

St. Paul: On The Same page
03.07.10 Week #114

has been, perhaps, even better known than A Mighty Fortress. We marvel at those who can praise God in such dark times. But have you tried? Why not write about God's goodness to you even when life is hard?

Prayer: Father the world is so dark, but you are so bright and wonderful. Every day I see evidence of your mercy, your love which I do not deserve. Fill my heart today with a song of praise. Amen.



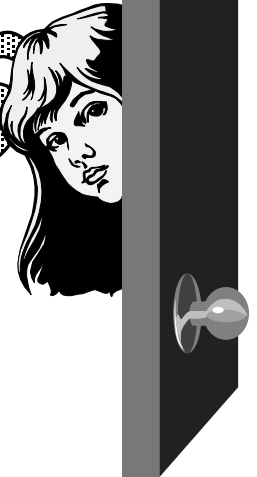
Through-the-Bible Schedule: Week 114

Exodus 23-30

Rules about worship. How to make this. How to make that. How to offer sacrifices. Do these chapters seem fussy to you? It's true that sometimes our traditions and our rules can get out of hand. We can forget why we made them in the first place, and begin to pile one on top of another. But that's not always true. Think of your rules for the dinner table. To wash your hands – to pass to the left (or right) – to say please and thank you – to speak with your “inside voice” – those are all things that guide children in showing love and respect. What rule do you have about worship at home that helps to make your time with God more meaningful?

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SPOTS



Today, in hundreds of congregations around the country, the focus is on the beginning of Lutheran Schools Week. It's very difficult for a congregation to run an elementary school, or even a preschool. It requires significant sacrifices. But it also means great gain. Like our devotions, we want our children to dwell in the word and grow in understanding of God and trust in their Savior. Is there anything more important than that?

Day One

First Lesson: Isaiah 12:1-6

In that day you will say: "I will praise you, O Lord. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid."

“That day” is a reference to the “Day of the Lord” (see Isaiah 10:20), which is about the end of the world, or in a smaller sense about bringing the Jewish people back from Babylon. A day of rescue like that is something we all pray for at different times. It's when God finally gets us past a cancer scare, or a financial tough spot. Can you think of a time when a long-term problem finally ended? What did you learn from it? Did you learn to trust and not be afraid during the next hard time?

Prayer: Dear Father, over and over again you have delivered me. When I received blessings from you, I praised you for a day, but then I quickly forgot. Lord, teach me to trust and not be afraid. Remind me that your greatest day of salvation is still coming, and you will not fail to deliver me. Amen.

Day Two

Epistle Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.



I don't feel very new. Do you? In fact, some days I feel quite elderly. Don't be surprised. I have heard children say the same thing. We can be dragged down by our day-to-day troubles until we feel quite crotchety. And yet, Paul says that even when our bodies and minds feel old, our spirit is brand new. All of the

stuff from yesterday, the sins and mistakes that we wish we could take back, none of them can stick to us. We get up in the morning all clean and sparkling because of Jesus' forgiveness. How did you feel when you got up this morning? Maybe tomorrow, just before you throw off the covers, say, "Now I'm unwrapping a new person!"

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, how can you never get tired of making me new? Thank you for my new life today, and my new life tomorrow again. Let me rejoice in it for your glory! Amen.*

Day Three

Gospel Lesson: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear [Jesus]... "There was a man who had two sons. The younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.'"

We all know this story about the run-away son. Some of us have even lived through it. Can you picture the feelings of the father? Every day that his son was gone would seem like a year. What was happening to him? Was he alright? When would he come home? Perhaps you have some prodigal part of your life – a relationship that is broken – and you wonder if it will ever heal. Just imagine the joy of the father when he saw his son returning! That's the joy your Father has when you come to him. He is even willing for you to endure hunger if that brings you home to him, because he has a feast in mind to welcome you.

Prayer: *Oh Savior, I have wandered far. I have been caught up in my own sins, even when others thought I was safely in your house. Lead me back to you, no matter what it takes. And never let me leave again. Amen.*



Day Four

"Now Thank We All Our God" (LSB #895)

Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
Has blest us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.

You've probably never heard of Martin Rinkart. He was born in 1586 and almost his entire ministry took place during the horrors of the Thirty Years War. In the midst of plague and poverty and the threat of death he wrote this hymn, which