

Sunday, June 28, 2020

Dear Members, Friends, and Guests of Desert Hills Lutheran Church,

Hello on this windy Sunday. It is nice since the winds seem to have driven the temperature down. This morning after breakfast I decided to go through more boxes. We have one car in the garage and one to go, though I don't think that will happen until after the White Elephant opens again. I wonder if there will be a massive amount of stuff donated after this lockdown is over. We all have had time to go through things.

I've got a large trash bag at my feet and I'm doing my best to just toss. Of the two of us here, one of us has a much easier time of letting go of things and it is not me. But I have found some treasures. I found the keys to my tool chests in case I want to lock them. I've found seven boxes of little staples, some old pictures, eight flash drives, a flask (where did that come from?), Christmas cards, and four magnifying glasses. Isn't it amazing the stuff we think we need? Everything I can throw away or earmark for the White Elephant is a victory. Jesus was always clear that we store our treasure in heaven, not in boxes in the attic or our garage.

Also this morning, we soon will be on our way to the Laundromat. Our clothes dryer quit last weekend and the part that will (hopefully) fix it hasn't yet arrived. So we wash clothes here and take them down to dry.

Now something from my class (taught by Dr. N.T. Wright) on Philippians. In Philippians 1:12-26 Paul is trying to encourage the little church in Philippi not to give up hope even though Paul is now in prison. In this last episode Dr. Wright said he believes Paul was imprisoned in Ephesus. Paul tells them that his being in prison will actually advance the gospel. The more that people can hear the gospel even if (verse 17) delivered by people preaching out of selfish ambition, not sincerely and to cause trouble, Paul doesn't care as long as King Jesus is proclaimed.

Then Paul talks about the elephant in the room, the possibility of being executed in prison. In verse 21: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." It so reminds me of our friend Dean Libner who, before a risky surgery, said: "Don't worry Pastor, in a week or so I'll either be golfing at Haven or I'll be with the Lord in heaven, either Haven or heaven." Paul is pretty sure he will remain and so he does for a few more years.

This all makes my sorting through boxes and going to the laundromat sound silly, but life is filled with both the silly and the serious; we will just face both by grace through faith in Jesus. Have a great Sunday.

Blessings,

Pastor Martin