

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, February 9, 2021
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“Homeward Bound”

READING: II Corinthians 5:1-8 – Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made use for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be at home with the Lord.

Going home! There has always been a thrill and a comfort in “going home”. Becky and I have lived away from where I grew up for all of our married life. We lived in Ann Arbor, MI, Chicago, St. Louis, Detroit, Evansville, IN, Ft. Wayne, and for the last 30 years, here in New Albany. Seeing my folks has always involved a drive, and except for our six years in Detroit where we were only an hour and a half away, those drives have been L-O-N-G!

Going home! Even our kids were excited about going home. That meant the freedom to run and explore a whole farm. That meant they were going to have Grandma’s sloppy joes and Grandpa’s cookouts in the summer. It meant Andy could hit baseballs as far as he possibly could without fear that the ball would land over the mean next-door-neighbor’s fence. It meant Dan could hunt for targets with the old BB gun. It meant Christa could play cards with Grandma and win a lot. It meant we would see aunts, uncles, cousins, old friends, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews...and especially Mom and Dad.

St. Paul in our reading today is talking about “going home”. He compares our mortal bodies to the tents that he knew so well, for he was a tentmaker and repairman. He knows that like tents, our bodies are not permanent dwellings, they are vulnerable to wear and tear, and the day will come when they cannot be patched or repaired. But he says not to worry, for we know our Lord has a new and improved place for us to live. He calls it “our heavenly dwelling” and he says it is “an eternal HOUSE” – not tent. And he says it is “not built by HUMAN hands”. That means our glorified, resurrected bodies will be *permanent dwellings* and since God will fashion them, they will *not* be vulnerable to the hurts, illnesses, and stresses of mortal life. That new body will be perfect, beautiful, and forever young.

I especially appreciate Paul’s repetition of the word “confident”. Twice he says that we are confident people and that we live now by faith, then by sight. We are confident of our resurrections and the life of the world to come because these are promises made by our God, who does not ever lie or take his promises lightly. We are confident people because we know

that Christ Jesus came into the world on a mission that led inexorably to the cross on Golgotha, to a borrowed tomb, and to a glorious Resurrection on Easter morning. Because Jesus lives, we shall live also. He said so. He has promised us. And, we, God's people simply say, "Amen!" That is, yea, yea, it shall be so!

"Going home" is still something I look forward to. To visit with my siblings and other family members is a good thing. But I must say, since Mom and Dad have gone on ahead of us, there is a bitter-sweet component to that journey. I miss them a great deal. The old house is just an old house, full of memories, but strangely empty. And, yet, St. Paul's words ring with a firm hope and a confident faith. I will be with those loved ones again. Paul says, "...as long as we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord...(we) would prefer to be at home with the Lord." All of us are homeward bound in Christ Jesus! Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

- 1) **9:35 KIDS** – is coming on Sunday, February 14, Valentine's Day. This is a special Children's Church for kids in Grade Six and below that takes place between the worship services starting at 9:35. The whole family can accompany them in the gym.
- 2) **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.
- 3) **DRIVE-THROUGH FISH FRY** – The preschool will offer a drive-through experience on Friday, February 26. Watch the Website for details.