

Weekly Devotion

Lay Your Burdens Down!

Find rest in Jesus when dealing with the uncertainty of the future –

Devotion 3/3

Isa 55:10 **As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, *Isa 55:11* so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. *Isa 55:12* You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. *Isa 55:13* Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD'S renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed.” – Isaiah 55:10-13**

Dear friends and family of True North and St. John's,

A survey went out to a group of students from a campus ministry. A common response of something the group wanted to do more of was “evangelism”. The students wanted more people to know about Jesus and to join them at their worship services and Bible Studies. Those students met and came up with some ideas of how they could do some evangelism work. As they did that, they noticed that not everyone was on board. As they met and planned various activities that were geared for evangelism work, there was less interest each time. So the few that remained asked the question, why aren't more wanting to be involved with evangelism. They learned the various reasons. One of them was the fact that there was a fear of rejection. Some were active early and then their interest disappeared. This isn't just true of campus ministries. This is a challenge that faces congregations too. Evangelism programs and the recruitment of volunteers can often be a struggle. While there can be a number of reasons, fear of rejection always seems to fit into the mix.

As our semester devotional series closes for another School Year, we end with dealing with that uncertainty of rejection. We are scared to be rejected. We don't like it. It hurts our feelings. It makes us second guess why we're doing what we are doing. After we get rejected we often want to disappear. We feel like we've wasted our time. First, we had to get the courage to go out and tell someone about their Savior. Second, when that finally came, we either didn't get the audience we were hoping for or we were dismissed quickly because the individual we were talking to didn't want to hear anymore. That can be very discouraging.

While it may seem like a waste of time, it never is. No proclamation of God's Word is ever a waste of time. To see that, the Lord gives us a practical reminder from our natural world. He tells us to look outside. Look at the rain and snow. They come down and they accomplish their purpose. It's the same with God's word. It always has a purpose. It always accomplishes the purposes for which God sent it out. We don't always know what that purpose is, but we can rest assured that God's purpose is going to happen.

That's important for us to remember with evangelism work. We when proclaim Jesus and all he's done to save us, that's not done in vain. It accomplishes what God desires. Sometimes it's to create faith in the heart of the hearer. Sometimes it's to strengthen the heart of the proclaimer. It's never done in vain.

When there is uncertainty about what's going to happen when we use our mouths to speak what God says in his word, we have the certainty of knowing God will bless it how he sees fit.

While the campus ministry in the introduction is a “fictional” scenario, it’s one that does apply to both True North and St. John’s. We have a field that is ready for harvest. We have thousands of souls around us both on campus and in the Northeast neighborhood who do not know about their Savior. You have friends and family members whose priorities are set more towards their life in this world than their spiritual life. Yes, fear of rejection will still be there. But know that the opposite of fear – confidence – is there too. Jesus says his word will never return to him empty. If he says it, we know it’s true. May the Lord continue to bless you and your efforts of evangelism! May he help both our campus ministry and congregation utilize the mouths he’s given to us so we boldly and confidently proclaim the gospel! The Lord’s blessings on your summer! We hope to see you again in Fall! (Vicar will send out one more devotion to close the year.)

In Christ,

Pastor Lindner

**This devotion series is based upon Matthew 11:28-30 which says, ^{Mt 11:28} “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ^{Mt 11:29} Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ^{Mt 11:30} For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”–
Matthew 11:28-30**