

**WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, October 1, 2024**  
**Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN**

**“Pity the Poor Rabbits”**

**READING: Romans 8:35-37 – Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**

**Pity the poor rabbits. From the moment they are born, sightless and hairless, they are mercilessly and relentlessly hunted by every carnivorous beast in their environment. Have you ever noticed that in the spring and early summer there are rabbits everywhere? Early in the morning on a walk or a drive, you will see one or two in nearly every yard, big ones and little ones. But by this time of year, you see very few bunnies of any size. The reason is simple: they have been eaten.**

**According to the DNR, the average life expectancy of a wild cottontail rabbit in Indiana that lives past the nesting stage is only 11 months! Less than a year! A rabbit aged 4-5 is a VERY old rabbit and a very lucky one at that. Everything eats rabbits: owls, hawks, coyotes, foxes, weasels, bobcats, fishers, mink, snakes, skunks, dogs, and racoons. Some of the worst predation is by your cuddly and beloved housecat you let out the door who kills dozens of baby and young rabbits in his lifetime! Rabbits are very tender and very defenseless compared to let’s say a squirrel. Most of them do not have a strong hold on life. Squirrels, on the other hand, will fight to the death and inflict all kinds of damage on their assailants. Rabbits are pushovers in comparison.**

**In our lesson for today St. Paul says that from the world’s point of view, Christians are also pushovers. Satan can and does use many tools to pull us down. Paul names a few: trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and sword. There are many others. Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 to point out that God’s people have always experienced suffering in spite of God’s presence in their lives. Our sin, the sins of others, and the brokenness of the world have always been the cause of many sorrows. We seem like sheep awaiting the butcher’s knife, easily dispatched.**

**In particular the words, “...we face death all day long...” speak a difficult truth to us. You see every morning I say good-bye to Becky as she heads her way and I go mine. We expect to see each other again about dinnertime, and to this day that has happened. But we can never be absolutely sure about that. Things can happen. One of us could become involved in a car accident. A tornado could wreak havoc with the roadways or sweep one of us away. Every active shooter tragedy involves people who don’t come home at the end of the day. Heart attacks, strokes, and accidents of all sorts can bring injury or death without much warning. What I am saying is that while I expect to see my wife at suppertime every day, I cannot say with absolute knowledge that this will always happen.**

**Paul acknowledges this truth, but then comes roaring in with a greater and more important truth: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” And why does he say this? He goes on to list all the things that cannot, will not, and never shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Nobody, no way, no how, no thing can take away the love of God that is ours in our Savior Jesus. It is ours, and there is nothing in this whole wide world that can take our salvation from us, period!**

**St. Peter says much the same thing in his First Epistle, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade – kept in heaven for you,**

who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." See – "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade." Our salvation is guaranteed – not for a day or a year or a lifetime, but forever and ever.

So pity the poor rabbits. They are targets from day one and have little to look forward to but being some carnivore's dinner. You and I, seemingly like sheep, easily taken, always in danger, and prey to "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" have a confidence and a sure hope for our God will not abandon us to the grave but will raise us up with Christ and give to us for his sake eternal life. That is his eternal promise, and that is our eternal hope in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**PRAYER:**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- 1) **MARY MILLER CRUISE** through the Locks is set for October 19. Interest was such that the bus filled immediately. We are also taking the van, so a few seats might still be available. The cost of the cruise is \$38 per person. If you are signed up, please send or bring a check made out to "Grace Lutheran Church" to the office or in an envelope in the offering plate.
- 2) While you were listening to this, I and some 45 others are traveling to Port Huron, MI, and then back to Frankenmuth today. We'll be headed home tomorrow afternoon, so keep all of us in your prayers. Thanks, and we'll see you soon.