

BETHEL MATTERS

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Inside This Issue

Outdoor Service & Picnic

Primitimers Activity

Operation Christmas Child

Congratulations

Vacation Bible School Wrap Up

Hymn Sing

Lessons in Lamenting from the Weeping Prophet, Jeremiah

One of the forms of Hebrew poetry found in the Psalms is lament. A lament is a complaint where the Psalmist pours out his case to God about the treatment being experienced with the request that God intervene and bring the painful situation to an end. There is an entire book in the Bible called Lamentations where Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, pours out his heart to God as he watched the Babylonian Captivity unfold upon Judah with all its horror and destruction.

In chapter 3, Jeremiah pours out his feelings about God's treatment of him personally during this horrifying time. He was confused, vv. 2-3, miserable, v. 4, in tribulation, v. 5, trapped, vv. 6-7, without answers, v. 8, feeling pursued by God, v. 10, torn up, v. 11, persecuted, v. 12, humiliated, v. 14, without peace or happiness, v. 17, and unable to hold on, v. 18.

Jeremiah sounds like someone who is about ready to abandon his faith in God. He sounds like the woman who once lamented to me, *I've been a good girl all my life; where has it gotten me*. That lament became the beginning of a departure from God that led to a hardened heart. Several years later her sister-in-law said to me that she had become a hardened woman.

This is where laments from people of faith take a different turn. The lamenter is honest about what is being felt, but rather than turning from God in resentment and disbelief, the lamenter turns to God in trust and submission. Jeremiah does this starting in v. 21. Many lessons can be learned from Jeremiah at this point about how to respond in lamenting situations.

The Lord is still good, v. 25. After everything poured out (in paragraph two above), Jeremiah still says, *The Lord is good*. In fact, vv. 25, 26, 27 all begin with the word *good*. This is so very important to believe, but also to affirm. For believers, even on the darkest days there are still blessings to count, and those blessings come from the hand of a good God who is still working.

We must wait for the Lord's timing, vv. 25-26. God told Jeremiah the nation Judah would suffer captivity for 70 years, Jeremiah 25:11. That is a long time to wait. Jeremiah would be dead before Judah's fortunes would be restored. Yet Jeremiah said, *It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord*. God works in His timing, not ours. Some lessons require lots of time before they are fully internalized. We must learn to quietly wait.

Let the affliction humble us, vv. 28-30. Speaking about the yoke of affliction Jeremiah wrote, *Let him sit alone in silence when [the yoke] is laid on him; let him put his mouth in the dust—there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults*. When we are forced to eat dust, essentially says Jeremiah, eat it. When we must grovel in the dust, don't reject it, but accept the slap in the face the Lord is letting us have. The reason God permits affliction is to break our pride. Only when pride is broken can we learn. So instead of resisting it, be humbled by it.

Instead of complaining, test and examine our ways, vv. 39-42. *Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord!* There is the difference. The person of faith learns and grows turning back to God rather than away. When that happens, affliction has succeeded.

Your friend, learning from the weeping prophet,
Pastor Brian (-:-).

From the Family Life Pastor:

Thoughts:

I'd like to begin today by thanking our church Elders, and the church body for allowing me to be able to go to other churches to preach. I have been honored to be asked to preach at CrossBridge Church in Ishpeming, who are doing very well as a church, and are in the midst of a building project. Then, a few months ago I was asked by the staff at Grace Church in Gladstone if I could come over and help by preaching there once a month while they go through a pastoral transition. I have gone over there a few months now, and will be for a while still. I have also been contacted by First Baptist of Marquette asking if I could help them out, and if we had others who could help them out with preaching. We gave them some names, and I have agreed to preach there on June 25th.

While I have enjoyed these opportunities, I am also grieved with the way that pastors have handled the transitions from some of these churches, and the bad appearance that it gives to the name of Christ and His church. I pray for all of us as believers to be good witnesses in a dark and hurting world.

At our Elder Board meeting this month, Pastor Brian shared a devotional from Lamentations (not a book that we turn to very often). He used some scripture from Lamentations 3 where the writer is talking about feeling the wrath of God – I am going to put in some of the “feelings” of this writer, and then bring in a conclusion – *“I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of his wrath – he has driven me away and made me walk in darkness.. He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.. made me dwell in darkness... He drew His bow and made me the target for his arrows... I became the laughingstock of all my people, they mock me... He has broken my teeth with gravel... I have been deprived of peace... yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope; because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him.’”*

These are great words of promise and hope for anyone going through the deep and terrible trials of life that can cause us to question and worry about our relationship with the Lord – *“His compassions never fail”* therefore we have a promise by a God who is never failing, who has made a covenant with us that if we will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we have a promise of eternal life spent with Him in heaven! Wow, what an awesome God!!

In these days, there seems to be so much anger and hurt all around us, and people are feeling depressed and put aside, we have the opportunity to be that bright and shining light that brings God’s love into the world. Ephesians 5:8-17 *“for at one time you were darkness, but now you re light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true”, and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them...Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, make the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”* We worship a Holy and Great God who is full of light and in Him is no darkness at all, and we need to strive to be more and more like Him so that those in the world with no hope will see that in God there is hope and that hope is found in Christ alone!

In order for us to shine the light of God we must do what it says in 1 John 1:7 – *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin”.* How do we walk in the Light? We walk with Jesus who said that I am the Light of the World when we spend time with Him in His Word, in prayer, in fellowship with fellow believers who will help us to draw closer to Christ.

We belong to a family – the Family of God, a family that has many gifts that can help us, and we have been given gifts that we are to share with others in the body as well. As the light of God shines in and through us, people will be drawn to the Light of Christ. Let your light shine!

In Christ’s love,
Pastor Hank

Prayer Chain & Official Notices

bethelemail@gmail.com

If you have a prayer request or information that you want shared, please send that to the email address above. If you are not receiving email prayer requests or notices, please contact Ann or Ellen in the church office at 228-7589.

Items for the August Issue
of Bethel Matters
are due in the office
by, Wednesday, July 19th

Items for the Happenings
are due in the office
by Wednesday noon.

Have you visited our Bethel Website?
Check it Out at:
www.bethelmarquette.com
Audio Sermons are posted weekly
along with items of interest,
Bethel Matters, Calendar,
and Happenings.



Youth Events & Activities

Junior High Youth Group
6th - 8th Graders
Sundays 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Senior High Youth Group
9th - 12th Graders
Sundays 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Questions:

Chris Mauser, Director of Youth Ministries
1-330-550-0141
christopher.mauser@gmail.com

Happy July Birthday/Anniversary to:

1. Spencer Johnson
2. Jeff & Kathy Millin (A), Jon Motta
4. Mary Wernholm, Pastor Brian & Ellen Oberg (A)
7. Jack Brown (90 yrs), Jerry & Debbie Napier (A)
8. Bill Brondyke, Joe Mackey
9. Mandy Erickson
11. Sandy Thomsen
13. John & Sandy Thomsen (A), Liz Nelson
15. Emily Thomsen, John & Kathy Morabito (A)
16. Jane Noe
17. Bob Wilkinson
20. Pastor Hank
22. Bill & Jan Brondyke
23. Lana VanderSchaaf
25. Mike & Julie Leppanen (A)
26. Bill & Diane Kosa, Pastor Brian Oberg
27. Chase Thomsen
28. Eric Smith & Susan Syria (A)
30. David & Sandra Paul (A)
31. Roger Morrison

Congratulations To:

Zach & Allyson Kytta on their recent wedding.

Ryan Brandt on his graduation from NMU with a Master's degree in neurophysiology/biology.

Jim & Gwen Timmons on the June 8th birth of their granddaughter, Olivia Rose born to their daughter Keely & Mark Wales. She weighed in at 7 lbs. 8 ozs and was 19.25 inches long.

David & Sandra Paul on the June 20th birth of a grandson, Luke Paul born to their daughter Judith & Paul Davis. He weighed in at 8 lbs 8 ozs and was 20.5 inches long.

Bible Studies

For Men

Tuesdays, 6:30 AM, Coachlight Restaurant
Questions: contact Pastor Hank 228-7589

For Ladies

Studies will begin again in the fall.

Summer Mix-Ups:

This summer we are having our Adult Bible Fellowship (ABF) mix-ups. For those who are not familiar, we randomly mixed up all of the ABFs into mixed groups. These classes include people from Junior High up through our oldest members.

We have five (5) men who are facilitating and five (5) men who are substitute facilitators for the classes. The study is **“Growing Strong In God’s Family”**. Each family will have a copy of the book and will work on it during the week as a family, and then come prepared to discuss the lessons on Sunday.

The mix-ups will end on August 13th. If you aren’t involved, you can still join a group. Contact Pastor Hank or if he isn’t available, just pick a group.

Questions, contact Pastor Hank at 228-7589.



Summer Camp

If are planning to attend either UP Bible Camp, Lake Ellen Bible Camp or Lake Lundgren Bible Camp and have earned a scholarship through AWANA, please let Ann know in the church office so the scholarship funds can be sent to the appropriate camp.

UP Bible Camp

(906) 346-6165

www.upbiblecamp.org

Lake Ellen Camp

(906) 542-3529

www.lakeellencamp.com

Lake Lundgren Bible Camp

(715) 324-5457

www.llbc.org

From the Mailbox:

Bethel Baptist,

Thank you for the card and the gift cards. Thank you for all that you have done for me and becoming a second home for me.

Sincerely,
Alee Spagnotti

Vacation Bible School 2017 Wrap Up Attendance

Monday - Kids 91	Volunteers 60
Tuesday - Kids 91	Volunteers 57
Wednesday - Kids 95	Volunteers 60
Thursday - Kids 87	Volunteers 66
Friday - Kids 93	Volunteers 58

Huge THANK YOU

to all volunteers that helped before, during, and after VBS. Thank you for all who made snowflakes, brought in snacks & supplies and for all who have prayed for VBS. God continues to do amazing work through this ministry.

Dear Bethel Family,

Thank you for your continued support for CEF. The summer is filling across the region with ministry to the children! Also, I am traveling from Grand Rapids to Milwaukee, WI this summer for CEF!

Love,
Cheryl Doan

Dear Bethel Retreat Ladies,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to spend the weekend with you wonderful, friendly, fun-loving, God serving ladies. I’m still enjoying “ripples of blessing” from the weekend.

Thanks for the opportunity too, to share God's goodness in my life and the "thank-you" card and enclosed gift.... more blessing!

Sincerely,

Jan Janofski

Zachariah 8:13 "I will make you both a symbol and a source of blessing..."

Dear Bethel Family,

I want to give a heartfelt thanks to each of you who supported the Care Clinic Life Walk. Our church gave \$2,430.00! Those donations will make a difference in many babies life's and on all those whose life's those babies touch. May God bless you for your loving hearts.

Sincerely and Thankfully,

Jean Johnson

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Following the ARCTIC STORM we had at VBS in June, it is time to start thinking about **Operation Christmas Child**. With donations already received, we have filled boxes, but need help with shipping costs. It would be much appreciated if you can help. Checks can be written to Bethel. We do ask that if you donate to this need that you still plan to participate in filling a shoebox in October during the Operation Christmas Child campaign.

Questions: contact Sandy Thomsen at 226-7232.

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Recipe Corner:

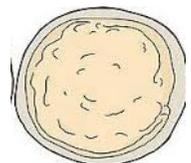
Pretzel Dip

- 1 (8 oz) package cream cheese (softened)
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla

Combine all ingredients in a blender on whip setting. Let sit overnight for best results. Dip pretzels sticks into the dip. It works well for fresh fruit as well.



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Primetimers ABF Activity

Thursday, July 20th, 5:30 PM

**Pool Party
at Thomsen's
405 E. Crescent, MQT**

Come join the fun - swim or have a s'more or both.

Bring a snack to share.

Please check your email if the weather is questionable.



Outdoor Service, Baptisms, & Picnic

Sunday, July 23rd, Presque Isle Park

10:00 AM

Worship Service
at the Band Shell



11:30 AM

Baptisms
in Lake Superior

12:00 Noon

Picnic
at the Pavilion



Please Bring:

last names A-R a salad
last names S-Z a dessert
lawn chair

Provided:

brats, chicken strips, hot dogs
condiments, beverages, table
service