

**WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, July 28, 2020**  
**Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN**

**“Military Honors”**

**READING: Luke 7:6b-10 – He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: “Lord, don’t trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.” Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.**

**My father received military honors at his committal service. There was a sergeant and a corporal from the local recruitment office who folded the flag and presented it to me on behalf of the family. (That flag will fly on Grace’s flagpole sometime next year.) There were also five Legionnaires and a commander who fired a fifteen-gun salute. Becky was sitting next to me with our youngest grandson, Uri, (age 4) seated on her lap. I warned him they were about to shoot, but nevertheless, when the guns went off, he nearly jumped off her lap!**

**Then “Taps” was played. I don’t think there was a dry eye in the gathering. That song nearly always brings tears to my eyes, no matter how many veterans’ committals I have done. It indicates that someone who gave the country two or three years, at least, of his or her life, and in many cases put that life in jeopardy, is now at ease and at rest until the Lord gives his command to “Come out!”**

**Having been in the Army, Dad knew all about orders. Orders were given and orders were obeyed. When the commander said, “Go,” he went. When his officer said, “Come,” he came. Dad served as a medic in Korea during 1952 and 1953. He saved a couple of lives, he was shot at “only one time,” and he did a lot of tedious but necessary health and wellness procedures. Since he was assigned to an artillery company headquarters unit about four miles back from the DMZ, things were usually pretty relaxed. But when his Captain gave him an order, he hopped to it. And when the Colonel dropped by, it was spit and polish, stomach in and chest out! That was REAL authority!**

**In our text, Jewish elders have come to Jesus on behalf of a Roman centurion who has a very sick servant whom he values highly. They assure Jesus that this man is different than most of the other Roman soldiers and officers. They tell him he “deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.” This was most unusual, to say the least. And Jesus agrees to come. But then, the centurion proves himself to be a surprising man once again by telling Jesus not to bother with coming to the home. He displays faith that Jesus can certainly say the word and his servant will be healed. He believes that Jesus has that kind of authority and that kind of power. He believes this without ever having met**

Jesus or even seen him in person. He believes on the power of the word alone; the word he has heard that describes Jesus. That word gives him all the confidence in the world that Jesus can do for his servant what is needed. Just the word. And Jesus marvels at him. "I have not found such faith even in Israel!" he exclaims.

Would that you and I might display such faith! We have only the Word, the Word of God contained in the Scriptures which assures us of the power of Jesus to do just what we need. It is only the Word. We have no videos. We have not seen with our own eyes. We were not present for the acts and actions described for us. But that Word is life for it convicts us of our sins, leads us to confess before God who and what we are. It points to Jesus and his life, death, and resurrection. And, it assures us that by believing in him, we already have eternal life. Just the Word, but, oh, what a Word!

Winston Churchill was a soldier, a commander, and a leader of his nation at the most dangerous time in her history. He was a Christian with many questions and a poor hold on doctrine. But at his funeral, which he himself designed and planned, when his casket was placed into its final resting place in St. Paul's Cathedral, high up in the great dome, a bugle was heard playing "Taps" as a fitting end to his military honors. But, just as the last note was fading away, the bugle was heard once again. This time it was playing "Reveille" – as Churchill's final affirmation of his hope in the Resurrection.

Someday my mom and dad will both hear that "Reveille" call when the trumpet call of God is sounded, the shout of the Archangel is heard, and the dead in Christ rise to eternal life. You and I will hear that call, too! Military experience or no, we will salute the One who sits on the Throne and the Lamb with shouts of victory, praise, and thanksgiving. Oh, come, Lord Jesus, come soon! Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):