

Briefings

Pilot Knob Lutheran Church

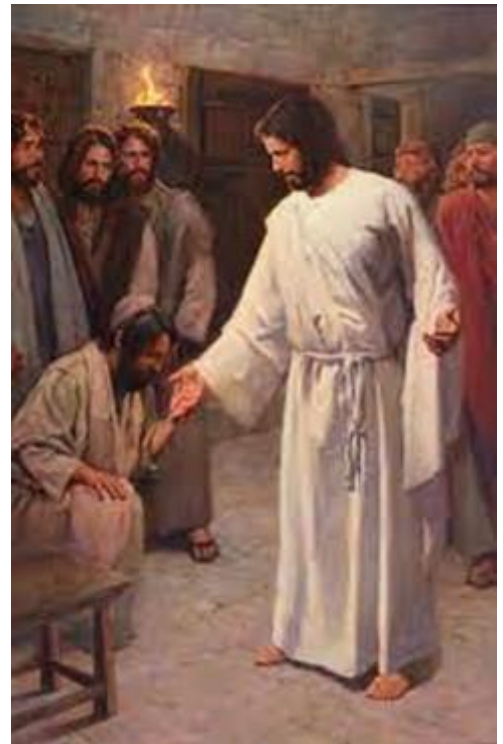
April 2023

Early Sunday morning with the dew clinging to the green leaves and just a hint of the rising sun on the Easter horizon three distraught anxious women walked briskly to the newly sealed tomb of Mary's son. Spices in hand intending to finish what was begun before the Sabbath, they suddenly realized there was no need. The approximately two-ton stone to the graves' entrance was removed and the body was nowhere to be found. Was the body stolen, were they at the wrong site due to the prior events and dime lighting? No! *Matthew 28:2b, 5-6 An angel . . . rolled back the stone and sat on it. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.*

Were the women expecting or anticipating his bodily resurrection? No! However, they stood before an empty tomb and an angel sitting triumphantly on top of the stone no one man could move. We often hear the popular proverb: "Seeing is believing." I prefer what Jesus said: John 20:29 *Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Or we could say: "Believing is seeing."*

We also hear people comment that faith is blind, i.e., faith is not built upon facts, events, or reality. Not so! Our faith as Christians is based on scripture, the very word from God himself. It records many eyewitness accounts of the crucifixion. For the disciple Thomas, seeing was believing.

What did he see and touch, a ghost? No! John 20:26, 27-29b *A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* Our faith is not in faith. Our faith, trust and surrender are in a person; the resurrected Jesus Christ who has shown himself to hundreds of people after his resurrection establishing a solid base of eyewitnesses.



Here in lies our assurance that the Christian faith is based upon historical evidence and eyewitness testimony. If Christ had not been raised from the dead then there would be no Christian faith, no hope of eternal life, no assurance that we can pray to God through Jesus and be heard receiving his help and mercy.

Many liberals who object to his resurrection state that rational people operate within the confines of their materialistic world rendering miracles impossible. Logically speaking and thinking, if God exists, he can work miracles and history continues to testify to this fact.

How many of you were eyewitnesses to the assassination of President Lincoln? None of us, yet we have a great deal of certainty that it was an historical event, because of the eyewitness accounts. Isn't eyewitness testimony about Jesus' resurrection just as trustworthy and certain? Regarding the resurrection we do not have just one eyewitness but hundreds, and none of them are contradictory.

The quality of the eyewitness testimony regarding the resurrection is just as good if not better. How many people do you know would die defending a known lie? After Jesus' ascension the disciples' lives were in danger for preaching the death and resurrection of Christ. All but Judas and John were killed for their faith and teaching Christ's historical resurrection as fact and not a lie or myth.

The disciples were dying for the truth of the resurrection! Would you?

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How Then Should We PRAY?

“WHY????? Why didn't God answer my prayers?

We know God can do all things, and nothing is impossible for Him!! After all, we have a plethora of evidence in the Bible!!

- He created everything out of nothing: light, earth, plants, animals, humans.
- He parted a sea to allow two million refugees to flee from their enemy, then used that same sea to swallow up that enemy.
- He made a bush to burn but not be consumed.
- He caused a desert rock to gush forth lifesaving water.
- He opened the wombs of barren women (Hannah, Leah, Elizabeth).
- He turned ordinary water into vintage wine.
- He caused a young virgin to become pregnant.
- He cured many infirmed people.
- He raised people from the dead.

Yes, God can do all things. Being omnipotent, He is more than capable to answer prayers.

But will He?

When the Answer is NO

There are several instances in Scripture when the answer to a particular prayer was “No.” In Acts 12:1-5, James, the brother of John, was taken prisoner at the request of the violent, anti-Christian King Herod Agrippa, the son of King Herod, the very one who had all the baby boys murdered around the time of Jesus’ birth. The first-generation Christians in Antioch prayed fervently for James’ release. But he wasn’t. Instead, he was beheaded.

Why didn’t God step in? Why did He allow James to die a horrific death? God certainly could have prevented it; He had all the power at His disposal to thwart Agrippa’s evil. But He didn’t.

In another instance, possibly the most poignant of all, another man prayed and wept for release from death. His own!

In the Garden of Gethsemane, a distressed Jesus fell face down and pleaded with God, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me” (Matt. 26:39). The “cup” was God’s wrath, which would soon be poured out on Jesus in the next 24 hours through a humiliating and excruciating crucifixion.

Jesus knew what was coming. He knew what lay ahead for Him. He knew He would suffer physical, mental, and spiritual anguish. It was not going to be pretty, and He (in His most human moment) was dreading it. He did not want to go through with it.

Jesus also knew it was possible for God to “remove” that cup, to prevent it from happening. Yet, with His next breath, Jesus whispered, “Yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39b).

God told His own beloved Son, “No.” God would not and did not remove that cup. Jesus would drink that cup. He would go through the ordeal. Why? Because God knew the bigger picture. God also knew His Son’s death would bring Him, God, the most glory and do the most good for mankind (you and me): that Jesus’ death would bring about reconciliation and eternal life.

These are hard, hard realities to accept. And knowing this, our minds and hearts are often in tension with praying for something or someone and our expectant answer (what we want to happen).

The Answer is Always God’s Will...Regardless.

Unfortunately, as finite humans, we cannot divine the will of God. We cannot know what God will do in any situation. Yet, He graciously invites us to always make our requests known to Him, regardless. We always have the opportunity and privilege to ask, to petition and supplicate, with humility and thanksgiving.

Of course, we want our prayers answered our way. And sometimes that happens. Why? Because it was God's will to begin with. He was going to do that very thing anyway, regardless.

But when the answer is the complete opposite of what we asked, like Jesus in the garden, then what? Well, either way, the answer is God's will.

How Then Should We Pray?

First, and foremost, with humility. We must temper our prayers like Jesus, with, "Not as I will, but as You will, Father," or "Thy will be done." Either way, we bow our will to God's. We humbly accept whatever answer He gives, even though we want healing ourselves or for a loved one etc. We must humbly acknowledge that God knows best and will answer accordingly.

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Yellow = A prayer request.
Green = An answered prayer.



Construction has started on our Community Center / Office Opposition from our Neighbor

"It doesn't matter what is written on the paper. I just signed that. What matters is what I discussed with Ruth," says Auntie Hadja. We made the contract so that

this wouldn't happen. Auntie Hadja's version of our agreement has changed over the months. Included in Auntie Hadja's version is that she has rights, even though she is poor. This isn't cultural misunderstanding. This isn't a foreign missionary oppressing a poor indigenous person. This is part and parcel of what we agreed to go through when we asked to be involved in Sama community. Ruth very appropriately pointed out,

we need to bathe this all-in prayer.

So, what's going on?

We've been praying and asking for other's prayer that we might be able to setup a computer center and library in community.

We built a home for Ruth's brother Mambo on the ocean part of community back in 2016. Auntie Hadja sold us the area. Everyone said she ripped us off. Recently she collected more money from us at a higher price still, selling us the bridge we repaired for her for free prior to that and the area between her house and ours. We had no option. We are used to Auntie Hadja's version changing. Many in the community also can testify to her "shrewdness." It was clear in both conversation and contract what we were buying from Auntie Hadja and how we could use it.

Anyways. We knew it was coming. It is frustrating to have to go through this kind of stuff every time. It just isn't easy to get along with everyone in a community like this, one particularly hungry for gossip and interpersonal conflict. Our neighbors on the way to our area and right next to it happen to be some of the more difficult members of community. The news of my discussion with Auntie Hadja reached Ruth's ears within the half-hour as she waited on Gideon to get out of his Kindergarten class.

How you can pray for our construction project:

We have to persist and we have to keep trying. Keep trying to bless the community while looking for ways to share Jesus.

Can I ask for your prayers for this whole process?

The neighbor issues will be cleared up within a day or two and at the same time, they will be here for years into the future.

It is a concern that the building itself needs to be built well. Experienced builders of cement stilts for houses have had the pillar topple over because they made a mistake in construction.

Pray for wisdom and skill for our workers.



Base of a cement stilt.



Poured at low tide.



Current bridge. Stilt below.

Ways that God has been answering prayers and my vision for the center:

We believe God has been answering prayers.

Now that we have a bridge and a spot of ocean to use along with Sama carpenters experienced in building cement stilts for ocean houses, we can make the community center that we have been praying for. It is helpful that the foreman is the son of an elected local official who lives quite near to the area of construction. We have the money to put up the building.

As of two weeks ago, Elon Musk is offering satellite internet to the Philippines intended to help places that aren't easy to access by the normal channels.

The Tinoto community is an example of a place that has connectivity issues. We're going to put up a strong internet signal that the community hasn't had access to before. This will allow me to do my office stuff in community. It will allow me to homeschool the kids here again. It will be an attraction for members of community as I plan to offer it to them, not for monetary payment, but instead as compensation for their involvement in using and developing their own language. Included will be listening to God's word in their language and participating in scripture-based recording projects.

Pray that this dream would come true. Pray for our perseverance. Pray for a gospel witness to radiate as well from our community center. Pray for good vision.

Here is a bit of irony, Ruth is almost done with the book of Nehemiah (and Ezra too) in which Nehemiah is called by God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He faces quite a bit of opposition. His response is to be courageous and face it with prayer. That is an example of how we can learn and be encouraged from all scripture, both Old and New Testament.

THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUED PRAYERS!

LET'S MEET THE MOWERS

Thank you to all the mowers that make our grounds look neat and orderly.

TEAM 1: JEFF & DONNA EDELEN

TEAM 2: DON ELBERT & JACK SMITH

TEAM 3: GREG & SHERRY FLUGUM

TEAM 4: STEVE & JAN ABELE

TEAM 5: DANNY LENZ & JOEL SHOWALTER

TEAM 6: MATT KEEL & BILL KEEL

TEAM 7: RANDY STENSRUD & RANDY HANNA

SUBSTITUTE: DEVON SNITZER

**TRIMMERS: BOBBY SNITZER & MATT
SWANSON**



LIVING LAST SUPPER



Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023
2:00 pm

Pilot Knob Lutheran Church
2391 330th St - Forest City, IA

Stay afterwards for refreshments and fellowship

APRIL SERMONS & SCRIPTURES

APRIL 2ND, 2023

Palm Sunday

Morning Worship & Holy Communion

SERMON: PASSOVER 1

OT Lesson: Exodus 12:24-30

Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 11:17-22

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 26:17-30

APRIL 7TH, 2023

Good Friday

Good Friday Service

SERMON: PASSOVER 2

OT Lesson: Deuteronomy 16:1-9

Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

Gospel Lesson: Mark 14:12-26

APRIL 9TH, 2023

Easter

Sun-rise Morning Service

SERMON: PENTECOST

OT Lesson: Deuteronomy 19:1-11

Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Gospel Lesson: Mark 16:1-8

APRIL 16TH, 2023

Second Sunday of Easter

Morning Worship

SERMON: KEEP SILENT

OT Lesson: Acts 5:27-42

Epistle Lesson: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel Lesson: John 20:19-31

APRIL 23RD, 2023

Third Sunday of Easter

Morning Worship

SERMON: BE SEPARATED

OT Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Epistle Lesson: 1 Peter 1:17-25

Gospel Lesson: Luke 24: 13-35

APRIL 30TH, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Morning Worship

SERMON: BE STRONG

OT Lesson: Joshua 1:1-2, 5-9, 16-18

Epistle Lesson: 1 Peter 2:19-25

Gospel Lesson: John 10:1-10

APRIL 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 LLS Rehearsal 4:00 PM
2 Communion Greeters: Brandon & Amanda Reader: Angie Lawrence Sound: Bobby/Greg	3	4	5 Confirmation 4:30PM	6	7 Good Friday Good Friday Communion Service 6:30 PM	8
9 Easter Greeters: Bob & Lou Reader: Matt Swanson Sound: Donna/Don	10	11 Council Deacon's Meeting 5:45 PM Council Meeting 6:30 PM	12 Confirmation 4:30PM	13 B-Day Barb Snitzer	14	15
16 Greeters: Jeff & Donna Reader: Don Eibert Sound: Rachel/Steve	17	18 B-Day Diane Swanson	19 B-Day Jan Abele Confirmation 4:30PM	20	21 B-Day Kinsley Keel	22
23 Greeters: Devon & Keesley Reader: Nick Smith Sound: Dave/Derek	24	25 Women's Bible Study 2:00 PM	26 B-Day Pat Hagen Confirmation 4:30PM	27 B-Day Faith Mohlis Quilting	28	29 B-Day Kambrie Keel
30 Greeters: Tony & Lydia Reader: Shelly Jordan Sound: Bobby/Devon	<p style="text-align: center;">Volunteers: Ushers: Bill and Sarah Keel Custodians: Joe and Cathy Mohlis Acolyte: Sophia Reese Communion Asst: Sarah Keel</p>					
Grishare 2:00 PM						