

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, June 9, 2020
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“ME AND MY COMPASS”

READING: Psalm 53:1-6 – The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good. God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. Will the evildoers never learn – those who devour my people as men eat bread and who do not call on God? There they were, overwhelmed with dread, where there was nothing to dread. God scattered the bones of those who attacked you; you put them to shame, for God despised them. Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

Many years ago, I went deer hunting in Michigan with my father, brother Alan, and good friend Jeff. (We were hunting near the village of Luther, which always made me laugh to think that any deer I saw was a Lutheran deer!) We decided that the three of us young guys would walk through a large section of forest while my dad watched for any escaping deer on the road that ran along its west side. We started in on the east side, with me in the middle. Now it was a big piece of woods about 2 miles long and a mile wide with lots of trees and a long walk.

I figured I was about three quarters of the way across when I decided to take a compass reading. I was quite sure I knew where due west was, but I decided to try out my new compass just for verification. I leaned my shotgun against a tree, aware that iron or steel can cause a compass to misread if the metal is close by. I laid my compass on a nearby stump and let the needle steady up. Hhhmmm! The needle said due north was behind my right shoulder. I thought, “That can’t be right!” That meant due west was quartering away from me to the right while I was convinced due west was straight ahead of me. I jiggled the compass, then laid it once more on the stump. It gave the very same reading. “That thing can’t be right! West is straight ahead. I came straight in from the east side, so I know due west must be straight ahead. Stupid thing must be broken or something.”

So, instead of following the compass reading, I stubbornly marched straight ahead. When I finally came to the road Dad was posted at, I discovered I had drifted nearly half a mile to the south of where I had expected to exit the woods. The compass had been right! When I told Dad what I had done, he laughed and said, “Rookie mistake! Always trust your compass!” It’s a lesson I took to heart.

In our reading today, the Lord “...looks down upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.” God had created man, put his law on their hearts, revealed himself through both nature and by his word spoken by the prophets. He gave to

mankind the right direction. He pointed out to them the right course. But, did they listen? Did they follow his directions? Did they obey his call and walk in his paths? No, no, and no! They foolishly and stubbornly went their own way, certain they knew better, certain they could find their own way forward. "God? There is no God!"

Sadly, nothing much has changed. We still see so many walking their own way, deciding for themselves what is good and right. They make their own laws, their own version of morality, their own rules for what is acceptable, or unacceptable. "God?" they sniff, "There is no God!" They can't be bothered with the Bible. To them that's an antiquated old book written by a bunch of old geezers in a whole different place and a much less enlightened time. "We know better now. We're not bound to the old ways. We know the way forward."

King David's cry at the end of the Psalm was heeded by God, "Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!" That's exactly what happened when Jesus carried his cross outside the walls of Jerusalem to that ugly little hill called Golgotha. Salvation came to Israel and to the world through his death and the Resurrection that followed three days later. Now anyone can know the way forward because Jesus is "THE Way, THE Truth, and THE Life." Better and more trustworthy than any compass, Jesus shows us the way forward to salvation and eternal life. Don't be misled. Should the whole world be pointing in one direction while Jesus points in another, follow his Way, and you'll arrive right where you hope to be. God grant it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PRAYER:

GRADUATING SENIORS in both high school and college are invited and urged to attend our late service on Sunday, June 14, so we can recognize and congratulate you in the service and at the reception that will immediately follow the service.

BREAKING NEWS!! We have decided to celebrate EASTER on the last Sunday of this month in all the services, with a special emphasis on the Sunday services. We missed out in April. We held off in May. We'll wait until the last Sunday, June 28th and then we'll sing his praises together in his house. Join us.