

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, October 5, 2021
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“Who’d Have Ever Thunk It?”

READING: Galatians 1:11-20 – I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles – only James, the Lord’s brother. I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.

Who’d have ever thunk it? We just held another drive-in Communion service last Sunday. Some thirty-one of our parishioners availed themselves of the Sacrament because they have been isolating themselves again because of the latest COVID surge. They can watch and participate in worship via the internet, but the Sacrament can’t be done online. So Pastor and I made it available, and I expect we will do it again in a month or so. We want folks to have ALL of God’s gifts.

If you had said to me two years ago that we should offer a drive-in Communion service, I would have looked at you as though you had two heads and three eyes in each one! I would have said to you, “Why in the world would we want to do that?” Yet, the Pandemic has forced us to look at how we do ministry in some new and surprising ways. Not only have we done several drive-in Communion services, but we also did two full drive-in worship services last fall, and we have become fully accustomed to weekly online services. What seemed so strange and exotic to us 18 months ago is now very normal and sure to remain with us into the future, Pandemic or no.

Who’d have ever thunk it? That’s what St. Paul is intimating in our reading for today. He is giving a defense of his apostolic calling, but even as he was writing it, he must have wondered at the course of his life before and after his visitation by Jesus on that dusty road to Damascus. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He was a Hebrew’s Hebrew. He was advancing in Judaism faster than most of his contemporaries, and his zeal for the traditions of his forefathers was without parallel. When the Way of Christ began to blossom, he perceived it as a heresy and a threat. He did everything he could contrive to stunt, blunt, and destroy the Church of Christ. Those who knew him then saw a man possessed by hatred for the things of Christ and determined to bring down the entire movement with threats, force, and violence. Who would have ever guessed that in a moment of supernatural confrontation this driven man would turn 180 degrees and become an apostle for Jesus? No one, least of all Saul!

How blessed are we who have known Jesus from our earliest memories. My parents taught me bedtime prayers, took me to church most every Sunday, sent me to St. Michael’s Lutheran School for eight years, encouraged me to be active in Walther League (our youth group), and supported me in my desire to be a Lutheran elementary teacher. Jesus was always a part of my life, and I am eternally thankful for that gift.

Perhaps you came to Jesus by an alternate path. Perhaps you had a “Damascus Road” moment when Jesus became a living part of your life. Perhaps you had some “wilderness years” when you wandered away from the Lord’s path and then he called you back. However you came to Christ, give thanks for his grace. St. Paul

says that God “set me apart from birth and called me by his grace.” God knew long before you did what part you would play in his Kingdom. Be assured today that he has always known you, loved you, and had a place for you in that Kingdom. Who’d have ever thunk it, right? Thanks be to God. Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

- 1) The elders will be hosting the “ELDERS’ BBQ” on Sunday, October 17, immediately following the 10:30 service. You’ll be asked to RSVP for that at our Website (glcna.org) or by calling the office. You’ll get a postcard in the mail shortly with all the details. Put the date on your calendar. You won’t want to miss it!
- 2) Grace will be hosting this year’s CIRCUIT REFORMATION SERVICE on Sunday, October 31, at 3:00 P.M. Get that on your calendar, too! It’s going to be very special. Watch for details.