

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, June 16, 2020
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“ROOTED IN LOVE

READING: Ephesians 3:14-21 – For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Forty-six years ago today a petite seventeen-year-old bride walked down the aisle at St. Michael’s Lutheran Church in Richville, Michigan. Waiting for her at the end of that aisle was a sweating, nervous nineteen-year-old groom. They had only the vaguest idea of what they were getting into. They had no real idea how they were going to support themselves AND go to college. They could not see into the future very far at all. What they did know was that they loved each other and could not countenance another year of being separated by 600 miles of Michigan highway and the Mackinac Bridge.

As those two stood before Pastor Victor Spiekerman and their assembled families, he led them through their vows. They promised to “...love, comfort, honor, and keep...” one another “...for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health...until death part(ed) them.” It was fairly easy to speak those words at an age where high blood pressure, gout, deafness, diabetes, etc. were way off in the future. They were young and strong and bullet-proof, like most young couples before and after them. “Yes! Yes, we will!”

That young couple back in 1973 was, of course, Becky and me. Today is our 47th Anniversary! We are still loving, comforting, honoring, and keeping one another after all these years, not perfectly, but constantly. Looking back, we could not have guessed the directions our lives would take or the places we would live or the people we would come to know and love. There was only a distant hope of children, and at that age, no thought at all of grandchildren! We worked our way through four years of college. Then it was off to St. Louis, then Detroit, then Evansville, then Fort Wayne, and then to a place called New Albany. We had a child in Chicago, another in St. Louis, and a third in Detroit. Back in those days money was always tight, unexpected expenses were scary, and we made do whether it was old cars, old shoes, or old carpets. And, all along the way, God blessed us and cared for us and saw to our needs.

In the text for today, St. Paul speaks a “heart prayer” for the people at Ephesus. He asks that God would give to them all the spiritual blessings they could ever need. He doesn’t really ask for material blessings. He knew these were important, but St. Paul also knew that if they

were at peace with God and supplied with the power and love of God, they would be patient, thankful, and content with their daily circumstances in ways that the world was not.

St. Paul prays that the Christians in Ephesus would be “rooted and established in love”. To be rooted and established is to delve deeply in the things of God: to celebrate the mighty works of God through the ages; to remember the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus and all that these have won for us; and to make full and diligent use of his gifts in Baptism, Communion, and the hearing and study of his Word. It is Paul’s prayer that Christians would love the way God has already and continues to love us: with an *agape* love, that is, a love that comes as much from the head and as from the heart. It’s a love that is fully focused on the good of the one being loved without counting the cost for the one who is doing the loving. It is a determined and sacrificial love. It’s really the only kind of love that comforts, honors, and keeps the loved one whatever the circumstances of life may bring.

Becky and I have been richly blessed in so many ways. It hasn’t always been easy, and there are still days when one or the other of us doesn’t *deserve* to be loved. We’re sinners, after all. But it is especially in those moments when we fall back on God’s *agape* love, knowing he continues to love us even on our worst days. Knowing that is how he loves us, we can and continue to love each other in that way to the best of our ability. Rooted in *HIS* love, we have the resources and power to love each other day by day.

So, my bride of 47 years: HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! I LOVE YOU!

PRAAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S): Join us on Saturday for the Weekly Review. Saturday services and the regular Communion schedule have resumed. A HAPPY FATHERS DAY in advance to all the dads and granddads out there. And, remember that both Sunday services will be live broadcast on the Internet regularly from now on.

MORE NEWS!! We have decided to celebrate EASTER on the last weekend of this month in all the services including Communion. We missed out in April. We held off in May. We’ll wait until the last weekend, and then we’ll sing his praises together in his house. Join us.

P.S. On a personal note, Becky and I have a master bath in need of a remodel. If you have had a contractor you felt did a fair and competent job of such a project for you, I’d appreciate your sharing the name with me. Thanks!