

May 21, 2017

## GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

**-Today:** We hope to have a morning reading service (Rev. Spaans Seasonal Sermons Red Book) and an evening catechism service (Hofman #12). NO confession of faith class.

**-Next Week:** We hope to have a morning catechism service and an evening reading service. Confession of faith after the morning service.

**This Week, Thursday,** May 25, is Ascension Day. We greatly encourage our members to attend services that day. Rock Valley has a reading service at 7:30 p.m. and Rev. Vergunst hopes to be in Sioux Center at 7:00 p.m.

### Advance Notices:

Wednesday, May 31, 7:30 p.m. Study Groups meet

June 4, Student Witvoet hopes to be with us at 2:30 p.m.

**Offerings** Today: 1<sup>st</sup> General Fund      Next week: 1<sup>st</sup> General Fund  
                          2<sup>nd</sup> School Fund                                    2<sup>nd</sup> NRCEA

-All the Lord willing-

**Notes:** The new church and school directories are in the narthex

Books for the study groups are available downstairs.

### Remember in Prayer:

-Those who have been unable to gather with us for some time, thinking especially of Mr. Decker and Mr. Roberts.

-Our widow and widower, our elderly, and the unborn, prodigal sons and daughters, any others who are unable to gather with us today, are under doctor's care, and all those who have hidden crosses.

## .MEDITATION

### Christ's Lesson for Peter

*"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not."*

John 21:18

This text directs us to Peter's life, how Peter was taught by the risen King, after Easter. We know from Scripture, that there was a beginning in Peter's spiritual life. He was from Galilee, but was drawn to the banks of the river Jordan, where he heard his first

lessons from John the Baptist's sermons. He heard: *"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees" (Luke 3:9)*. If the tree falls to the south or to the north, where the tree falls, there it shall be. For Peter, it pointed to his lost condition and by grace, he was shown why Jesus came into the world. Peter followed Jesus for three years and saw how Jesus' life ended. Following Jesus was so different from what he expected. He learned he was a lost sinner and a deceiver. He wept bitterly, thinking his life would end as a hypocrite.

Through the wonder of the love of the risen Christ, He reinstated Peter; first as His child and later, at the Sea of Tiberias, as His servant. On the shore of Tiberias, the risen Prince of Peace addressed him again. Christ started with: *"Verily, verily..."*, drawing Peter's thoughts back in time; *"When thou wast young"*, an earlier time in his life of grace. Many people, throughout the ages, try to skip this beginning; however, they deceive themselves on the way to eternity. They are so sure they are on the narrow way, are never afraid and think they will enter Heaven with joy. They shed 'religious' tears while at the same time they exult the gods of sports and entertainment. Jesus rejected the tears of the daughters of Jerusalem, because they missed the knowledge of the true God and their own lost condition. We need to learn this lesson. The way Peter was led is an example of how God works grace in the lives of His people. They are conquered by regeneration and learn to abandon all 'self' religion. A holy zeal is born in their life to follow God's will. The fruits of regeneration are seen as they leave their old ways and walk on the way of life. They do not dare to count themselves with God's people even though they desire it. There is an inner separation from the world and sin, which is outwardly revealed in their walk, their talk and their dress. How different they are from many travelers today, who exclaim: 'it is not the outside that matters'.

Peter had 'girded' himself with his own thoughts of the way of salvation. His zeal was exemplary, but not free of personal desires, which Jesus revealed to him. Painful lessons for Peter. Room had to be made in Peter's heart for Christ and His work. God's way was so different from his own way. When Peter walked 'whither he wouldst' it went awry. He had to learn at the 'school of free grace' to despise his own strength. *"For by grace are ye saved..." (Eph. 2:8)*. These lessons are not learned in one day. It is essential that all God's people are led back to the beginning of

their spiritual lives, so that they learn their folly and admire God's work of grace.

Jesus also directed Peter's thoughts to the future as He said: "*When thou shalt be old...*". Peter expected a much different way, but he would have to learn to follow the risen Savior. Jesus directed Peter's attention not only to the last moments of his life, but especially to the time just prior to Peter's crucifixion when he would stretch forth his hands which would be bound on the cross. He, as a helpless one, would have to lean on the hand of the Almighty. He would be led as one without strength; all his rebellion would be subject to God's will. This is the same way that God teaches His people in the life of grace. Although it is comforting, they are oppressed by many questions. So often their way, the narrow way, goes so differently from what they expected or hoped for, yet ends in eternal communion with the Lord, just as with Peter. People of God, may this be to your comfort.

The only other way to eternity is the broad way, and by nature, we all walk that way since our deep fall in Adam. This way ends in eternal destruction. God's Word warns us about those who think they are on the narrow way and walk with God's children, but at the end they will not be able to enter into glory. It is necessary for all of us to learn, during our life time, how we can be taken off the broad way and placed on the narrow way. Christ has to bring us there, as He did for Peter.

Reader, are you on the broad way or the narrow way?

~Rev. P. Blok

Translated from "De Saambinder"

## Notes

# Netherlands Reformed Congregation

Sioux Falls, SD



*Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made  
the heaven and the earth by thy great  
power and stretched out arm, and  
there is nothing too hard for thee:"*  
Jeremiah 32:17

Church Times: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.