

Daily Devotions



Monday, 11/12/2018 1 Kings 17:8-16

I admit that I don't care much for Elijah in this story. It seems rather obnoxious that he would ask someone who is already starving to feed him first, when she also has a son to feed. I want to shake him while asking, "Are you clueless? Read the room, man!" Then I realize that perhaps it's because Elijah has a better attitude than I do that he can be bold enough to ask for this favor. My natural tendency is to live life with an attitude of scarcity--a fear that there is only so much and that it will never be enough. It is through stories like this one, stories of people like Elijah who point to God's message of abundance, that I am reminded that God provides. Elijah was bold enough to ask, because Elijah's faith was strong enough to know these people would not go hungry. *God of abundance, keep me mindful today of all the blessings you have given me. Give me an attitude of abundance so that I can boldly share what I have to further your kingdom here on earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Emily Martin, '17, Associate Pastor, Cambridge Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minn.

Tuesday, 11/13/2018 Psalms 146

We often think of "Love thy neighbor" and "Love one another" as uniquely New Testament themes. However, the God of the New Testament is also the God of the Old Testament. As a beloved seminary professor taught me, "God can't help but love God's people." The psalms of praise, like Psalm 146, remind us of this. We see how God not only provides abundantly, as was the case with yesterday's story, but how everything about God is abundant! The hope God provides, the freedom God provides and, of course, the love God provides stretch far beyond anything our imaginations could ever grasp. The psalmist compares the limitless power of God with the limitations of human rulers. The juxtaposition is all the more astounding when you consider that God uses that power to love God's people. *Good and gracious God, we become frustrated by human limitations, and we call on you to remind us what you are capable of. Inspire us to love like you love, and to offer hope to all we meet. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Emily Martin, '17, Associate Pastor, Cambridge Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minn.

Wednesday, 11/14/2018 Revelation 21:1-6a

The first glance at two people deeply in love on their wedding day takes the breath away. Dressed in their finest, presenting themselves to each other in a covenant of faithfulness and promise, it is a moment of joy and excitement. The preview God gives us of eternal life in Revelation 21 captures the exhilaration of a wedding day. It is a new beginning. God is making a home for the beloved, and they will dwell together forever. The old things have passed away, so there are no signs of anxiety or loneliness anymore. The old tears are wiped away, so there is only the amazing joy that brings two together in love. "See, I am making all things new," says our God. "It is trustworthy and true." *Gracious God, your glance toward me has always been filled with love. Fill me with your Spirit so that my longing eyes may show you my love in return. Make me new for our life together. Amen.*

Betsy Dartt, '81, Visitation Pastor, Our Savior's Lutheran, Spring Valley, Minn.

Thursday, 11/15/2018 John 11:32-44

Sometimes the preview of the future that we imagine God performing does end up getting answered according to the desires of our hearts. Mary was in tears with grief and disappointment when she said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Her vision of Lazarus being healed by Jesus in the same way Jesus had healed the sick, the blind, the lame and the deaf had ended, rather, in tragedy. Lazarus was dead. Yet Mary had great faith that Jesus had both the compassion and the power to make her dream a reality. God did not cure Lazarus. Instead, Jesus stood with Mary, deeply moved by her loss. Jesus, too, had tears of grief. God stays with us in the times of sorrow when life goes wrong. Don't be surprised if the Savior has a different scene to show in God's future. *Ever-loving God, I am grateful for the many times you stay close when I am feeling loss and despair. With your presence, I can begin again to see your provision and mercy. Forgive my doubts. Keep me always in the comfort of your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Betsy Dartt, '81, Visitation Pastor, Our Savior's Lutheran, Spring Valley, Minn.

Friday, 11/16/2018

John 11:32-44

This preview of life beyond death is the most dramatic of all. It takes courage to rewrite the entire script at God's direction. As Jesus comes to the tomb where Lazarus is buried, he says to Martha, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" Jesus speaks to the Father for the sake of the crowd, so that they, too, might believe. Then Jesus calls Lazarus out. The dead comes to life--not just healed. Jesus gives the surprise ending of freedom from death. Here we see a preview of his own death and resurrection. Here is a preview of the new, resurrected life promised to each of us. The glory of God shines. As we look ahead in faith, it is sometimes hard to wait for the wonder of eternal life and God's happy ending. Keep watching the preview; the best is yet ahead. *God of glory and might, your vision for our redeemed life is beyond my ability to imagine or grasp. Expand my belief and stretch my sight so that your previews of eternal life become my life now. In gratitude and praise, I give my heart to you. Amen.*

Betsy Dartt, '81, Visitation Pastor, Our Savior's Lutheran, Spring Valley, Minn.

Saturday, 11/17/2018

"Behold the Host Arrayed in White," ELW 425

We cannot publish the text for today's hymn due to copyright limitations. We apologize for any inconvenience.

However, you may find a version of the text here: Hymnary.org

The images of this Norwegian folk song tell the story of saints who endured the suffering of this world by keeping their faith focused on the future of God's great story of salvation. Capturing the previews in the book of Revelation, we see bright, white-robed saints before the throne of light, shouting their victory cries. While living in this world, these immigrants from the old country "wept through bitter years." They scorned worldly things. They cast seed in tears and with sighs, and now they harvest with new eyes seeing God's pattern in their seed.

We are all like immigrants who seek a better life. How extraordinary that God has an eternally splendid life for all who trust in the Savior's gift of grace. "O saints, sing with that happy throng; lift up one voice; let heaven rejoice in our redeemer's song!" *God of love, we marvel at the vision of life beyond this world. Wash away the tears of hardship that cloud my eyes. Cleanse my soiled life with the blood of the risen Lord. Thank you for a new song and a new future and a new life with you. Amen.*

Betsy Dartt, '81, Visitation Pastor, Our Savior's Lutheran, Spring Valley, Minn.

Sunday, 11/18/2018

Psalm 24

The panoramic scenes of the mountain of the Lord and the expanses of the earth with its everlasting doors bring to our eyes a picture of grandeur and majesty. This preview of the holiness and glory of God excites the imagination about the heavenly realm. "Who can stand in God's holy place?" we ask. Will we be worthy to approach the altar of God? When the full picture is revealed, we rejoice to find that blessing and favor come from the God of our salvation. Our hands and hearts and deeds are graced with the righteousness of the Savior. This is an action show about the Lord, strong and mighty. Just wait to see how your part in the whole story unfolds! *Almighty and merciful God, grace us with your righteousness and make us ready to be in your presence always. You are wise and wonderful and holy and strong. In you, I can feel that all the world is under your care and provision. Amen.*

Betsy Dartt, '81, Visitation Pastor, Our Savior's Lutheran, Spring Valley, Minn.