

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, February 16, 2021
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“Word Gets Around”

READING: Colossians 1:3-7 – We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints – the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Last week in my devotion I talked about going home, and that’s exactly what I did last weekend. I went to Michigan to visit with my siblings and to go ice fishing. Yes, you heard me right, I went ice fishing. It had been 48 years since last I went out on a lake, bored a hole, set a tip-up, and waited for the flag to go up signaling that I had a bite. I waited 48 years for the opportunity, and what did I get? 6 degrees above zero with winds gusting to 35 miles per hour, for a wind chill of between 14 and 16 degrees BELOW ZERO! Man, is that COLD!

Oh, and I also caught the biggest northern pike I’ve ever landed: 36 inches long and about 12 pounds in weight. We used an auger to bore an eight-inch hole, and when her head came into the hole, it pretty much filled it completely. It took both my nephew Brad and me to get her out of the hole and onto the ice! That fish is my personal best by an inch, having landed one of 35 inches through the ice in the winter of 1972 – 48 years ago.

Of course, we took pictures, one of which I sent to Becky on my I-phone. Within the hour she had uploaded it to her Face Book page, and by the time we came in off the ice, she had already recorded over 50 looks and 28 comments! By the time I came back into the office on Wednesday, nearly every person I saw or talked to had already seen the picture! Before I could begin to boast about my accomplishment, they already knew most of the story! Word gets around!

In our text for today St. Paul tells the saints at Colosse that word has already gotten to him of their faith and their love for Christ and all the saints in the Church at large. By their actions and by their service, by their loving kindness and by their joy in the Gospel, word of their steadfastness had already covered the distance between their city and Paul’s current station. He rejoices in that news because it speaks to him of the work that the Gospel is doing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was working in many places, but in this letter, he rejoices specifically in the fruits it is bearing in Colosse.

There is a saying that “bad news travels fast”, and that has never been truer in our times. The internet is a marvelous tool, but it is a double-edged sword, for it can spread rumor, lies,

innuendo, fabrication, half-truths, and suppositions at the speed of light. People get themselves amped up about something or other, write a poisoned pen email, and hit the send button without much thought, and BANG! – there's trouble. Reputations get tarnished, the eighth commandment gets fractured, and anger, resentment, and hurt are the rotten fruits to be harvested.

Thank God that good words can also travel fast! When we share our faith and trust in God with those we correspond with, when we give God the glory and boast in our Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrifice of redemption, we can spread the Good News of the Gospel at the speed of light as well. When we encourage people, pick them up with kindness and prayers, when we empathize with their hurts and understand their fears, we can put in a good word for Jesus that may just be the seed to be sprouted or the refreshment on a parched soul that allows the Holy Spirit to break through and change lives.

So when you spend some time on Face Book or emails or even texts, remember that "word travels fast". Give a little thought to how you respond. Let your faith and love spring from the hope that is yours in Christ Jesus. Put in a good word for Jesus and don't be afraid to let your light shine. Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Witnesses are called upon to tell only what they know: the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help you God! Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

1) **DRIVE-IN COMMUNION** – will be offered again on Sunday, February 21, at 3:30. There will only be one session this time. Tune your radio to 87.9 FM and we'll do an abbreviated service of prayer, confession/absolution, communion liturgy, and distribution. Takes about 15 minutes start to finish, but for those isolated at home, here's a chance to receive the Sacrament.

2) **DRIVE-THROUGH FISH FRY** – The preschool will offer a drive-through experience on Friday, February 26. Watch the Website for details.