

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

**“Get It All Out”**

**READING: Colossians 3:1-10 – Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.**

**Well, they’ve finally gone after it! They’ve finally attacked it! Now it remains to be seen if they’ve done it right and succeeded in killing the doggone thing! I’m talking about the bamboo patch across Mel Smith Road from the Church on the Rock. Years ago, whoever owned the home that stood there must have planted a small clump of bamboo to decorate their yard. There was a small stable there that housed a couple of horses years back. Since then, the house was torn down, the stable abandoned, and the bamboo left to its own devices. And did it ever go to town!**

**You might remember a sermon I preached last year in which I talked about that bamboo patch as a perfect picture of how sin spreads and grows in our lives if we’re not careful to avoid it. Bamboo puts out rhizomes (underground stems) and new shoots spring off of those rhizomes every few inches. I have watched that patch of bamboo grow and spread for the past 14 years. Each spring and summer it would expand its territory. By this spring it was threatening to totally envelope the old stable. In another year or two one wouldn’t even have been able to see the stable from the road.**

**However, someone bought that whole property, including the second house that stood just east of the stable and the bamboo clump. Last week they tore down the house and the stable and carted everything away. This week they went to work on the trees and the bamboo patch. They cut all the stalks off at the ground and it’s all going to be hauled away. They’ve cleaned it up and everything looks cleared off. I expect the bulldozers to come next. They’ll certainly try to level off that piece of property by moving the hill nearest Grant Line Road down into the lower end to the east. But I wonder...**

**Will they be able to get rid of the bamboo? If they miss even one of those rhizomes, if they leave just one buried close to the surface, the bamboo will rise up again. Shoots will pop up and start putting out new rhizomes, and before they know it, they’ll have a bamboo patch all their own. You have to put it to death, or it will grow back on you.**

St. Paul warns the Colossians (and us) about the sins that so easily entangle us if we are not careful and diligent. He says our old human nature is always ready to rise up and take control of our lives once again. It's all too easy for us to set our minds on the low things, the sinful things of this world. We're all pretty good at coming up with excuses and justification when it comes to sin. But Paul says we must "put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature..." Just like those bamboo remnants, our sin has to be ruthlessly rooted out and cast away. Even just a few little "secret" sins can take root and establish themselves as a real problem in our lives and our relationships with God and others. But there is a remedy:

Paul says that by setting our hearts "on things above", we can refuse the lower things from taking root. By being diligent in worship, Bible study, devotion, and Christian service, we can create an environment that discourages sin's taking root. By keeping our minds and our hearts "out of the gutter", by watching our language, avoiding gossip, and putting others first, we give the devil very little soil in which to plant his evil seeds. What does sprout has little to sustain it when Christ Jesus is Lord of our lives. And, most importantly, when we sin, we need to make confession and seek our God's forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

I'll be watching the progress of the new owners of that corner. I'll also keep an eye out for new bamboo shoots. I don't know if they realize just yet what they're dealing with. There may be a learning curve to observe. At any rate, it'll be interesting to see who wins. As for our spiritual life, I pray that the Lord will draw us to himself and his Word in such a way that when the devil tries to grow foul things in our lives, he won't find any place in our hearts that's fetid and dark enough for his evil things to grow. Be on guard! Keep your minds on the things above, and the God of all grace will bless you, forgive you, and defend you. Amen.

**PRAYER:**

**ANNOUNCEMENT(S):**

1) **DRIVE-THROUGH FISH FRY** – The preschool will offer another drive-through experience on Friday, March 12. You can pre-order your fish and set the time for pick-up by going to [glcna.org](http://glcna.org).

2) **WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICES:** Our series is entitled, "The Road to Perdition". We will walk beside Jesus as he experiences the various events that lead to the Judgement Hall and the Cross on Good Friday. We'll listen this week as he bests the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law when they try to trick him. Next week we'll see Mary anoint his feet, and we'll be humbled as Jesus washes the Disciples' feet on March 24. Join us on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM.