

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, September 22, 2020
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“He Heard Me”

READING: Psalm 34:1-7 – I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him; and he delivers them.

I had a mean older cousin, his name was Bill, and he took great delight in teasing me. Bill was an only child, his mother, my aunt, died when he was nine or ten. It was just him and his dad, so when my mother’s side of the family gathered together, Bill enjoyed picking on us younger cousins. It seemed I was his favorite. Maybe that was because he and my three Enser cousins were roughly the same age, and all 7-9 years older than me. I was the oldest of the next set, and so I liked tagging along and being around the older ones because they seemed so “cool”. But, invariably, that meant I became a target of Bill’s attentions.

One Sunday just before Christmas, when I was 9 or 10, we had lunch with my Grandparents Kischnick. Grandpa noticed that I was sort of glum, and he inquired as to why I was so quiet. I told him that that evening we were going to an aunt’s house for the Mossner Christmas party, and I was sure Bill was going to be mean to me. I told him how Bill liked to pick on me, and that he was too much bigger than me to fight, and I knew my aunt’s house was too small for me to stay away from him.

Grandpa said, “Well, do you want to stay overnight here with us? Then Bill will have to pick on somebody else.” I couldn’t believe it! A reprieve AND the chance to spend the night at Grandpa and Grandma’s place! Dad was there at the table, and I immediately asked him if it would be okay. He said that was fine with him, Mom said okay, and it was settled! I stayed with my grandparents, and my younger brothers had to go face Bill on their own!

Oh, I had a grand time! Supper, dessert, snacks, TV, and NO BILL! When it was bedtime, Grandma fixed up the couch in the living room, and I snuggled in, said my prayers, and thought about how wonderful the day had been. Then, Grandpa said goodnight, turned off the lights, and retired to their bedroom. Then...it got quiet. I began to hear noises: strange creakings, floorboards popping, the windows gently rattling, the wind moaning past the eaves...and I began to be afraid. I’d never spent the night away from home before. I began to cry. Grandma heard me and sent Grandpa to check on me. He reassured me. He said they were right around the corner. He said there wasn’t a thing to be afraid of. He went back to bed, and soon I was crying again.

The next thing I knew, it was morning. The sun was shining in the window, and the curtains shown white in the light, and...hey, wait a minute! Where am I? This isn’t Grandpa’s living

room! I turned over and there was Grandma...asleep! I was in bed with her! Grandpa had carried me to his bed, left me with Grandma, and HE SLEPT ON THE COUCH! (I have since done the same for a number of grandchildren, and always smile when I think of Grandpa doing that for me.)

In our text for today, the Psalmist says he, "...sought the Lord and he answered me. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him." But note one thing; first "he delivered me from all my fears;" and then "he saved him out of all his troubles." The Lord first addressed the man's fears, then he addressed his troubles. You have undoubtedly experienced this firsthand. Our fears often out-weigh our troubles. Our fears magnify our troubles, aggravate our problems, and steal our strength. Our fears make everything more difficult. Our fears sometimes threaten to cripple us before the troubles even arrive. And our Lord knows this. So, first he addresses the fears; then he leads us out of our troubles.

Fear of the unknown, fear of things imagined, fear of what *might* happen, fear of COVID, fear of perceived threats – these are all part of our landscape at present. The devil preys on fear. He feeds on fear. He knows that when we are afraid, we are tempted to jump to any conclusion, accept any rumor, take any compromise to alleviate that fear. The Lord knows this, and so he addresses our fear with his Word, with his promises, and with his grace. It was not coincidence that Jesus' most used command was, "Do not be afraid!" First, he helps us overcome our fears; then he addresses our needs.

Grandpa addressed my fear of Bill, then he addressed my need for security. He gave up his place and slept on that couch, so I could rest unafraid and unmolested. God knows your fears and your needs. He says, "Fear not! I will deliver you!" Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

We would once again put out a plea for those who are "techies" to consider volunteering to learn from Ryan Dietrich the process by which we broadcast our service on the Internet. We need 3 or 4 people so everyone can take turns, especially Ryan! Consider it, then act!