

Devotions – August 4-10, 2019
By Fortune Lake Camp Staff 2019
Crystal Falls, MI

Sunday, August 4, 2019

Written by Joshua Stachnik, Fortune Lake General Staff, Summer 2019

Bible Passage: Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

At Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp where I work, this is the theme verse for our summer and we have made the verse into a chant. We chant the verse with every camper group throughout the week in the hopes that they can memorize it and take it with them for the rest of their lives. The chant is important because it can be a reminder for your life to stay on Jesus's path. Fortune Lake has changed my faith life. When I first came here as a camper, I didn't want to be here. By the Thursday morning devotion, my counselor had to drag me out of bed. I remember the staff person talking about the Bible story of Abraham and Sarah. I started to connect more with the message of camp, and I really started liking singing the songs. I wondered how to apply their messages to my life. Camp helped me to see God in different ways. I felt faith like I never had before, and I wanted more of it. It's kind of like popcorn: you have some and you always want more. You can run out of popcorn, but you can't run out of faith!

Let us pray: *Dear God, give us faith and help us to renew that faith. May we see Jesus in the acts of kindness we encounter. In His Name, Amen.*



Monday, August 5, 2019

Written by Lance Crevier, Fortune Lake Youth Camp Coordinator, Summer 2019, and soon-to-be Camp Intern

Bible Passage: Luke 14:7-14

⁷When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸“When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; ⁹and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

¹²He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

This scripture in the Bible is an interesting one. Jesus is essentially giving a lecture to a person who invited him to a party at their house. This might not be the nicest thing to do when invited to a party. Even though the time for lecture might be odd, the lesson is important. Jesus tells us that we should not be boastful and arrogant, and to not exalt ourselves. If we do, we might find ourselves being embarrassed. In the case of the story that Jesus says, if you take a high seat and have to move to a lower seat you will have to get up and walk in disgrace back down the table. The key part from this half of the story is to be humble, and this message is repeated several times throughout the Bible.

Jesus also uses this story to drive home another point, and this is the point of the day theme at Fortune Lake for Monday: inclusion. Jesus says to the host, invite the poor, crippled, lame, and the blind. Essentially Jesus is telling the host to include the outcast who did not have a chance at being invited, and then you will be blessed.

This image of inclusion happens on a weekly basis at camp. Every week it seems that there are kids who live on the outskirts for the first night or first day. However, it is wonderful to see how their cabinmates invite them in and make a genuine effort to include everyone, just as Jesus was saying to the host.

Let us pray: God we know that you have created a beautiful and diverse world with people of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Help to celebrate our diversity and cherish what makes us unique. Remind us that you created us in your image and help us grow closer to you and include everyone in the song of praise. Lord we lift this prayer to you, Amen.



Tuesday, August 6, 2019

Written by Caoilann Ferguson, Fortune Lake General Staff, Summer 2019

Text: Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ **On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”**

²⁶ **“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”**

²⁷ **He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”^[a]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b]”**

²⁸ **“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”**

²⁹ **But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”**

³⁰ **In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii^[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’**

³⁶ **“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”**

³⁷ **The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”**

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Who is my neighbor?

In the passage, the lawyer is trying to test Jesus, asking what needs to be done to gain eternal life, and Jesus replies, asking what the law says. The lawyer’s reply is, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,” and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (verse 27). After he replies, the man questions Jesus further, wanting to know who our neighbor is. He gets a story for an answer, one many know well. In the Good Samaritan story, there’s a man beaten, robbed, and left for dead. A priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan all come across him and react differently to the situation. The priest and Levite,

keepers of the church and teachers of the word, both avoid the man, going so far as to go to the other side of the road to do so. The Samaritan, the “bad guy” of the time, is the one to help the beaten man. At the end of the story, Jesus asks the lawyer who he thinks was a neighbor to the beaten man, to which the lawyer says the Samaritan. The interesting part is that the priest and the Levite did what they were supposed to do according to the laws. Had they stopped to help the beaten man, they would have had to go through a long process to be considered clean again, during which they wouldn't have been able to do their jobs. They followed the rules, but the answer to the lawyer's question shows that that isn't always the right thing to do. The passage has the person who is the last choice for many at the time to be the one in the right, even if the others did what they were supposed to do.

Let us pray: *Father, we ask that you guide us to do the right thing, and to help our neighbors, even when others might tell us that it is the wrong thing to do. Help us to recognize the good ways to help those in need around us. Amen.*



Wednesday, August 7, 2019

Written by Summer Kalinovik, Fortune Lake Day Camp/Arts-n-Crafts Coordinator, Summer 2019

Text: Matthew 20:1-16

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?’ ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to

give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Text: Psalm 37:27-29

**²⁷Depart from evil, and do good;
so you shall abide forever.**

**²⁸For the LORD loves justice;
he will not forsake his faithful ones.**

**The righteous shall be kept safe forever,
but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.**

**²⁹The righteous shall inherit the land,
and live in it forever.**

In today's world and society, there are so many cruel and mean people lingering around, never really caring for much or showing that they do. We are often selfish about the things we do, give and take. Sharing is not something that comes along very easy among others, and in these texts state that those who are last (the ones who get bullied, pushed around and picked on) will be first and those who are first (those who take and take and continue to expect a lot in return) will be last. It is saying that we need to stay kind, do our best, do the most that we can, and expect nothing in return. If we do this, if we help, give and love to the best of our abilities while expecting nothing back, we will be repaid in heaven and live greatly in the hands of God after our own passing. However, this does not mean that we turn our backs to those that are cruel, sometimes the case may be that they too are struggling and giving to those what you can is all that you really need to do to help better their day and give them a good start to better themselves so they will also flourish in heaven alongside the Lord.

Let Us Pray: *Dear Father, we thank you for those who we meet, those who change us, those who help us, those who we help. We are so grateful for all that you have led us to do in your path to not only better ourselves but others as well. In your name we pray. Amen.*



Thursday, August 8, 2019

Written by Laura Lyons, Fortune Lake Health Officer, Summer 2019

Text: Mark 2:1-12

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ² So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. ³ Then some people^{6a} came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” ⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷ “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ⁸ At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk’? ¹⁰ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹ “I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.” ¹² And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

“Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’?”

A weight is lifted from your shoulders following an act of forgiveness. It allows you to move forward and frees the burdens you carry. Without this act, you maintain the weight of your guilt and it clouds your thoughts. Jesus instructs his disciples in Luke 21:34, “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down.” Even though it may be trying at times, a feeling of joy is uncovered from an act of forgiveness. It frees a hidden weight from your shoulders.

In this story, it is the boldness of the act of asking for forgiveness that gets the man forgiveness. The faith of the men in the story, just as much as the paralyzed man’s, help contribute to his healing. Without the men’s confidence in Jesus being able to help, the man would never have seen Jesus and received healing. And without their steadfastness to overcome the hindrance imposed by the crowd, this healing wouldn’t have taken place. In this Gospel, Jesus rewards the faith that is persistent in the face of obstacles.

Let us pray: *Lord, let us remember that it is okay to ask for forgiveness and help when we face difficulties and also to allow us to give it freely. Please help us to remember the power of forgiveness as we pray for those in our lives who you might touch in response to our faith. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.*



Friday, August 9, 2019

Written by Ryan Marjonen, Fortune Lake Camp Director's Assistant, Summer 2019

Text: Acts 2:41-47

⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Generosity

I would like to share with you two stories from my life that I believe relate to this reading from Acts 2.

I am currently working at Fortune Lake, on the Fortune Lake property committee, and have also served on the Fortune Lake Board because of the generosity that I have been shown in my life. It is my way of giving back from the generosity that I have been shown. I would not be in this position to even write this without generosity. The biggest thing that has made a difference in my faith life was when I went to Leadership School that was run by the synod and staffed by FLLC. I grew a lot through this program and probably would not have gone if it wasn't for the generosity of my church to pay for it and my pastor's insistence that I go. Because of my experience at Leadership School, I had the courage and desire to work at camp after I had attended there three years while in high school.

I received a Youth and Family Ministry Certificate because of generosity also. This certificate has given me new tools to use at Fortune Lake and more confidence to lead youth groups in various locations. When I had shown interest in the certificate, I was told that the synod would pay for half of it and I would have to pay the rest. Being the poor college student that I was, I didn't have the money to pay for my half and had forgotten about even trying to go to the school until I got an email telling me to show up and that everything was paid for. I don't know where the money came from but will be forever grateful for the generosity.

As my two stories show, generosity really does transform, and it has transformed my life for the better. Now hopefully with my work at Fortune Lake and at other churches, I have transformed other lives as well. Generosity transforms community. It transforms by showing love and kindness to your fellow man. Being generous also shows God's love for all people especially when it is done unconditionally. Generosity isn't just about material wealth; it includes your time and talents. Just being there to listen or just giving someone company can make a big difference in someone's life.

Because God has blessed us with so much, it is our duty to share that blessing with others and share the love of God with others. You never know how far reaching one act of generosity can have on people.

Let us pray: *Dear Lord, thank you for all the generosity I have been shown in my life. Help me to use the gifts that I have been given to pay that generosity forward. Help me to show a glimpse of your love to others so that they may know you. Help me to live a generous life. All this I ask in your name. Amen*



Saturday, August 10, 2019

Written by Charlotte Strom, Fortune Lake Vagland Coordinator, Summer 2019

Text: Matthew 18:20

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

I have heard, over the years, many theories about what makes Fortune Lake such a special place. I have also had the chance to consider them all while living here this summer. I would argue that there are many things that make camp so special, but the greatest of all is community. It takes at least thirty kids to play an exciting field game. It takes just ten kids to fill a cabin. It takes two people to have a conversation, and to invite God into this place. Every day we sing, praise, and study together in groups, sometimes of people we've never met before. It's a unique opportunity to see God in the people around you, walking with you as a friend. However, our community extends far past the grounds of Fortune Lake. God shows in the light that sparks in a stranger's eye when you discover that you have both been to camp, or the embrace of an old camp friend who you never really lost touch with, or the knowledge that you know a place where there is almost always a friend waiting. That is the true gift of camp.

Let us pray: *Holy Creator, thank you for the people you have given me. Help me to see your light in the community around me, and to extend my hand when someone is in need. In your holy name, Amen.*

