

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, January 17, 2022
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“God Made Me This Way”

READING: Genesis 3:11-12 – And [God] said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Genesis 4:13-14 – Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” Genesis 27:34-38 – When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me – me too, my father!” But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.” Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?” Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?” Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau wept aloud.

I recently read an article in a theological paper in which a gay pastor wrote, “I am the way God intended. He made me this way, and I am glad.” “He made me this way.” That is a statement often used in all manner of media, especially whenever the topic of gender or sexual preference is discussed. I cringe a little inside whenever I hear it, not because I am homophobic or a hater. No. I react to it because it is such a dangerous statement to make in any circumstance. Every one of us would like to use that statement as a shield from guilt and judgement. It is used again and again in the Scriptures as an excuse for ungodly behavior of all kinds.

Let’s start with the Fall in the garden. When God asks Adam a direct question, his response and excuse is, “The woman YOU put here with me gave me fruit!” In essence he says that God made him susceptible to Eve’s temptations, so God must share the blame for what’s happened. “You made me that way...and I fell.”

Look at Cain. Having murdered his brother and been sentenced, he responds by accusing God of being too harsh. After all, it was God who made him a jealous and violent hothead. Now God is driving him from the land and out of His presence. It’s not fair! It’s more than he can bear. God is being judgmental! “He made me this way!”

How about Esau? When he discovers that Jacob has tricked his father into giving him the blessing reserved for the eldest, he weeps and pleads and speaks ill of his brother. He says, “He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright...” Wait a minute! “He took my birthright”? Really? No, Esau, you sold your birthright for a bowl of lentil stew! You thought so lightly of your place in the family that you shrugged it off because you were hungry. In essence he says, “God made me this way. I’m a hunter and outdoorsman. I couldn’t be bothered with future stuff. I’m all about the here and now. He made me this way!”

What God calls sin in the Scriptures always makes us uncomfortable because of the Law’s mirror effect. We see our sin and unworthiness when we take God’s commands seriously. The serial adulterer says to his wife, “I can’t help it. God made me this way. I’m just over-sexed.” The woman who leaves her husband and children for another says, “God would want me to be happy, right? That’s how he made me.” The arrogant person says, “It’s hard to be humble when you’re perfect in every way. Thank God he made me this way and not like those lazy, ignorant people down the road.”

“God made me this way” can become an excuse and a cover for all manner of sin. Instead of recognizing that “we are by nature sinful and unclean”, we can lay it all on God and claim we can’t help our weaknesses and our failings – he made us this way. The only healthy path lies in acknowledging our sin, repenting of it, confessing it before God, and doing our best to steer clear of it in the future. God is clear in his Word that ALL of us are broken in some way; that ALL of us fall short of the glory of God; that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” We all need his forgiveness. No one sin is worse than another, and no one sin is better than another. Jesus died for all of them, and only in his blood and righteousness can we stand before our Maker in hope. Only in His forgiveness can we truly rejoice and say, “Thanks be to God – He made me this way!” Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

1. Watch for information about the SENIORS ANGEL TREE. We are going to give you an opportunity to adopt a Senior Citizen from our congregation or from our community who needs some basic items like toiletries, tissues, snacks, and other items they may not be able to afford. The Discipleship Team will collect and deliver what you have provided just in time for Valentine’s Day next month.
2. For younger families, pass the word that we will be having “CAMP COCONUTS” this year on *Friday, January 27, 8:00 P.M. to Saturday morning at 8:30*. This is a whole family event that will let them camp out in the church building with pop-up tents and sleeping bags. There will be games, a fire pit for hotdogs and S’mores, and a movie to put everyone to sleep. There is no cost beyond bringing snacks to share. Sign up at the office or call Karen.
3. And announcing the return of the CHILI COOK-OFF AND DESSERT AUCTION, Sunday, February 5 from 5-8 P.M. You can cook and enter a chili or two at luthyouth.com. You can bake one of your favorite cakes, pies, or cookies for the youth to auction off. Or you can just come and taste a variety of chilis and buy yourself a scrumptious dessert. This is one of our most entertaining events. Come and enjoy.