

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, April 27, 2021
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“LAVISH GRACE”

READING: I John 3:1-2 – How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called 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 children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he (Jesus) appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

In the movie “The Book of Eli”, the title character has possession of the only existing Bible in a desolate, post-nuclear war American west. There is no green anywhere: not any grass, not one living tree, no plant life anywhere. There’s been no rain since the war, and the only fresh water to be found comes from underground, and those who control those few wells control everyone else. The principal bad guy owns a well with an old-fashioned hand pump over it. He trades water for whatever valuables others can bring to him. The water is better than gold!

There is a scene where the bad guy has come into possession of a small hotel-sized bottle of shampoo. He has a young woman as his concubine, and in this scene, he is shampooing her hair. He uses precious water to wet her hair, then applies the shampoo and lathers her hair. Both of them enjoy the process: the scent of the shampoo, the texture of the lather, and the sensual lavishness that they had nearly forgotten in the years of hardship. Then comes the moment when he rinses her hair. It takes a gallon and a half of precious water to get the lather out of her hair. In the stark emptiness of the setting, this rinsing process represents a lavishness almost beyond her imagination. It is incredibly gracious.

In our text today St. John is thinking about the love of God and its effect for us. He exclaims, “How great is the love the Father has *lavished* on us...!” The Greek word here translated “lavished” comes from the root of a word that refers to an anointing. When a prophet would anoint a new king, he would pour the finest olive oil over the head of the anointed one in such an abundance that the oil would run down over his face and the sides of his head. It would run down upon his garments and drip off the tip of his beard. It represented the fullness of God’s blessing and all the best gifts with which God would adorn the king’s life and reign.

Here in John’s text he uses this word to indicate just how fully and completely God has accepted us as his children and pours out on us spiritual and physical blessings that we neither deserve nor could anticipate. We are the children of God! We will see Jesus face to face when he comes again in glory. We will be like him then, glorified and immortal. And all of this is because Jesus took our place, suffered our punishment, and died, only to rise again on Easter morning so that we may rejoice in his love and in his lavish grace. We do not

deserve any of it, but it will be ours because the Father accepts us as his own and pours out the Holy Spirit on us in lavish abundance.

It was said that Marie Antionette, consort of the King of France, (The one who said, "Let them eat cake.") loved to take warm milk baths. After luxuriating in it for a time, she would transfer to a warm water bath scented with essential flower oils purchased from the perfumers at extravagant cost. The milk baths used scores of gallons of milk when children in the poorest corners of Paris were starving to death. She simply loved the lavish lifestyle, and since God had deemed her fit for royalty, well she must therefore be worthy in his eyes. She thought that until the rebels sent her to the guillotine.

We don't deserve *anything* from the Father. But for Jesus' sake, he forgives us and declares us righteous, lavishing upon us his grace, his love, and eternal life with him. We do not yet know what we will be, but we know that when Jesus appears, we shall be like him! That is lavish grace. That is undeserved love. That is our promise in Christ Jesus! Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

1) **CONFIRMATION REQUEST:** Our Junior Confirmands are well into their preparations for Confessional Sunday and Confirmation Day, May 16 and 23 respectively. They have been working on their Personal Statements and are now working on their third and final drafts. On April 30 and May 1 they'll participate in their Confirmands Retreat. So, I would ask you to remember them in your prayers. Ask the Lord to pour his Holy Spirit upon them to clarify all they've been taught and to bring to mind the knowledge that they'll need in a few weeks. More than that, ask the Lord to hold them steadfast and sure through the coming years so that their gifts of baptism and their desire for communion will not desert them.