

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, September 17, 2024
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“Sons of the Father”

READING: Mark 10:35-40 – Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

Two weeks ago I celebrated my wife Becky’s birthday with a tribute to pastors’ wives and mine in particular. Today happens to be my brother Larry’s birthday. He is exactly two weeks younger than Becky to the day. I am the eldest child in our parents’ family. Larry is number two. Alan is third, and Sally is the only girl. Our sainted youngest brother Kurt rounded out the Bob Kischnick family.

We three oldest boys were together a lot. We did chores together. We hoed weeds together. When we got older and stronger we did men’s work at planting and harvest time. Nearly every Saturday morning found us mucking out the calf stalls together. Sometimes we were the “Three Musketeers” and sometimes we were the “Three Stooges”. We played together, we built “camps” in the woods together, we fished and hunted together, we fought one another, and sometimes we still laugh together so hard tears come to our faces. We talk often and see each other every chance we get. We are the sons of our father – “Bob’s Boys”, and we will be as long as we live.

When we were in “Three Musketeer” mode, we were inseparable. We worked together to achieve goals like building sledding hills in the winter or snow caves. We once spent a whole day in the straw mow, building tunnels and rooms amongst all the straw bales. We did such a good job that the next day our dad walked across the mow to throw some straw down onto the drive floor when without a clue he fell through into one of the rooms. We were ordered to pile all the tunnels shut again. We’ve often speculated about the look on Dad’s face when he went down into that cave we had built!

When we were in “Three Stooges” mode, we did nothing but irritate one another. The only person on the planet I ever had a fist fight with was Larry! Don’t know what the tussle was about, but we were doing the milking one evening and squared off with each other. He hit me in the mouth and busted my lip. At the same time I caught him with a body blow to the gut that knocked the wind out of him. We both retreated to our corners, the fight was called a draw, and we never did THAT again! There were also some battles while we were mucking out the calf stalls on several different occasions. When you have a fork full of manure in your hand and you’ve had enough of their stuff, well, you use it. Retaliation was always swift and in kind. Farm boys – what can I say!

I have always imagined that much of the same was true for the “Sons of Zebedee”, that is the “Sons of Thunder”. I imagine that they also were always together until they couldn’t get along. They probably had more than one “fish fight” in their day. They worked the boat and the nets together. They probably dreamt of doing something more exciting with their lives but also saw that their future together would be as fishermen and businessmen.

When Jesus said, "Follow me," they went together. They were together at the Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane. They often enjoyed Jesus' extra instruction and his more intimate feelings, emotions, and frustrations. He wanted them to lead, but sometimes, like in our reading for today, they failed him miserably because they sought their own glory in his. They completely misunderstood their own request. Jesus said, "You don't know what you are asking."

St. John in his gospel indicates that Jesus' glory came upon the cross. When he was lifted up, he drew all men to himself. With that in mind he must also have realized that he and his brother were asking to be at Jesus' right hand and left AT THE CROSS. Unwittingly they were asking to be crucified with Jesus. I've often wondered if this realization came to John as he stood with Mother Mary at the foot of Jesus' cross and saw the malefactors hanging on their crosses to his right and to his left. "These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared," Jesus had said. These brothers who had shared many things were spared from sharing that dreadful death.

So to Brother Larry, "Happy birthday, Knucklehead!" To the rest of you, give thanks that Jesus was willing to "drink the cup and be baptized with the baptism" that his Father had prepared for him. By his sacrifice you and I can be brothers and sisters in Christ, sons and daughters of the King, our gracious Father. 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) **GOLDEN SAINTS LUNCHEON**, this Thursday, the 19th noonish. Bring a dish to pass.