

Weekly Devotion for Monday September 14, 2020
Pastor Matt Woods, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany

“Moving Day”

This last weekend we rearranged the house. My youngest son who is getting married in a month has moved to the basement which has been fixed up as a little apartment. Meanwhile my oldest and his bride have moved upstairs to his old room in anticipation of building a house in the Spring. What does all this mean? Good Lutheran question to ask. It means that we had to do a lot of moving—Saturday was moving day.

If you have ever experienced moving from one house or apartment to another (and most likely you probably have) then you will understand moving day. Tricia and I have had many moving days in twenty-five years. It always begins with a culling of old things—broken toys, forgotten clothes, wedding gifts that we only used once. “Who filled our closets with so much junk?” Must have been the garden Nomes. Moving from our house in Charlestown to an apartment, we quickly discovered that in only five years of living in one house we had accumulated a lot of stuff that we didn’t need to take with us. Then we began to move things to our storage locker. And by the way, in the future, if you have to use a storage locker, I am convinced that you don’t need that stuff either. All but a handful of things we ended up getting rid of anyway. We boxed so much stuff up and then unboxed them.

Our family has moved many times and each time I remember why I don’t like it. It’s always stressful. Something important always seems to get lost—especially screws and bolts for tables and bed frames. And worst of all it doesn’t take long to realize just how used our own dirt we have become. This last weekend was proof that even when we think we have things clean we don’t. We have plenty of dust and dog hair, and dirt that the vacuums miss. One might even be able to knit a whole new dog from the hair that we found this weekend. It’s a little embarrassing. If we had a sign with a phone number and sign that read, “How’s my cleaning?” I might have gotten a few calls this weekend.

The thing about moving day is that it always seems to end one chapter to begin another one. Moving day is a transition day. Old things have to be let go of. Things that were once important are replaced with something new. A home is replaced with another home in another location. This weekend’s move was a transition for both boys. They remain in the same house but not in the same circumstances. Soon both will be married. The oldest and his bride are poised to move into their own place soon. The other is getting married and stabilizing things until his wife finishes Pharmacy school and then they too will make a home together. Before too long the house will get really quiet.

Exodus 12 speaks of moving day for the Israelites. Listen to verses 31-42. ³¹Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron at night. He said, “Get up and go away from my people, both you and the people of Israel. Go and worship the Lord, as you have said. ³²Take your flocks and your cattle, as you have said, and go. And pray that good will come to me also.”

³³The Egyptians were trying to make the people hurry out of the land. For they said, “We will all be dead.” ³⁴So the people took their dough before yeast had been added. They tied their dough pots in their clothes on their shoulders. ³⁵The people of Israel had done what Moses had said. They had asked the Egyptians for things made of silver and gold and for clothes. ³⁶And the Lord had given the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. So, the Egyptians let them have whatever they asked for. And they took the best things of Egypt.

³⁷The people of Israel traveled from Rameses to Succoth. There were about 600,000 men on foot, and also the women and children. ³⁸And a mixed group of people went with them, and very many flocks and cattle. ³⁹They made the dough they had brought out of Egypt into loaves of bread without yeast. Yeast was not added to the dough because they had been sent out of Egypt and could not wait. They could not make ready any food for themselves.

⁴⁰The people of Israel had lived in Egypt 430 years. ⁴¹At the end of 430 years, on that same day, all of the Lord's people left Egypt. ⁴²It was a night to be remembered for the Lord for having brought them out of the land of Egypt. This night is for the Lord, to be remembered by all the people of Israel for all time.

Passover night was also moving night. By morning the next day, the Israelites were on their way out carrying gold and silver and as much stuff as they could carry with them. Much of that gold and silver would later be material for making the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. But here again one chapter was ending in the history of God's people and another chapter was beginning. Sadly, this generation would be exiled for forty years in the desert because they did not trust God in spite of all the miracles that God had done for them. However, this moving day would literally shape Israel's history and its future for the rest of its existence—even now. Even now Jewish folks celebrate the Passover as a memorial for all that God had done with Moses.

Going to college—moving into dorms and out of dorms for four years—going to seminary—going to vicarage—getting married and moving into an apartment with my bride—moving to our first call and into a rental house—then to our second call and into a parsonage—and then here to Grace and to a house in Charlestown—then to an apartment—and then to our current house. We've done a lot of moving. Not nearly as much as others I'm sure but plenty. All of our moving days have been memorable but not defining like it was for the Israelites who left the bondage of Egypt to become a nation. They became the nation of Israel, moved into the Promised Land, and fulfilled the promise to Abraham.

2 Corinthians 5:1 speaks of another move from an earthly tent to a house not built by human hands. The most definitive move anyone of us will make eventually will be when we change our address from this fallen world to the risen one. The new home will be permanent. It will define us because of who lives there namely, our Savior, Jesus. And the old things will disappear and the new things will take hold. We will Passover from death to life. Best of all we won't need anything from this world and everyone we love who believe in Jesus will be with us in the Lord's kingdom. This is a moving day unlike any other. One chapter will end and another will begin. That's our hope in Jesus.

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with His favor and give you His peace in Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Matthew Woods
John 3:30