

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, January 24, 2022
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“Rewrite, Revise, and Reinterpret”

READING: II Timothy 4:1-5 – In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

A friend gave me some issues of The Lutheran Forum, a monthly newsletter published by some fairly conservative pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In one of the issues was a report on this past summer’s National Convention in Columbus, Ohio. At one point a contentious issue was on the floor and tempers were getting a bit frayed. So one of the delegates moved a “point of order” and asked that one of the members of the “Prayer Team” be asked to lead a prayer to settle everyone and get refocused on the issue at hand. (Evidently they had a standing committee of pastors who were there to offer appropriate prayers when called upon.)

The designated pray-er came to a microphone and read from their I-phone a prayer that began with this invocation, “Brother Wind, Sister Water, Mother Earth, Father Sky...” Do you recognize those words or the ones to whom they refer? I hope not, for neither do I. I do not recognize those words as Christian, let alone appropriate in a so-called “Lutheran” setting. Those words refer to something that is rank paganism, specifically “animism”. They have no place on the lips of Christians, neither lay people nor pastors.

There is a current that runs strong through many of the Protestant church bodies these days that I find alarming, frustrating, and sad. So many of the leaders in these churches are “chasing the culture” rather than addressing or even confronting the culture. In order to be current, in order to be fresh and cutting-edge, in order to appeal to the Biblically illiterate within and without the church, these leaders “rewrite, revise, and reinterpret” the Scriptures to attempt to fit the Word into the lifestyles and life-choices they see around them. Mostly this has disastrous consequences.

As we just read in II Timothy, St. Paul predicted nearly 2000 years ago that this day would come. What God said clearly and plainly in the Bible grates hard on the ears of so many in our day. They want all manner of sins to be declared righteous. They want sexuality to be a menu of “choices and preferences” rather than a beautiful gift given by God to secure the blessings of family and fidelity. They want to gild certain lifestyles and hold them up to the light to see how they sparkle. They want to define for themselves what is a good work and what is sin. They talk about “haters” with real venom, then take every chance to ostracize and shame those who have a viewpoint different than theirs.

As St. Paul says, “The time will come when they will not put up with sound doctrine...” And we can see just that happening in the public square. When the “itchy ears” need relief, teachers jump up to tickle those ears with “rewrites, revisions, and reinterpretations” that are more myth than truth, more humanism than Godly.

But to you, Christian, St. Paul lays the charge to hold to God’s word and to sound doctrine that is clearly taught in that Word. He encourages you to “keep your head in all situations”. When you hear something

new that seems at odds with what you have been taught all your days, trust your “stink-o-meter”! You are probably hearing something “itching ears” are eager for, but you want the truth. When a “documentary” tries to tell you that Jesus had a wife and children, when the History Channel tells you that “Ancient Aliens” showed the Egyptians how to build the Pyramids, when you hear a prayer to “Brother Water, Sister Wind, Mother Earth, and Father Sky”, turn away and thank God that you have his Word in your Bible and in your heart. If anything points you to a savior that is not Christ Jesus, our Lord say, “Get thee behind me Satan!” He’s the One and Only! 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 you 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.