

THOUGHTS

By Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

J
A
N
U
A
R
Y

“GOD IS STILL SUPREME IN 2016!”

Each year, Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, the home of The Word Today, has a theme which we continuously revisit in order to focus our spiritual growth. This year we are going to emphasize the sovereignty of God, His righteous yet loving rule over our lives. Our key verse is Psalm 146:10, “The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.”

At the onset of the book of Daniel, king Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian empire has a disturbing dream about a statue made of various materials (Daniel chapter 2). God gives one of the Jewish captives in Babylon taken from Jerusalem, Daniel, the interpretation of this dream. It covers approximately two thousand years and encompasses the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman empires! A rock smashes into the statue shattering it, and then grows to enormous proportions until it covers the world.

This strange visionary dream was fulfilled in the passing away of these four empires, during the fourth of which, the Roman Empire, the “rock” of our salvation, Jesus Christ appeared! His spiritual Kingdom supersedes all human realms. This is but one illustration in the Bible of our God’s supremacy!

I just recently read [The Hiding Place](#) by Corrie Ten Boom, the account a Dutch family’s efforts to protect Jewish neighbors and countrymen from Hitler’s genocidal troops. It is a powerful account of how God’s Kingdom proceeds regardless of human intrigue. The Ten Boom family had a “hiding place” built into their home in Haarlem, Holland and aided up to 7 Jewish people in hiding from the Nazis. Corrie became a key person in the underground movement to prevent extermination of the Jews.

She and her sister, Betsie, were apprehended by the Nazis and were sent to Ravensbruck, the concentration camp deep in the heart of Germany. There, despite the inhumane conditions, they held clandestine Bible studies and saw many conversions. While her sister died there, Corrie was freed and recounted in this, her first book, both the evils of ungodliness and the glory of God’s indwelling in the Christian’s heart despite outward circumstance. I strongly recommend you take the time for this beautiful story about the Kingdom of Christ.

2016

FIRST JAPAN, THEN INDONESIA?

Work continues in preparation for the rollout of The Word Today in Japan! We are exploring alternatives to radio if they will give us better contact with the people.

Thoughts
Box 77
Greendale
WI
53129



January

2

I have been asked to visit Indonesia, the group of Islands on which live 100 million Muslims. Increasingly we are being given the opportunity to reach Muslims with the truth about Jesus. Many Islamic people have a distorted view of Jesus and desperately need clarification on his deity and passion. We are in a unique position to reach them! Ask God to open opportunities and show the direction and languages He wishes for us to pursue in reaching these people with the Gospel.

WANT TO TOUR GERMANY?

I will be leading a tour in Germany in 2016! I normally take people to Israel; however since it is agitated lately I have signed on to lead a group on a cruise of the Elbe River from October 11-21. If you would like a flyer describing the tour please call or email our church office at 414-421-2060 or bethb@ourshepherdlutheran.org and we would be happy to send one out to you. For those receiving *Thoughts* electronically, a copy is attached for you to view. Perhaps you can join me on this trip!

0

FASTING

For about four years now I have led the congregation in the practice of fasting for the first three weeks of the New Year. I was surprised several years ago reading of the regular practices of the early Christians, as I discovered that not only were prayer, partaking of the Lord's Supper and giving to the poor part of the everyday activities of the early church, but also fasting! It would make sense that fasting was incorporated into believers' lives as it is part of the spiritual regimen of the Old Testament. It would have been natural for Jews who accepted Jesus to continue the practice.

1

Jesus spoke about fasting specifically in Matthew 6:16-18, where he leads off his commentary with the words, "When you fast..." In the book of Acts, the account of the early church, we see in the town of Antioch the Christians were fasting before sending off designated missionaries, and as they appointed elders, who were lay leaders in the church (13:1-3; 14:23). Jesus even hinted at our fasting when he said in response to his disciples *not* fasting, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast (Matthew 9:15)."

6

What does all this mean? It seems to show that fasting was a regular part of faith for Christians. We have lost this habit, and I think we are worse off because of it. I find that the fasting, not an "absolute" fast, which means only consuming water, is tremendously healthy for our bodies and our spirit. Our culture makes us fat and lazy, both bodily and spiritually. Fasting keeps us "on our toes" so to speak. It turns our thoughts back toward the Lord, the true source of spiritual nourishment. I suggest you consider a fasting habit to enhance your walk with the lord. Feel free to do a modified fast with small means and cutting out sweets, alcohol, etc. If you have a medical condition such as diabetes consult your doctor to pursue a proper plan so as to dedicate yourself to God, but not harm your body.

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder