water, a young boy named Matthew was hanging on tightly to the ladder. I asked him what was wrong, and he told me. "I am too scared to swim. I'm going to drown!" I instinctively got in the water and tried to help him. We were all wearing life jackets, but Matthew didn't know that a life jacket meant you wouldn't go under. I talked to him for a while and soon we were swimming while I held his side all the way along the dock. I taught him how to paddle and to kick (although he already knew how to kick) and we started with the basics. We floated on our backs and tried swimming out farther and turning back. After a while, I convinced him that we could swim 40 feet to the water trampoline, and we set our sights on it. He said he would be very mad at me if I let go, so I swam on my side and we swam to the trampoline together. Once we arrived, it took some convincing to get him to get on and jump, but after jumping around, we were having a great time with laughter and smiles, something I hadn't seen from him yet. When it came time to swim back, he swam all by himself - all 40 feet.

At the beginning of this summer, I was Matthew. I was too scared to go off to Bible camp and counsel girls every week before leaving for college. I didn't think I could pray in front of a group of girls let alone pray by myself every day. Coming to high school week as a camper and then being a LIT (Leader In Training) for a week changed that. I learned to serve others and put their needs before my own. I also realized I cannot bite off more than I can chew. The Bible says in Matthew (ironically) 6:34 "So do not worry about tomorrow. For tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." I've learned this summer that if I need help I ask for it. With my LIT experience and my first week of counseling under my belt, I have enough faith in God and myself to lead a Bible study on my own, and even pray for my

whole cabin and all of camp if needed. I've stopped worrying about tomorrow. For today's worries are enough.

Let us pray: Dear God, help us to leave our worries with you, trusting you to be with us in all times and places. Guide us in all areas of our lives. Amen



Friday, July 21, 2017

By Benjamin Leow

Text: Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Have you ever walked on a trail in complete darkness without any source of light?

Well, I have, and this was my experience on the very first night I hiked up from the main site in Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp to Vagland, an off-site camping area full of treehouses. I wonder what got over me. Perhaps it was tiredness... perhaps it was carelessness... but I did not have my flashlight readily available. It was about 9.30 pm, and Mr. Sun was nowhere to be found. Hanging high up in the sky above me was Mr. Moon instead, with his company of stars and constellations. Still, the only way up to Vagland was through a rocky path in a dense forest, and the tall trees left no space for any light to enter in. Thankfully for me, I was not alone. I was walking with a line of campers and counselors, many of them holding on to flashlights. The hike up was no longer as daunting as before.

From this experience of walking in darkness, we can learn three things about our walk with God. First, God is with us to guide us each step of the way. Even if you are holding on to a flashlight in darkness, it would not be useful unless you shine it on where you are about to walk. In Psalm 119:105, God reveals to us that His Word (the Bible) is like a flashlight, shining light on our feet! I especially like how this verse is so specific about where the light goes... right where we need it, each step of the way! The hike up to Vagland is filled with broken stumps and huge rocks that could easily trip us up. It is only when we use the flashlight on our feet that we could avoid any falls. Likewise, God's Word warns us of the ensnarement of life, providing for us a standard of righteous living, so that we would not fall into a life of sin.

Secondly, we need to walk this Christian life with a community of God-fearing believers. When you do not have your flashlight with you, the smartest thing to do would be to walk alongside a friend that does! On top of that, the key is to stay close to that friend, so that you get as much light as possible. Likewise, it is important to stay close to friends that are walking closely to God, for often times, they could offer you advice and guidance as you journey through difficulties in life. They could even point out a stumbling block on your path that you may not even notice on your own! God Himself is a relational God: He is known as the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. If God needs a community, how much more do we as His creation!

Thirdly, we need to keep our eyes on God and away from the distractions of this world. So... it is the night when you have to hike up to Vagland. Flashlight? Check. Friends walking with you? Check. You turn your flashlight on, but as soon as your eyes start to wander from the path you are walking on, you trip and fall. Ouch! It is not only important to have God's Word and to know it, but it is just as important to keep your eyes on it and live it. The more attention we pay to the distractions of this world (e.g. gaming, drinking, partying, gossiping), the more likely we are to fall in our walk with God.

Have you been reading the Bible? Do you have God-fearing friends? Are you distracted by the world?

Let us pray: *Dear Daddy God, I thank You for Your Word. Teach me Your ways, and show me how to live a life that honors You, according to Your Word. Help me to find friends that can journey alongside me in this walk of faith, friends that will encourage each other with Godly counsel and wisdom. Reveal to me the things that have been distracting me away from you, so that I can spend more time with Jesus. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*



Saturday, July 22, 2017

By Annie Jo Wills

Text: Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

About three weeks ago, I was put in charge of a group of campers aged nine though eleven. It was during a week that I was only with the campers during the day and gave them back to their mothers at night. Despite the short period of time that I spent with my group, they taught me something I will remember always.

It was odd how it started because such an important lesson came from such a casual talk. I was sitting around with most of the girls in my group while others sat nearby playing a card game. They asked me questions about life, school, and other random topics. When I answered their questions, I realized they were intently listening with genuine interest. It was the start of a natural, non-forced conversation that we all enjoyed. It made me realize that not just my actions, but my words influence young people. I became a camp counselor because I thought I had the

energy to do it. Now I realize that God chose me to be a counselor because I have something to teach as well as learn.

Let us pray: *Dear Gracious opportunity to learn from one different and has gifts to one another. Amen.*



God, thank you for the another. Each of us is share. Help us to learn from