

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, August 10, 2021
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“Their Baser Instincts”

READING: Genesis 8:20-22 – Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. So long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

About half a mile due west of my house there is a home set back from the road in a heavily wooded lot. In the shade of all those trees they have allowed natural plant life to grow, and it's obvious they love nature. In front of their house is a little roadside ditch and there is a small sign that reads, “Do not mow.” They want things natural and do not want the county guys to come by a mow down what's growing there. A couple of weeks ago, the man took his weed-wacker and cut down the grasses and weeds he didn't like. What he left behind was all the thistles, wild daisies, and milkweed plants!

Now as you know, I am no fan of thistles, daisies, and milkweeds. They are enemies of the farmer and the gardener. All three of those plants produce prodigious amounts of seed that will float away on the wind, and since the wind is usually out of the west, many of those will find their way to my lawn, my flower beds, and my garden. I am of the mind that it is an unneighborly and selfish thing to let weeds proliferate that will seed themselves in other people's yards. Now maybe they are unaware; maybe they don't give a care. I don't know. But if everyone followed their “baser instincts” then the world would once again look just like the world looked to God before he sent the flood.

“Baser instincts” – that's an irreligious, unscriptural term the unbelieving world uses to describe what God simply calls “sin”. Those “baser instincts” are just like those weed seeds floating on the wind. They land somewhere and immediately begin to foul up the place, often at the expense of others. After drowning most of his creation because of the “baser instincts” that human beings had sunk to, God shakes his head and says: “Note to self – wiping out the sinners makes the place better for only about one generation. Sin is a sickness that all of them are stuck with. Going to have to go to Plan C.” See, Plan A was for mankind to obey and live forever. That didn't work for long. Plan B was to wipe them out and start again with the best of them. God already sees that won't last either. Plan C is to send the CHRIST into the world who will be the obedient Son and the ultimate sacrifice, and then forgiveness and eternal life will be offered to all mankind.

Our “baser instincts” are an unfortunate result of the Fall. After Adam and Eve we all had them. It's the inclination of our hearts from our beginning. Children have to be taught to be good. My hat goes off to the teachers of three-year-old preschoolers: they have to teach them EVERYTHING – how to wait their turn, how to share the toys, how to sit and be still while others are speaking, how to walk not run in the halls. Sin (and its attendant self-centeredness) is our natural tendency. And, sadly, it doesn't diminish in the least as we age. What the world calls our “baser instincts” are always just a decision away, a temptation waiting to be grasped, a rebellious act to be done.

How wonderful then is the Good News that in Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners! He came to overcome those “baser instincts” and to be obedient unto death, even death on a cross. He came so that we could aspire to a higher instinct: love for God and neighbor. He came so we could walk in his way and do

as he did. And, when we fall, he offers to pick us up, clean us up, and bring us back on his path. Take out the seeds, prevent new weeds! Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

- 1) Our celebration of Pastor Woods' 25th Anniversary of his Ordination is planned for August 22 in late service and in the dinner to follow the service. Watch for details that should have come to you on a postcard. Be sure to respond to it. What a blessing he has been to us!
- 2) Fifth through eighth graders and at least one of their parents will be invited to meet with Rose Ebling and the pastors on Wednesday, August 11, to get started on our new confirmation year. Then all the children of the congregation, age 3 and up, are invited to our first "Grace-on-Wednesday" in over a year! Spread the word.