

## **Devotions June 10-16**

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### **Sunday, June 10**

*Exodus 3:5 Then he (God) said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."*

As the semester comes to an end, my wife graduating, both of us interviewing with congregations with the hope to be their pastors, working on campus, and with a new baby things seem to be a little hectic. I know that I am not alone in feeling a little overwhelmed at times with all that needs to be done. Each of us feels that way some time. The problem is that when we allow ourselves to get too busy our attention is drawn away from God. These words from the Book of Exodus are spoken by God to Moses and they remind me of the promises made at Baptism and that each moment of our lives is holy ground.

*Gracious God, we ask you to help us remember that each day and moment is holy because you are always with us. Help us to live fully. Amen.*

## Monday, June 11

*Ephesians 5:10-16 Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; <sup>13</sup> but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." <sup>15</sup> Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of the time, because the days are evil.*

In my life before and during seminary, I have worked with computers. More than once I have repaired computers that have been "infected" by browsing through websites that are intended to lure people to them. Sadly, many times the problems are related to pornography. The book Pornification describes cycles and reasons that people – both men and women, are hooked on internet pornography. One of the key issues is that they think they are anonymous and no one will know. This anonymity is nothing more than a myth. What most people do not realize is that logs are kept of what you are doing on the web. Every web page you visit, every picture downloaded is logged. Even with out these logs, God still knows what you are doing because God is everywhere.

*Forgiving God, we know that we are not always able to live lives that avoid the dark places of this world. We know that we are sinners and needed your Son Jesus to be our savior. We pray for those who are caught in the darkness, help them and us to always find the light and turn to you. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 12**

*Deuteronomy 11:18-21 You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. <sup>19</sup> Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. <sup>20</sup> Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, <sup>21</sup> so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.*

As I write this, I am getting ready to baptize my son, John Karl. This passage from Deuteronomy came to my mind. What a wonderful task we have as adults to teach the faith to young people. Reverend Dr Rogness, said in a sermon at the seminary on the eve of this year's graduation, that we are all God's grandchildren because someone told us about Jesus. The Holy Spirit took those words and created faith in us.

*Inviting and creating God, help us to reach out to others and speak the words that create faith. Help us to teach the faith to our children though what we say and do. Amen.*

## Wednesday, June 13

*Exodus 34:6-7 The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."*

It had been a long Wednesday night at the start of my internship and conformation was just about over. "How do you know you are in love?" Looking up at my small group made up of eighth grade boys, remembering what it was like to be that age and having just gotten married the year before, my mind went racing. This was a serious issue to them and it was a serious issue to me as well. The question came again "Seriously, how do you know if you are in love?" Closing my Bible, I asked them "What do you think love is?" The responses that they gave ranged from friendship to what could be seen on late night cable TV. The world had filled them with its understanding of what it means to be in love. But it and they missed the greatest example of love, the cross where Jesus died for us. True love always puts the beloved completely before oneself.

*Loving God, you love us more than we can understand. Help us to really love you and others. Amen.*

**Thursday, June 14**

*Philippians 2:12b-13 work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

So many times we hear this part of Philippians 2:12 “work out you own salvation with fear and trembling”. After all what is most important to us is our own salvation. The world teaches us to be independent, to solve problems ourselves, and you can always get a second chance. Though the world has it wrong, verse 13 gets to the real heart of the matter. “for it is God working in you, enabling you to both will and to work for his good pleasure.” Left to our own intentions and efforts we are still sinners. It is God who does the real work in regards to our salvation. It is through the cross that we are saved.

*Saving God, help us to remember that it was you who died on the cross for our sins and give us life. Even though we try to work out our salvation, remind us we need to cling to the promise of new life in you. Amen.*

## Friday, June 15

*Psalm 63:1-3 O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. <sup>2</sup> So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. <sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.*

One of my wife and my friends from the seminary is from Nairobi Kenya in Africa. He has started a foundation to work with some of the 1.1 million AIDS orphans in Kenya, trying to provide food and education for them. He once told my wife “You must come to Africa and see true poverty.” What is most striking about our African friends is the joy that they have during hard times and poor conditions, they are able to sing, smile, and praise God, because their trust is in the Lord.

*Help us, O God, to ever sing your praise when we have troubles and worries. Nothing is better and truer than your love. Always be close to us and hold us in your loving arms. Amen.*

## Saturday, June 16

*John 5:39-47 "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. <sup>40</sup> Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. <sup>41</sup> I do not accept glory from human beings. <sup>42</sup> But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. <sup>43</sup> I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. <sup>44</sup> How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God? <sup>45</sup> Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. <sup>46</sup> If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"*

We have a strange love-and-hate relationship with the Law. We like to think that we are good enough, though Moses through the Law is able to point out every mistake we make. It is the Law of Moses that accuses us of not being good enough to be called the Children of God. But Christ came with a different message one that changes our relationship to the law. To paraphrase Luther from The Freedom of a Christian we are both master over all and servant to all at the same time. No longer is it just a matter of the Law but of having the love of God in us.

*Loving God, let your love flow through us and surround us. Remind us that we are not slaves to the law, rather stewards of your love in this world. Amen.*