

Message from Pastor Rich...

Strength, Power, and Peace!

These 3 small words have become words that have changed my whole concept of who we are in Christ. As I have developed in my faith and my identity in Christ I took it for granted thinking I had a really strong faith and understood what it meant to be a Christian.

However these last several months have opened up my eyes to the fact that I am not nearly as strong in faith nor did I understand the true meaning of being a trusting and faithful Christian.

Many of us will fall into this category when we are assailed by things in our lives that question our mortality and pain and suffering become our daily occurrence.

As I encountered one situation after another and realized I struggled in my faith life as these daily situations reared their ugly head my mind went directly to the apostle Paul's struggle with the thorn in his side found in 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10. I found myself pleading with God, as Paul did, in order to have the pain, suffering, and heartache relieved or taken away because the hurt was almost unbearable. I raised my voice to God seeking and imploring Him to help me in my distress.

I could identify with King David in many of the Psalms as David wondered and sought the Lord's presence in his pain, loneliness, and suffering.

Despite my wallowing around in my self-pity and feeling sorry for myself; God continued to seek me out and offer strength, power, and peace. These 3 words continued to speak to me even in my lowest point of despair. They were speaking to me not from a physical or emotional state of being but a spiritual point of reference. God was consoling me as He consoled Paul in his trials and tribulations of life.

Those words the Lord spoke to Paul in his pain became an anchor for my soul each passing day. I found myself experiencing something totally different than I had ever experienced before. Those words of the Lord spoken to Paul so many years ago become like a billboard sign flashing before me each and every day: ***"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."***

You see I had lost sight of the very things that would help me through this turbulent period of my life and that is God does not want me to suffer or struggle in life, but, if I only look to myself and other means to cope during trials and tribulations I will only find despair, doubt, my mortality apart from salvation, and trust in things that offer no hope whatsoever.

My point in all of this is for you, as believers in the Lord, Jesus Christ, is to understand that Satan wants to get us to believe that there is no hope when circumstances become dire and your mortality comes to the forefront and things in life look bleak. God has other plans. He wants you to know by reading, studying, and being in fellowship with other believers the importance of knowing that His promise, He gave to Joshua back in Deuteronomy 31: 7-8 saying: ***"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you: he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid: do not be discouraged."***

You and I have a God who continues to live and grant us His strength, power, and peace but how often do we let it encourage, envelope, and pour over us in our troubles. We persistently want to solve all our problems and issues ourselves and when we try to do this we will find ourselves in the same dire straits that I found myself these last several months.

My prayer is for all of you to recommit yourselves to reading God's Word, praying for everything in your life, and understanding that when difficulties arise don't think you can handle them by yourself but know that God understands and wants to be with you so Satan cannot bring you down and make you doubt, forget, and to question the very promises of God along with the hope that we have as believers in Jesus Christ.

Let us remember the words which the apostle Paul uttered when he found himself in the throes of despair in his life: *"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That 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."*

May God bless you all as you prepare for lots of activities during the summer months and keep you safe in the arms of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In God's Grace and Mercy,

Pastor Rich

Events you may be interested in....

2017 RELAY FOR LIFE...

There has been a big change in Relay for Life...instead of a nighttime program, this year's Sunday, June 25th Thayer County Relay will be a daytime celebration to honor and remember those who have been impacted by cancer.

The event will be held at Hebron's Roosevelt Park from 11:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. beginning with a community hamburger/hotdog picnic served from the fire hall (survivors are our guests) followed by a short program beginning at 1 o'clock. Luminarias, in memory or in honor of your friends and family members will align the walkways.

Survivors, their friends and family members may have their pictures taken on the "World's Largest Porch Swing". There will also be an auction of donated items for your bidding pleasure. Do bring your lawn chairs and settle in for a time of fellowship, remembrance and hope.

If you have questions, you may call Naomi Grupe 402-365-7738 or Kris Miesner 402-365-4206.

Also, a Relay for Life golf tournament is Friday, June 9th at the Hebron Country Club (contact Jerry Brase of Davenport at 402-364-2240).

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL INVITATION...

Discovering the God of the Universe! As kids search the visible to discover the invisible, they will discover that the God who created everything just wants a relationship with them! Our *Galactic Starveyors Adventure* will take place at Trinity Lutheran Church Friedensau during the week of **July 10-14**. Our exploration will take place each evening from 6:00PM - 8:30PM with a FREE meal at 5:30PM. We have a few spots left if anyone can find space in their summer schedule to volunteer during this outreach opportunity. Registration for kids 3 years (potty trained) to 6th grade is available now - forms are available on the counter in the Peace church office. Contact Hannah Kane for more information: thkane630@gmail.com or (402) 469-2857.