

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, May 11, 2021
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“They’re Baaaaccckkk!!”

READING: 2 Peter 2:20-22 – If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “The sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.”

You may remember a couple of months ago me talking in a weekly devotion about the bamboo patch across Mel Smith Road from the “Church on the Rock”. A developer has purchased that acreage and is planning a development there. Previous owners had planted a clump of bamboo that had been allowed to grow wild for some years. It had nearly swallowed up the old stable there and was increasing in size year after year. The developer had sent in a bulldozer to take out the rhizome structure of most of the clump, and I was speculating whether or not they got all of it because if just one piece survived, the clump would start its comeback.

Well, they’re baaaaccckkk!! I had noticed in the fence row along the roadside a lot of brown bamboo stalks. I thought they may have hit those with an herbicide, but now I think they were just in winter dormancy. In the past two weeks all of those stalks have greened up and are growing madly. The whole roadside is sprouting bamboo and already new stalks are poking through. They’ll have their hands full trying to eradicate the bamboo.

In our text St. Peter is talking about men who had received the Gospel of Jesus with joy only to turn that Gospel into something tainted and destructive. They used the Gospel to feather their own nests and to gain the trust of the gullible. St. Peter says it would have been better for them never to have heard the truth for when the judgement comes, they will be held accountable for blasphemy and for the evil to which they led others.

What a sad state of affairs! To have learned the good news of Jesus and his death and resurrection. To have learned of his salvation and to gain the hope of eternal life in his name. And then to spurn it all or, worse yet, to twist it into a snare by which unknowing and unwitting others are lured away from the truth and led into emptiness or depravity. Such a result is truly worse than such people never hearing the name of Jesus. Their judgement would have been less severe.

But like those bamboo shoots on Mel Smith Road, sin and its roots are hard to eradicate. Left without repentance, left without a willing spirit to resist, left without a constant influx of God’s word, his sacraments, his worship, and the encouragement of his people, sin pokes

through. It pulls us back into depravity. It threatens to turn the good news of Jesus into an opportunity for selfish gain and a return to self-righteousness and pride.

An example is a program on cable TV called "Camp Meeting". It's usually on in the early morning programming, and whenever I catch a couple minutes of it, I find myself gritting my teeth! It masquerades as a "Christian evangelism" program, but there is no Gospel. The whole "show" (and that is what it is) is based on one thing: plant "a financial seed and God will provide you with a harvest". I cannot remember the last time I heard the name of Jesus spoken there. I cannot remember the last time any Gospel was spoken. The whole show is aimed at getting the hearers to "show God their faith" by sending a tithe of some size to the program so that God can reciprocate by bringing an even larger financial windfall to the listeners. The bigger the seed, the bigger the harvest: that is their promise. It is pure paganism. And I shudder to think what these "preachers" will face when they stand before the Lord at the judgement.

We rejoice in the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. We rest our salvation on HIS works, HIS righteousness, HIS death, and HIS resurrection. We turn from the ways of the world and do our best to walk in his ways. And we trust his Word that tells us we are saved by faith alone in the Son of God, Jesus our Lord. When sin threatens to "poke through", we confess it and let God's grace keep us in his Kingdom. Thanks be to God! 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. 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 the next two 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.

2) Our brothers and sisters in Christ at Shepherd of the Hills, Georgetown, have announced the installation of their new pastor, Rev. Andrew Becker, on Sunday, May 23, at 3:00. You are invited to join them in giving thanks for God's gift.