



ST. PAUL'S MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER



Sunday School Classes and Confirmation

Last day, Sunday May 21

Kids Club & Youth Group

Last day, Wednesday, May 24h

*On Sunday, May 21, we will combine
the Confirmation, Adult and Youth classes.*

Speakers Missionaries' Jeff & MaryAnn Anderson



When torrential downpours beat on the heads of my newly planted petunias, I felt bad for them. I wanted to bring them inside to shelter them from the storm. By the time the rain stopped, their little faces were bowed to the ground from the water. They looked sad and weak. Within a few hours, however they perked up and turned their heads skyward. By the next day, they were standing straight and strong.

What a transformation! After pounding them on the head, the rain dripped from their leaves, soaked into the soil, and came up through their stalks, giving them the strength to stand straight.

Because we prefer sunshine, we get annoyed when rain spoils our outdoor plans. We sometimes wrongly think of rain as something negative. But anyone who has experienced drought knows that rain is a blessing. It nourishes the earth for the benefit of both the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45).

Even when the storms of life hit so hard that we nearly break from the force, the “rain” is not an enemy. Our loving God has allowed it to make us stronger. He uses the water that batters us on the inside, so we may stand straight and strong.

Our Daily Bread





CAMP MEETING

If you would like to join us, please see Gail Ulvi or Pastor Handsaker We will then set up a date and time to meet



**We will be setting up the new playground
June 8, 9, and 10th**

See Justin Kantonen if you can help

Wednesday Evening Summer Fellowship & Bible Study



Starting in June, we are offering people the opportunity to host Bible Study in their homes. There will be sign up sheets in the narthex. You can sign up to both host and lead the Bible Study, or just host a Wednesday evening at your home with Pr. Handsaker leading the Bible Study.



The deadline for signing up is the Wednesday the week before.

If nobody is signed up by that date, it will be held here at St. Paul's Church, led By Pastor Handsaker. Info will be available the Sunday before in the bulletins. or you can call the church office.



Vacation Bible School– Keepers of the Kingdom 4 years old to 6th grade

Monday, June 19 to Friday June 23 - 9:00 am to Noon

Stand Strong in Today's Battle for truth



Mn Adult & Teen Challenge

MN Adult & Teen Challenge will be here at St. Paul's Church

Sunday,, Jun 25 during the Worship Hour 9:00 am

Breakfast to follow



St. Paul's Church/ Family Camp

July 21-23 at Covenant Park Bible Camp -Mahtowa, MN

Invite your friends & family

Come for the day or stay for the weekend





GOOD FROM BAD



I recently read *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, the Pulitzer prize-winning novel about man's relationship to trees. The novel makes a convincing argument that trees can communicate with each other, or at least can sense changes in their environment.

I thought of the novel when, during that stretch of a few warm days in April, I spent a considerable amount of time pruning our apple trees. Because of my vivid imagination and because Powers' book was still fresh in my mind, I felt the trees were "talking" to me as I trimmed them. Some of the branches I cut back were quite large and I actually told our Cortland, "That must have hurt!" Of course, I realized that pruning is necessary for the health of the tree. Since it's been a while since I've tackled this chore, many of the branches were half dead. Much of the tree's energy had gone into adding clusters of new growth to the very top which diminishes the size and number of apples we can harvest in the fall.

So something that may be "bad" for the tree actually turns out to be good – the pruning results in a healthier tree and more applesauce for us!

When bad things happen in our lives these negative experiences sometimes can be beneficial. It can be hard to see the hand of God when things go against us, for example, plans that fall apart, dreams that burst, opportunities that never come, sickness, or job loss. Yet these difficulties can present opportunities.

Consider what happened to Paul as recorded in *Philippians 1*. Paul had long desired to go to Rome to spread the Gospel. He finally made it to Rome, but ended up in prison. Look how he describes his circumstances:

"But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are more bold to speak the word without fear" *Philippians 1:12-14*.

How did Paul get good out of the bad? He did not sit in the corner of his cell to have a pity party. He shared the gospel with his Roman guards (talk about a captive audience!) Some scholars believe that

1. the gospel then spread to the praetorian guard, the most powerful group in the Roman army, and
2. some members of the guard were transferred to England and established a church there.

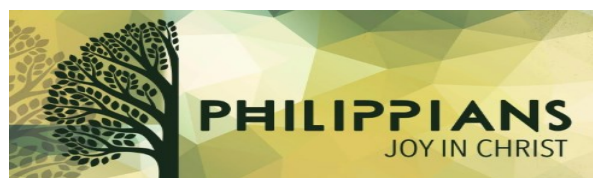
Another positive outcome to Paul's imprisonment was the local brethren, realizing Paul would not be free to preach on street corners in Rome, realized they had a responsibility to share the good news and became "more bold to speak the words without fear."

Paul did not endure trials through his own strength, and neither can we. Consider verses 19 and 20: "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

Notice how Paul appreciated the prayers of his friends while he was imprisoned. Through their prayers he was strengthened and encouraged. Never doubt the efficacy of prayer! Paul also recognized the power of the Holy Spirit, the great resource Christians have in living a life pleasing to God.

What was Paul's overriding motive? That through his life or his death that Christ might be magnified. Can good come out of bad? If we look at the cross and at Paul's imprisonment, we know it can.

C. Phil Johnson



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Like" us on Facebook - St. Paul's Lutheran Church (AFLC)
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Worship Services - Sundays 9:00 am

Sunday school classes 10:30 am

Confirmation Class 10:30

Wednesday Evening Activities 6:30 pm

Kid's Club, Youth Group, Bible Study