

FRIEDENS REFORMED CHURCH

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Fall 2023



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR ANDY

Comfort For The Afflicted

Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. Psalms 119:92

This passage tells us four things:

(a) David's condition – He was afflicted. It is no sign of spirituality to not have troubles and afflictions. This runs counter to the Health and Wealth/Prosperity gospel doctrine, nevertheless, this is the testimony of Scripture.

(b) His sense – I should have perished. It is no sign of spirituality to downplay troubles and act numb. David sensed his trouble and, in this verse expresses despair of life.

(c) His remedy – The Word of God. In every situation of life, David's recourse was to God's word. Psalm 119 itself is a testimony to this fact. Every single one of its 176 verses makes reference to the word of God. David calls it God's "law," "testimonies," "statutes," or some other such name.

(d) The way of application – It was his delights. David's heart delighted in God's word. He accepted with gratitude the things God gave him, but God's word alone was his true delight. It was a source of constant and continual delight. In fact, it was his whole delight. He turned to it when he was deprived of all other things.

Hence, we learn this important truth: The afflicted man's true consolation is in the Word of God.

(a) David's condition -- David was a man after God's own heart. Yet he tells us that he was afflicted. Why would anyone so near and dear to God's heart suffer, or even need to suffer affliction?

The first reason why is: God has other ways of expressing His love to us than through external things. (Ecc. 9:1; Prov. 3:31, 32; Rom 8:16; 1 Jn. 3:2, 4; Gal. 4:6). Here again is a great flaw in the Health and Wealth/Prosperity doctrine. The assumption is made that the more pleased God is with us, the more He will bless us financially and materially. This is patently false. In fact, this is precisely the argument used by Job's mistaken friends. Calling them mistaken is, of course, understating the case. It seems to me to call into question one's whole view of heaven to teach that you can get, pardon the pun, your best life now. If heaven is not going to be better than what I've got here, what keeps me from being miserly and covetous?

The second reason a saint may undergo afflictions is this: Afflictions are necessary for even the best of us. We all need to be humbled and weaned from the world. (1 Pet. 1:6; Ps. 119:67) There is no one so saintly as to not need to be reminded of his need of growth in grace and that God's greater blessings await us as our inheritance in heaven.

Thirdly, we need to learn the worth and benefit of God's word and how it may comfort and support us under whatever trouble. (Rom 15:4) If we don't instinctively run to the word of God when we are under troubles and afflictions, then we can count on a lot more of them until we learn this lesson. Again, not

to snark on it too much, but the Health and Wealth/Prosperity doctrine will never drive you to God's word when you undergo troubles. They claim to have the solution: If you are going through troubles, it's your own fault. You are either timidly letting the devil walk all over you, or you need to send in a large donation.

(b) His sense. -- David tells us that he was ready to sink under his affliction. Why would this be so?

A. The grievousness of the affliction (Ps. 60:3). Sometimes our troubles are so difficult that we feel that we cannot go on another day.

B. The weakness of the saints. We are all but "dust and ashes," as Bernard of Cluny put it. Our human nature certainly has a breaking point. We are all too familiar with stress and exhaustion. Often we are as weak in our spiritual resolve as our physical bodies are. Our weakness may be that:

(1) We look more to the creature than the Creator. The highest and greatest role model is yet a flawed human being. When we look to our fellow creature, we are inviting disappointment.

(2) Worse yet, we look to God but feel that He does not look to us. It is easy in the midst of our troubles to assume we are alone and that God is not aware of our situation, or that He isn't concerned with it.

(3) We are impatient with the delay. Even the most staunch, stalwart believer in the Sovereignty of God, comes up against situations in his or her own life where the doctrine of God's sovereignty comes too close for comfort. It is an easy doctrine to pontificate about until it is you who is on the business end of an incurable disease, the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, etc. It is easy to question in one's mind what God's delay is for. The pendulum of ideas one wrestles with about God's character swings back and forth. One may question God's goodness and try to resolve the humanly invented dichotomy between sovereignty and goodness. Then the pendulum swings back the other way, and one bears down and accepts with naked resolve the fact that God is God and as His creature, He is in His rights to dispose of us however He wants. And as sinners, we can't actually claim that anything is unfair. Then the pendulum swings to a weak-kneed attempt at faith in God's promises.

(4) We may be becoming hardhearted. A true relationship with God, what the Puritans called "true religion," softens the heart. A father's anger is no small thing to a soul that has been the recipient of God's grace. It should soften us to think that our heavenly Father might be displeased with us.

(c) His remedy -- God's word is the only true consolation that allays the bitter sense of all our troubles.

- In it we find God, the fountain of all true blessings – the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:13)
- In it we discover the meritorious and procuring cause of our comfort and consolation: Jesus Christ, "Who hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." (2 Thes. 2:16)
- In it we receive the work of the Spirit who is called "The Comforter." (Jn. 14:26)
- The true means whereby we receive comfort is faith (Jn. 14:1). Our faith is built up by communion with God in His word.

(d) His application -- A person under affliction can find these comforts available in the word of God:

1. The word of God teaches us not only how to bear our afflictions, but also how to profit by them.
2. The word of God teaches us how to moderate our troubles and be delivered from them.
3. The word of God teaches us that we have a greater experience of God under the cross. Paul was strongest when he was weak.
4. The word of God teaches us God's governing of all things for the elect's benefit.

One would have to be insensate to not derive consolation and comfort from these facts. This passage rebukes us when we take our only consolation is in external things. It reproves us for valuing worldly wisdom as much as Christianity. It corrects us for undervaluing the consolations in the Word. (Gregory tells of a lady who asked that he would seek from her a revelation from God that she would be delivered from some trouble. He replied that this was both difficult and unprofitable: difficult for him and unprofitable for her. He said she already had a surer way in the Scriptures – 2 Pet. 1:19). Furthermore, this passage rebukes us who do not honor the good preaching we hear by being patient under our trials. We may be forgetful or indulgent of a bad attitude (Jer. 31:15), but either way, we may hear these truths and not apply them when the time comes. Theoretical knowledge counts for little if it doesn't convert into practice when the chips are down.

This passage also instructs us to get these things firmly settled in our hearts. We are taught to prize the Scripture. We should be increasingly more zealous in reading, studying and meditating upon it (Ps. 119:97). We must have an attitude of application under affliction (Rom. 8:31). The truth not applied is no better than not having the truth at all. In fact, it brings us under judgment. Sins of omission are no less sinful than sins of commission. We must take delight in God's word in all situations. The word of God must be your delight in times of prosperity if it is to be of any comfort during adversity. (2 Pet. 1:4).

Pastor Andy



OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES

♥ to Nhora and her family in the passing of her sister Thess, July 15th.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Friedens' Nursing Home/Assisted Living Residents (With Addresses and Birthdays)

1. Betty Wormsbecher – Avera Assisted Living; 400 West Fir St; Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: Feb. 1
2. Curtis Huether – Avera Assisted Living; 400 West Fir St; Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: Sept. 24
3. Mary Fischer – Borman Manor, 501 N. 4th St, Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: July 20
4. Dennis Fisher, Sr - Borman Manor, 501 N. 4th St, Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: Feb. 9th
5. Pauline Finck – Good Samaritan Center, 2304 Laurel St, Tyndall, SD 57066 Birthday: Nov. 13
6. Elton Stoebner – Good Samaritan Center, 130 6th St, Scotland, SD 57059 Birthday: Mar. 30
7. Judy Brown – Borman Manor, 501 N 4th St, Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: Oct. 26

SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR:

- ♥ Karl Kuper for added strength in his fight against cancer.
- ♥ Gary Stoebner for determination and healing.
- ♥ Glen and Marilyn Hartman's son and both daughters-in-law for strength as they battle health issues.
- ♥ Pat Stoebner for strength and courage.
- ♥ Morgan Gemar, daughter of Mark and Jen Gemar, for healing and a speedy recovery.



MISSION FEST – OCTOBER 15 – Join us in welcoming our guest speaker, Dr. J. P. Mosley, a professor at Heidelberg Seminary in Sioux Falls. A potluck will follow the service.

WOMEN'S GUILD UPDATES

The Guild's fall season annually begins with our Potato Topper fund-raiser event, which was held this year on Wednesday, September 13. We greatly appreciated the welcomed turnout with approximately 220 baked potatoes served, including multiple choices of toppings and a plentiful variety of desserts. We thank all who attended and certainly appreciated your donations and all of whom were part of our "Kitchen Patrol"! Our mission work will continue, largely due to the success of this event. Thank you very much!

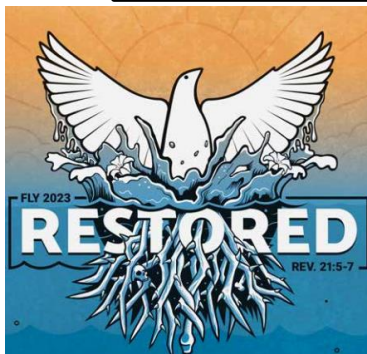
Christian Education Sunday was observed on October 8, with the Guild gifting three Friedens third graders with a Bible: Amelia Mehlhaff, Tyler Mehlhaff and Aidan Underhile.

The Guild's Samaritan's Purse Christmas Shoebox mission project concludes October 15, which then will allow us to deliver the shoe box gifts to a designated drop-off location in our area during the week of November 13-20. We extend a sincere THANK YOU for Friedens' support in all our mission projects throughout the year! Following is a list of the various missions, which our Guild supported this church year.

- *Feed the Children
- *Bible to each newborn
- *Palms for children (Palm Sunday service)
- *Donate to youth Estes Park camperships
- *Gifts to graduating seniors and Confirmands
- *Samaritan's Purse Disaster Relief
- *Samaritan's Purse Christmas Shoe Box Mission Project
- *Union Gospel Mission
- *Bible to our 3rd graders
- *Snack Pack (TAG) Program
- *"Our Daily Bread" devotional
- *Children's Care Hospital (Lifescape)
- *T-D School playground fundraiser
- *ZoeCare



YOUTH GROUP ATTENDS CONVENTION



Eight youth members, along with other community youth and advisors, attended the FLY 2023 convention, July 3 – 6, at Estes Park, Colorado. This year's theme was "Restored", based on Revelations 21:5-7. Upon their return, the youth shared their experience with our congregation and the First American Lutheran Church. The youth would like to thank everyone for supporting the fundraisers for their memorable trip.

SUNDAY SCHOOL RECOGNITION

Train up a child in the way he should go
PROVERBS 22:6 ESV

October 8th was Christian Ed Sunday. Members of the Christian Ed Committee are:

Gary Schnabel, Superintendent
 Amy Brown, Treasurer
 Lennis Mehlhaff Jeff Mehlhaff
 Jody Schnabel Becca Mehlhaff
 Pastor Andy Underhile

We offer classes for preschool thru eighth grade with high school and adult class combined.

Thank you, Jen Gemar, for your many years of teaching Sunday School and VBS!

FOURTH QUARTER GREETERS

- Oct 15 – Jerry and Brenda Stoebner
- 22 – Gary and Robin Stoebner
- 29 – Mark and Jen Gemar
- Nov 5 – Tiffany Horstman
- 12 – Ray and Phyllis Dewald
- 19 – Keith and Lynn Stoebner
- 26 – Marlin and Karen Nuss
- Dec 3 – Diane Stoebner
- 10 – Dale and Amy Brown
- 17 – Gerrie Saenz and Mel Muntefering
- 24 – Jeff and Becca Mehlhaff
- 31 – Ruby Reiner
- Jan 1 – Wayne and Lisa Stoebner
- 8 – Karl and Diane Kuper
- 15 – Jerry and Brenda Stoebner

If you are unable to be a Greeter on your designated Sunday, please exchange with someone and inform Judy Mehlhaff (935-6335 or 770-8231) of the change. Greeters should be at the church a half hour before the Service. Thank you for greeting!



OFFERING SCHEDULE

October		November		December	
1	General Fund	5	General Fund	3	General Fund
8	General Fund	12	General Fund	10	General Fund
15	Mission Fest-Benevolent Fund	19	Benevolent Fund	17	General Fund
22	General Fund	26	General Fund	24	General Fund (morning service)
29	General Fund	Thanksgiving Eve Service Wednesday, November 22 at 7:30		24	Youth Group & Sunday School
				25	Benevolent Fund
				31	General Fund



Regular Sunday worship service at 10:00 on Sunday, December 24.
 Christmas Eve Program on Sunday, December 24, at 7:30.
 Practice will begin in December. Watch bulletin for dates and times.
 Christmas Day Service at 10:00 on Monday, December 25.

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