

## Weekly Meditation Archive

Wednesday, September 16, 2009, 9:46 PM

Greetings all,

Sunday I golfed in a 9 hole scramble. I was the youngest most inexperienced player in the 4 some. There were 2 men and 2 women. It has been at least 10 years since I played a round of golf. I have some bad habits I recall from the past. I loved to swing like a baseball player during golf. After all, the harder the swing the further the ball goes; so I thought then. I liked to loose my temper, say bad words and throw a club or two as well. And I certainly did not want any advice' especially from my golf partners. I wanted to do it myself, my own way, because I knew best!

I probably played the best golf ever in my life Sunday. Mind you that is not much, because I rarely play. But I did Find myself taking it easy, listening to advice, and staying calm and enjoying the company instead of trying to beat the tar out of the competition and the ball. I guess after ten years I noticed a change in my mentality and approach to golf.

Funny thing how over time, with a willingness to listen and learn, and try a few new things, we actually can notice a change in our lives. This is true in life as well as faith. The key is having a willingness to seek help outside of self, so that we will not simply be stuck on our own pride, ideas and knowledge as the only way.

NRS 1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.  
2 You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak.  
3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.  
4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;  
5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;  
6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.  
7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Paul was telling this church that they need one another, because each person has something to add to the church, the body of Christ, which lives and loves the world today. We are all given gifts to use for the glory of God. We can all grow from one another in faith as we are willing to explore and share the gifts we have been collectively given. It is amazing how much better things can go if we have a willingness to learn, grow and listen to one another. We are the church together, working together we can get rid of some of the past baggage that hinders us from serving God and the world. That's what my own willingness to listen to and discuss my golf game reminded me of this past Sunday. Thanks to my partners for the lesson in life, and faith.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for the many gifts you have given the church and world in so many ways. Open our hearts and minds to the growth you wish us to experience through our fellow men and women of the church and world. Give us wisdom to see where we are called to use our gifts to your glory. Give us wisdom to know when to ask for help, discern what we hear, and act in faith upon what we hear. AMEN

In Christ

Pastor Rob

Thursday, September 10, 2009, 6:05 PM

Friends,

A reminder that the church rummage sale will continue tomorrow at 9 am. Please remind your neighbors and friends. This is an excellent place to send any family that may benefit from a great selection of cloths.

Help is Needed! Please consider coming by Saturday at 4:00 PM to help load all the remaining stuff in bags and boxes. This is the pack up phase of the sale. There are 2 people signed up to help Saturday. Please consider showing up with anyone available from your family to assist with packing up. If you are a new member or visitor it is a great way to meet some of our women's board. They have worked very hard once again setting up. Any help to them Saturday would be a great gift.

These items need to be ready for shipping on Sunday when they are loaded upon a trailer after 10:30 worship. All are welcome to help load Sunday as Well.

In Christ

Pastor

Wednesday, September 9, 2009, 8:46 PM

Greetings,

Look out, proud parent moment ahead!

My son Joshua is very big for his age. He is in the 99% for height and weight. He has to work hard to keep up with the rest of the athletes and kids in the neighborhood. It is not easy for him, but he always tries. I know on occasion he is teased. He perseveres as we discuss why other kids tease etc. Always focusing him to do his best, and remember he is defined by God's love, our love (family) and his own self value and pride.

Yesterday he showed me with great pride a little football sticker on the back of his helmet. He explained that it was an award he earned. He said the coaches recognized his effort, and attitude. He said he knows he is not the first, but works hard not to be last in running. He said the coaches wanted to use him as an example of doing his best, not giving up.

My heart melted when he told me this story. This after I watched him practice last week one day. Instead of noticing his hustle and effort, I noted where to coach him to get better, faster etc. I did recognize his effort, but also got hung up on what he could not do. A lesson taught to me about being a father, leader, teacher and coach by his football coaches.

Corinthians 9:6-8

6Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

There are many ways we give to the world, and our families. But love in all its forms should be what we always give generously! There is a time to teach, challenge, encourage etc; but we should ALWAYS see the best of others and tell them about it! That is sowing generously in love. It is a shame if we travel through life and never recognize the power of our love and affirmation.

For all that work with others, coach, teach, and lead in any way public, family or private; sow deeply with love and know you can make a powerful impact upon someone. I am grateful to God for my sons coaches that saw the best in him, and made a profound impact on the value of hard work, not skill.

Prayer: Dear Lord you have loved us in so many ways when what we deserve is criticism. Help us learn to ignite the fire of hope, the strength of pride, the desire to achieve and power of love in the people we come into daily contact with. AMEN.

May the power of your love begin to pay it forward and change the world.

Pastor Rob

Monday, August 31, 2009, 3:06 PM

Dear Friends,

Yesterday after church I found myself with an afternoon and evening off, so I thought I would give our yard some badly needed work. I began by pulling weeds and found that to be overwhelming. You see our yard has many, many beautiful plants, but all have been crowded over with weeds. Furthermore, many of the perennials have become too big and needed to be split.

So I weeded out completely two flower beds, and then began planning what perennials would fill the spaces well. In the end, I had two flower beds weeded, and planted with room to go. The real joy will be next year, when I know those two beds are ready for the growing season.

Each year I have such enthusiasm for the yard and garden, and as the season moves on, my own expectations for what I had hoped to accomplish seem to diminish again. But yesterday was a reminder, things take time, things take energy and things take work. I have done my part. Now it is left to our creator, God, to bring growth to the work I have started and accomplished in the two cleaned up, replanted flower beds.

Faith is like that too. It is a partnership between us and God. There are certain things that are a gift and out of our control. Faith, redemption, grace, the Holy Spirit and many other aspects of our spiritual life are gifts. What we do with our knowledge of those things, the work of our hands and lives becomes important to keeping that faith growing and spreading. Jesus used the following parable to teach about faith.

Matthew 13:3-9

And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow.

And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up.

Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

What has happened in your garden of faith this growing season? How is the growth going of the seeds of faith that God has scattered in your life, and how are you caring for them?

Is it time to weed, prepare for new growth, transplant or pray for more seeds?

Today I have two well planted flower beds, and more work to clean, dig, and transplant the remaining areas. I am grateful to have an abundance of plants to work with. I am grateful to have the chance to have all the tools and ability needed to not only grow plants, but faith as well. God continue to cast seeds into all of our lives, and then

patiently watches the growth and transformation.

PRAYER: God thank you for being a generous God that is always casting seeds into our lives. Thank you for giving us the tools and desire to grow the seeds of faith. Thank you for placing people into our lives to help us weed and transplant our gardens of faith. Help us to flourish through your guidance and Holy Spirit, help us draw near to Jesus. Give us the strength and wisdom needed to grow in faith, hope and love. AMEN

Have a great week everyone!

Pastor Rob

Thursday, August 27, 2009, 9:16 PM

Dear Friends,

First of all for all you football fans, or even just campfire fans. This is an open invitation for all to join together Friday night after the first Freeland High School Football game for a fire behind the church.

All are welcome, families, youth, singles. We are hoping to encourage our youth to be there with their friends. I will start a fire as soon as I can get there after the game. I will pick up some smores stuff and we will have some form of drinks to share. Consider bringing a roasting fork and joining our first ever post football bon fire.

For a long time I have sat in front of my computer, trying to come up with a good meditation for the week. I have many thoughts, and each one begins, and soon ends. Our church is in transition. What does it mean. I have spoken with many people this week trying to fully digest, comprehend or understand the action of the national church as they acted on the sexuality social statement and recommendations. I have spoken with some people that are "silently celebrating" the inclusive action of the ELCA. I listen to all of you, I hear joy and pain, apathy and anger. And I thank you for your sharing, and value your words.

As I paused, prayed and pondered what to write, my screen saver kicked in. And before my eyes, photographs of my family over the past 5 years began flashing on the screen. I found myself brought back to each moment of the past. Each picture reminding me of the various cities, homes and challenges along the road to ministry. Some pictures brought back joy, others pain. But when I look back, I remember God has been faithful through our journey. I realize that the journey of the past, the joys and the pain, have brought a greater depth of love and faith to my life today. God has been present in all things.

It is at times difficult to find God in the midst of times of trial, pain or struggle. This is not just about our life as church; but our personal, professional, educational and spiritual lives for us as individuals. But often times, when we look back, and remember our life journey we see the growth that has happened in the process. At times, remembering all the ways God has grown us in the past, helps us live in the present.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, help us remember that you have asked us to make disciples, to work for your kingdom, and proclaim the good news in the Blessed Trinity. As we are on this journey together, help us know you have promised to be with us always. Bless us with the ability to recognize your loving grace that has touched us in the past, will be

present with us tomorrow and abides with us today. Amen.

In Christ

Pastor Rob

### Thursday July 23, 2009

This week we spent one day without water at my house. The township was installing a shut off valve for the main 12 inch water line that served our neighborhood. The location they installed was in our yard. So we also got the benefit of having our lawn torn up a bit.

Sometimes we take for granted many of the gifts God has given to us. Most of us take for granted the simple basic gift of running water, and a green lawn. Until they are removed from us, changed or altered.

Do you ever think the flow of the Holy Spirit or Gods love is shut off for a day or two in your life. Unplanned events, stress, difficulties and a host of other worldly concerns may seem to temporarily disconnect us from our main spiritual source of love and grace. There is no doubt that there are time in our life where we take for granted the average, no thrill routine days where God is present and we fail or forget to reflect or take notice.

Gods love and grace is never really shut off from us at all. We may face situations in our life or surroundings that capture our focus, energy, attention and awareness of Gods presence in our life for a brief moment. But the source of that love and grace is still there, pouring out love and grace, just waiting for us to be reconnected. God is always there, trying in many ways to communicate with us his unconditional love and grace. Sometimes we feel cut off from God because of circumstances beyond our control, other times because of our choice, and yet again because it seems as if others are receiving Gods love instead of us!

The story of the prodigal son in the gospel of Luke 15:11-32 is the story of a loving father. One son runs away, spends everything, and returns home with remorse and shame (Choices). The other son struggles because his brother is welcomed home and forgiven, this causing him to overlook the daily love and support of his Father (circumstance). The father loves both of them. He welcomes his lost son home (verses 22-24) and tries to explain his love to the faithful son (verses 31-32).

Luke 15:22-24 and 31-32

22"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

31" 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

How is it for you recently? Have you remembered that God loves you in the routine daily actions of life, or has the water been turned off. Have you chosen to shut the water off, or are you upset that you notice the water flowing places you think it should not? Are you ready to have the water flowing again?

God is ready willing and able to let love and grace flow into your life. It flows every time we re connect, it flows in the every day routine actions of life, it flows to us in our anger anjealouslyly. Gods love and grace is always flowing. The source and power of that loving Gift is God, and that can never be shut off. I pray this week you will sense the flow of Gods love and grace in your life as God reaches out to meet you just where you are at today.

In Christ

Pastor Rob

Tuesday July 14, 2009

Dear Friends,

Greetings from camp michi-lu-ca located in Fairview MI. Camp is a vast and beautiful grounds. The atmosphere has been excellent with the property having numerous lakes and magnificent nature settings. This is our first year coming here, having used stony lake the first three years I have been pastor. This was a good choice, and now we will alternate every other year. Each place has their own unique blessings and challenges. But it is the kids experiencing faith that matters. There are 140 children here this week, a full week. Keep us in your prayers that things continue to go well.

Our students have been split into four groups. This has been a challenge, but has also allowed our students to really form relationships with others. Those relationships are all being formed with the understanding that everyone here is joined together through the love and friendship of Christ. We are invited to invest in one another and then examine what it means to be loved by Jesus and freed to serve others. Jesus has chosen these children, us adults, as well as our church, to love the world.

John 15:13-17

13Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. 14You are my friends if you do what I command. 15I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 17This is my command: Love each other.

One of the most interesting and dynamic concepts of our faith is to love the world, to love others, just where they are at. That means loving people for who they are at any given moment in their life. Sometimes this is easy, other times it is difficult. But it is possible. It becomes easier the more we reflect upon Christ's love for us, and how we have been chosen. We may not always want to love, but we are chosen to love.

Remember no matter how good or bad we are at this; God still loves us as we are....ALWAYS!

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for choosing us as your friends. Thank you for loving us, and helping us grow in understanding what it means to love others. Continue to fill us with the realization we are never outside of your love. At our best and at our worst, you love us. May your love be the strength we need to love the people around us, especially when it is difficult. Amen

Have a great week

Pastor

Tuesday, July 7, 2009, 7:13 PM

Greetings One and All

First of all Bishop John D. Schleicher will be visiting Zion Lutheran Church THIS THURSDAY at 7:00 PM. Bishop John is coming to share a video, vision and solicit support for the Center for Mission & Ministry. The synod called and requested that we host this visit.

I ask that as many of you as possible please consider attending this meeting. As a church we have elected to support this cause. Bishop John would like to share information and see if there are any among our membership that may share from their blessings.

It will also be an informal time to discuss our church and mission here in Zion. Please attend if possible.

Meditation for the Week

How one looks at Life certainly has a dramatic impact upon the way we live. Before there was Opera, Dr. Phil, self help books, support groups, 12 step programs and many other programs designed to make life better, there was the apostle Paul. Paul who once hated and persecuted Christians experienced a powerful conversion of faith. Paul became the original missionary planting churches. Paul was redeemed by Gods grace, and a true worker for the kingdom of God.

But Paul struggled with his humanity as well. Paul wanted to be the perfect servant and Representative of Jesus, but he could not. He could not become perfect, because he was human, and he struggled with his weakness.

## **2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (New International Version)**

7To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

How many of us delight in our weakness, or the weakness of others? Our tendency is to beat ourselves up, try and wrestle for control in everything and become judgmental of self and others. Paul is the original self help guru, as he explains in all things be thankful, even in our weakness, for in this we find the need for the grace of Christ. Paul spoke about gratitude before the self help circuit caught the idea.

Prayer: Lord, we turn to you and celebrate our weakness. We celebrate those battles and struggles in our life that remind us the need for your guidance and grace. Humble us into trusting you with all that we are, and all we will become. Help us to live by the wisdom of the serenity prayer helping us to "accept the things I can not change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference". AMEN

If you are struggling, perhaps a visit to church tomorrow night may help at 7:00 PM. I will be using this scripture as the preaching text, and expanding upon this meditation.

Have a great week. In Christ

Pastor Rob