

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, October 22, 2024
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“It’s Good to be Loved”

READING: I John 3:1-2, 11 – How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is...This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

Last Thursday I had a new adventure: I underwent a heart catheterization at Baptist Floyd. It was mostly the cardiologist’s “look-see” to make sure I have no other cardiac issues besides the leaky mitral valve that I have to have repaired in early January. I am happy to report that there are no major blockages, so the valve repair should be the only item on the agenda come January.

It's a little weird to be on the “other side of the bed” after all these years of visiting people at that hospital. I’ve probably been in nearly every room at Floyd to visit folks about to undergo a procedure or a surgery. I’ve stood over their beds and read them the Scriptures, prayed with and for them, and celebrated with them when the news was good. I have also stood over their beds and prayed with and for them when the news was hard. I’ve been with them in pre-op rooms and waiting rooms. I’ve been with them in post-op, ICU, CCU, PSU, and in rooms scattered all over the hospital, but I have spent almost no time at all in the Operating Rooms. Until now.

I have to be honest that I don’t like it! You probably know what I’m talking about. You come to registration and from that time on, you are your birthdate! Every single person you interact with from that point on will ask you at least once, “What is your birthdate?” And then there is that infernal gown that defies being tied securely or discretely! And there’s the shaving of places never shorn before, the IV sticks, the monitor patches, the thirst you have because they make you be “N.P.O.” for half a day or more before they really need to. And then there’s the waiting...the seemingly endless waiting. They have you come to the hospital hours before they need you so you are available whenever the doctors find time for you. I’m not telling you anything new, am I?

What I will say is how good it is to be loved! I received text messages before and after the procedure from family members, parishioners who knew about it, from friends near and far. Some were messages encouraging me beforehand. Some were messages afterward inquiring of the results. Some were humorous, some were touching, but all of them expressed their love for me and their prayers for me. As I lay in my bed at home when it was all behind me, I thought about all those messages and tears came to my eyes. The thought came to me, “It’s good to be loved.”

That’s exactly St. John’s thought as he is writing out text for today. He talks about how lavishly God the Father loves us, then sits back and looks at what he has just written, then adds: “And that is what we are!” We are loved so much by the Father, and the proof of it is the fact that we are now THE CHILDREN OF GOD through Christ Jesus our Lord! St. John says in effect, “Wow! God loves us THIS MUCH!” And it’s good to be loved!

We don’t deserve that love. We know that. We believe that. We confess that. There is nothing in us that should earn God’s attention, let alone his love. Yet, in his mercy he could not turn away from us forever. He promised a Redeemer, and at just the right time in human history he sent Jesus, his Son, into our

existence and he saved us. Now for Jesus' sake, we are forgiven, redeemed, sanctified, and called to be the Children of God, loved and blessed. Wow! It's good to be loved by God.

In addition now we can love one another in righteous and holy ways, too. Having been made right with God, we can now live rightly with one another. We care for, care about, and help one another because as God's children we are also brothers and sisters in Christ. We are called by God to be his hands, hearts, voices, and ears to and for one another. That's "double-love!" God loves us, and we love one another. It's good to be loved.

I've had lots of opportunities to share my love for the people of Grace. I've been there in the good times and the hard times for a long time. I have confirmands with whom I can share stories about their great-grandparents; I've been here that long. The folks at Grace are not just my charges, they are my family, and so I have been often able to express my love and caring for them. Now I guess they will all be able to demonstrate their love for me. When my surgery comes on January 9, I expect I'll get many messages before and after letting me know of prayers, hopes, and love. I'm sure that will do at least as much for me as the surgeon will because IT'S GOOD TO BE LOVED: by you and by God! Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1) The PRESCHOOL is holding their "School Carnival" on Saturday, October 26, from 10-2:00. Games, prizes, food, and surprises for kids from 3-99. Bring your little ones and your middle ones. They'll have a ball!
- 2) CIRCUIT REFORMATION SERVICE on Sunday, October 27, at Concordia Lutheran Church on Broadway in Louisville. At 2:30 there will be an organ concert followed at 3:00 with the service. After the service the congregation there will serve a meal of brats and stuff while a representative of the Synodical Mission Institute will make a presentation of the latest news from the mission fields. Take an opportunity to celebrate with other Lutherans from our area.