

Daily Devotions



Monday, 9/17/2018

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The poet Isaiah tells it straight. He has the tongue of a teacher, speaking truth in a world gone mad with nonsense. In his day everything solid was melting. God inspired his words to interrupt the weary with hope. His vocation was to teach about the soul force of God. To do so he confronts the brute force caused by his nation's disunity and warring factions. He teaches through the ubiquitous steadfast love (hesed) of God. The older I get, the more I incline my ear to this poet-prophet, because he provides courage to square off with religious and social systems fearful of practicing the radical hospitality of God's justice with the power of mercy for the whole people of God. I am inspired by Isaiah and pray with teachers like Howard Thurman (God bless his memory) who teach that the heart of faith is the ministry with those "whose backs are against the wall." The church reads Isaiah and remembers God sets his face like flint seeking to provide salve necessary for a troubled time. *God, we thank you for the gift of teachers who mentor and voice the faith in the spiritual delicacy of placing faith into the public life of discipleship. We pray for courage like flint. Amen.*
David Rommereim, '81, Inter-faith Clergy Coalition, Whitefish, Mont.

Tuesday, 9/18/2018

James 2:1-10 [11-13] 14-17

We really seem to value certain folks more than others. We gravitate toward those who are put together--who have more resources, aren't emotionally needy or simply won't challenge our own sense of being. In 2006 a song was released by Bowling for Soup called "High School Never Ends." The older I get, the more I agree. As adults we still sort ourselves into categories--sports fans, wealthy, country music fans, cultural background, racial background, sexuality, political beliefs, faith background, you name it. You probably find people who are most like you to spend time with. You don't even do it on purpose--it's just easier or less awkward to hang out with people who think and act like you. But what does God want us to do? Not play favorites. Be in relationship with those who are different. Show love to those we might not usually interact with. Not just give money to the poor, but talk with them and listen to their stories. You get the idea. Perhaps it's time to get uncomfortable. *Relational God, you never shy away from the tricky situations. Teach us to break out of our comfort zone, to forge relationships with those who are different. And give us the grace to try again when we fail. Amen.*
Stefanie Fauth, '15, Associate Pastor of Faith Formation, Redeemer Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, Minn.

Wednesday, 9/19/2018

Mark 7:24-37

When I was young, the acronym *WWJD* was very popular. "What would Jesus do?" was supposed to challenge me to act with love and kindness, but I always felt like it was a way to make me feel bad when I wasn't the "Perfect Christian." You know the kind--the people who *never* get upset, who *never* use bad language, who don't get sassy when they're frustrated or "hangry." I was never that person. I lean heavily on sarcasm and am easily frustrated. I figured Jesus would reject me for being such a person. But when the Syrophenician woman interacts with Jesus, she doesn't have a perfect faith. She isn't reverent or quiet or submissive. She's quick-witted, and a bit of a smart aleck. And what does Jesus do? Heals her daughter! Perhaps Jesus doesn't judge us as harshly as we fear. And I'm delighted in a God who can deal with a little sassiness or spunk! *God of the surly and frustrated, we ask you to give us patience and peace in our daily lives. When we fall short, help us to know we are forgiven, and that you can love us even when we aren't at our kindest. Amen.*
Stefanie Fauth, '15, Associate Pastor of Faith Formation, Redeemer Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, Minn.

Thursday, 9/20/2018

Mark 7:24-37

Who can resist sharing a tasty bit of news? You've heard that something really amazing is about to happen in your church or at your work, but the news hasn't been made public yet. You are just *bursting* with excitement--you just *have* to share this amazing news with a close friend! You swear them to secrecy, but they have their close friends they can't resist sharing with--and suddenly this private news is public. It might feel like no one was harmed in that move, but sometimes it matters how information is shared. It can be hurtful for people to hear something through the grapevine that should have been delivered by someone they know--even when the information is happy. It doesn't make much sense why Jesus would want his healings to be secret--but this sharing of information probably made it harder for him to go places without being mobbed. Lucky for us, the

love of God in Jesus doesn't have to be secret any longer--we can share this news to our hearts' content!
God, it can be hard to keep information to ourselves. Help us to know when sharing is helpful and when it might cause difficulty. Give us courage to always share your love with others. Amen.
Stefanie Fauth, '15, Associate Pastor of Faith Formation, Redeemer Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, Minn.

Friday, 9/21/2018 "Jesus Loves Me!" ELW 595

*1 Jesus loves me! this I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
little ones to him belong,
they are weak, but he is strong.*

Refrain

*Yes, Jesus loves me,
yes, Jesus loves me,
yes, Jesus loves me,
the Bible tells me so.*

*2 Jesus loves me! he who died
heaven's gates to open wide;
he will wash away my sin,
let his little child come in. Refrain*

*3 Jesus loves me! he will stay
close beside me all the way;
when at last I come to die,
he will take me home on high. Refrain*

When I was growing up, I sang this song over and over in Sunday school--and yet, I still have a hard time believing that I am loved. Perhaps the hardest thing to remember in this life is how loved we are. Not because we earn it, not because we are so amazing--even though we are. We are lovable because we are children of God. We are lovable when we are achieving our goals, and we are loveable when we are falling apart. Jesus loves us--he's opened heaven's gates wide. Because God loves us, Jesus has washed our sin away. We don't have to worry about being good enough because Jesus has done that work for us. You are loveable. Jesus loves you. Really think about these words--and the next time you sing them with the young (or any age!), let yourself feel the weight of these words. Yes, Jesus loves you! *Jesus, you love us. You gave your life so we could be free from the sin that would keep us from knowing you more deeply. Help us to trust that we are loved, truly and deeply, no matter what. Amen.*

Stefanie Fauth, '15, Associate Pastor of Faith Formation, Redeemer Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, Minn.

Saturday 9/22/2018 & Sunday, 9/23/2018 "What Wondrous Love Is This," ELW 666

*1 What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this
that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?*

*2 When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down
beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.*

3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;

*to God and to the Lamb I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb,
who is the great I AM,
while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme, I will sing.*

*4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm free,
I'll sing God's love for me,
and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and through eternity I'll sing on.*

No matter how amazingly perfect our earthly statistics might seem, as humans and as earthly creatures we are imperfect. We make mistakes, we take our loved ones for granted, we forget to focus on people instead of money, we forget to love with all our heart. It can be easy to feel like we are sinking down in the drudge of everyday life. The news can make us feel like all hope is lost--that God has forgotten us. But the truth is, we are loved by a powerful and merciful God. We don't have to worry. But even when we do, we can trust that our God is filled with wondrous love. With that wondrous love our God continues to heal and surround us, and to carry us on our journeys, and finally home to our eternal rest. *God, help us to trust that you are with us, when we bear the curse, when we are sinking down, and when we feel joyful enough to sing. When we are feeling it, help us to share that with others! Amen.*

Stefanie Fauth, '15, Associate Pastor of Faith Formation, Redeemer Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, Minn.