

Devotions - June 22-28, 2008
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Fortune Lake Camp Board
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FLAME

Sunday, June 22

by, Sophie Scholer

Summer Theme For Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp
"I want to see a mighty flood of justice, a torrent of doing good." – Amos 5:24

My interpretation of this verse is that God is expecting the best to come out of us in his name, since he is putting the best into us each day! He is expecting us to be good, righteous people doing our best and raising our voices in praise and thanks. Are we always living the best life we can? Being human, I can say truthfully I don't always.... The time is here for summer camp and for fun in the sun. Let us encourage ourselves, our youth and others to always do our/their best and to thank God for all their blessings.

Lord, help us to live each day up to our God-given potential with the gifts and talents you have given us.

Monday, June 23

by, Sophie Scholer

Day 1 Camp Theme
"Grant Me Justice" – Luke 18:1-8

This parable about the unjust judge shows us the need for continual prayer, an answer to prayer if we are persistent enough, that God will be with us and on our side in the end, and lastly never to give up our faith even when times are hard and it seems God is not listening.

On this first day of camp, let us always remember to keep prayer as a constant in our life and whether done in a group or alone never forget the great power it contains and that there is no wrong way to pray.

Lord, Let us experience and appreciate the power of prayer through you in our lives.

Tuesday, June 24

by, Sophie Scholer

Day 2 Camp Theme:

"The Master Seeks His Workers" – Matthew 20:1-16

This parable shows us many things, the major points being that God doesn't play favorites, he is generous, compassionate and comforting. This parable shows the two great truths for the working man - the right to work and the right to a living wage.

The lessons it shows us is that it is not the amount of service given, but the love in which it is given. All service ranks the same in Gods eyes so long as it is all we have to give. Secondly, it shows all God gives is of grace. We cannot earn it or deserve it, and that it is given freely, and is a gift.

The main theme of the parable is as I understand it: the whole point of work is the spirit in which it is done. Not to ask "What's in it for me, but how can I serve God and others?" A worthy question for any age group including our Fortune Lake campers.

Lord, we thank you for your kindness, generosity and compassion. When we think life is not treating us fairly, help us to remember it is not about the rewards but the thrill of serving and the joy of a job well done.

Wednesday, June 25

By, Ruth Warmanen

Mark 4:30-32

When reading the parable of the mustard seed, I just can't avoid thinking about daffodils. I don't plant mustard seeds, but every fall I dig little graves around my house and hope for a springtime resurrection. Those bulbs are much bigger and uglier than mustard seeds, but they have earned my respect! I'm always amazed that they can sleep under eight inches of soil and several feet of snow for more than four months and still manage to find their way to the surface when the time is right. And, although they don't grow tall enough for birds to nest in them (like the proverbial mustard plant), their yellow blooms trumpet the return of warmth to the earth.

Faith can be compared to daffodils (or mustard seeds). It may seem insignificant and unappealing in its bulb-like state and may lie dormant for months or even years. But when the ice and snow of doubt and fear melt away, new growth appears and eventually blossoms with peace and understanding, bringing joy to the beholder.

The summer camping season is presently blossoming at Fortune Lake. The daffodils that come up every spring in front of Emanuel Lodge are history, but be assured that faith and love are presently being cultivated and nurtured in the camping community.

Creator of daffodils and mustard seeds, melt away our wintry attitudes. Strengthen and nourish our faith so that we can in turn encourage and nurture others.

Thursday, June 26

by, Ruth Warmanen

Luke 18: 9-14

Nobody likes a show-off! We tell our children, “don’t get a big head” or “too big for your britches.” The virtue of humility is high on the list of values that we expect the staff of Fortune Lake Camp to instill in campers.

In the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector, we shake our finger at the conceited Pharisee who thanks God that he is “not like other people.” We admire the tax collector who humbly asks for God’s mercy. This parable is another one that definitely did not win Jesus any points with the Pharisees! The Pharisees were the learned and religious folks. The tax collectors were unpopular for obvious reasons but also because they were known to take a slice of the profit for themselves. But Jesus ended the story by saying the tax collector “went down to his home justified.” Jesus had pulled another role reversal on the religious leaders.

Wait a minute! Aren’t we the religious folks today? Don’t we thank God for being born American and “not like other people?” The most important holiday of the summer is the 4th of July, a time when we boast about our short history and sing “God Bless America.” But why should God bless America more than any other nation?

Yes, we should be thankful for the many blessings we enjoy as Americans. But perhaps, like the tax collector, we should also beat our national breast and ask for God’s mercy. Because nobody likes a show-off!

God of the whole world, forgive us our arrogance. We ask your blessings on your whole world, not just our little corner of it.

Friday, June 27

by, Ruth Warmanen

Matthew 7:1-3

While standing in line at Jubilee Foods unloading my cart, I hear the burly guy ahead of me tell the cashier, “him and me need a couple cans o’ Copenhagen too.” My English teacher ears flinch and I bite my tongue so I don’t correct his grammar.

“He and I need...” Doesn’t this guy know he should use the nominative case pronoun as the subject of a sentence? But my judging doesn’t stop there. How can he “need” chewing tobacco? Doesn’t he know that he can get lip cancer from that stuff? Shouldn’t he be spending his money on something good for him?

Fortunately, the cashier quickly fills the request and the guy pays, grabs his bag and escapes my judgmental gaze. God knows that I have judged the character of the man by one simple sentence. I know that good grammar and good lifestyle choices do not make a person “good,” and it’s not fair to assume that the opposite makes one “bad,” but I have judged anyway.

We all judge others unfairly, often on more serious issues than grammar or chewing tobacco. These “specks” that I observed in the customer are insignificant to the judgmental “log” in my attitude.

God of justice, You alone are the rightful judge of human character. Open our eyes to our own logs so we don’t sweat the specks in others.

Saturday, June 28

by, Ruth Warmanen

Luke 16:1-13

The parable of the dishonest steward is one of the most confusing stories to interpret. But it does relate to a problem that many people are facing today – unemployment and debt.

In the parable, the steward is going to lose his job so he makes friends with his master's debtors. By reducing the amount of money each one owes, he hopes to win favor in the eyes of those who are in debt. When the master learns what the steward has done, he commends the steward for his shrewd actions.

But is this right? Does God applaud dishonesty? I'm confused. Let's try a modern application to the parable. The manager of a MacDonald's franchise has been accused by the owner of mismanagement and may be fired. As a response, without permission, the manager slashes the prices of every item on the menu. Sales increase dramatically and the owner is delighted.

OK, the analogy isn't perfect, but both stories show resourcefulness in the face of adversity. Maybe that is one of the lessons we can learn from this parable. Both the rich man's steward and the manager of MacDonald's were faced with unemployment. They used creativity and generosity to avert a crisis.

Can we be more resourceful in serving God? Should we pay more attention to spiritual matters and focus on our eternal future when we will be "unemployed" from earthly occupations? How resourceful we are now may avert a spiritual crisis in the future.

Teacher of the ages, some of your lessons leave us with more questions. Guide our understanding. Motivate us to be more generous and resourceful in serving you.