

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, June 23, 2020
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“The Ditches of Quanicassee”

READING: Isaiah 35: 1-2, 8-10 – The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God...And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it. They will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

I went home to Michigan early last week to visit with my father who had been hospitalized for the second time in two weeks. My daughter, Christa, and her two youngest children accompanied me. He was doing better when I left him on Wednesday. The frustrating thing was that the hospital was maintaining a policy of one visitor per patient PER DAY. That meant only one of us could see him on any given day. Not adequate, but the fear of COVID continues to show itself in many ways.

Since we could spend only small periods of time with Dad, we decided to take the kids to the beaches around Caseville, on the shores of Saginaw Bay on Lake Huron. On the way there we drove through the little village of Quanicassee. It's there that several very large drainage ditches empty into the Bay. See, all the farmland for hundreds of square miles in that part of Michigan is flat as a pancake. My Dad's farm is like that. At one point, way back it was all under the lake, and when it receded, it became swamp and wetland. To farm its rich soil, the farmers had to drain the land with underground drainage tiles that empty into ditches that empty into deeper ditches that empty into really huge drainage ditches that wind up emptying into the Bay at Quanicassee.

There is one road in particular that runs through that countryside and is bordered on BOTH sides by some of the deepest, widest drainage ditches you'll ever see. They are 12-15 feet deep and 10-12 feet across. They're big enough that every so often someone will accidentally drive off that road and the car will be swallowed up by that huge ditch. It's happened several times that a car has gone undiscovered for two or three days before someone notices the tire marks going into the ditch and finds a car at the end of those tracks. When driving on that road it is imperative that the driver keep his car going straight down that road. To veer to the left leads to destruction. To veer to the right invites the same. There is no room for foolishness or a lack of focus. Going off the road means death.

In our reading today Isaiah describes such a road: it is called the "Way of Holiness". Note that No unclean people, no wicked fools, no lions or ferocious beasts can go up on it. Only the Redeemed may walk its path. Only the Ransomed of the LORD may follow its path to joy. When Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus replied, "I am The Way..." Jesus was making a direct reference to this passage in Isaiah. How can any of us be redeemed? How can any of us be ransomed? Only by faith in Christ Jesus. Only by trusting in his righteousness, his redemption, and his promises. There is only one Way, and it is a straight and narrow path that leads to salvation.

There are people who doubt the truth of the whole of Scripture. They want to pick and choose which passages have meaning and which ones can be ignored. There are others who try to gain their salvation by earning it through works righteousness and a strict adherence to all the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. Both of those paths veer dangerously, one to the left, the other to the right. Neither stays the course with eyes and faith fixed on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Want to avoid those huge ditches in Quanicassee? You have to aim right down the middle. Want to avoid errors that lead us away from salvation and to a reliance on ourselves? Fix your eyes on Jesus and run straight to him you whole life long. He will lead you safely home. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S): Join us on Saturday for the Weekly Review. Saturday services and the regular Communion schedule have resumed. 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 this weekend in all the services including Communion. We missed out in April. We held off in May. We'll wait until this weekend, and then we'll sing his praises together in his house. Join us. We've also started up "Thursday's Saints" Bible Class on Thursdays at 10:30. We're meeting in the Fireside Room. Come join us there, too!

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!