

Sunday, July 12, 2020

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

To start, just a word about how good our staff is. On Friday, the water cooler in the church office wasn't working. So, I talked with Joe Mazur and he said he would look at it. I returned to my office and two minutes later he dropped in saying, "I fixed it." I was astonished. "Wow!" I said. He said very humbly, "Well, I am sort of genius at fixing things." "Yeah, what did you do?" "I plugged it in." Good laughter followed.

It is Sunday. My sermon this weekend is about there is therefore now no condemnation in those who are in Christ Jesus. We find this in Romans 8:1. I hope you take the time to listen. I've taken that verse almost like a mantra for myself. Christian people who are overly critical of themselves will do well to listen to that verse.

I continue to take the class on Philippians from N.T. Wright. We are in chapter two. Chapter 2:25-30 has Paul telling the church in Philippi that he wants to send Epaphroditus back to them. We believe Paul is in prison in Ephesus and the church sent Epaphroditus with money for Paul but then the church in Philippi didn't hear back from him. If a person carrying a large sum of money disappears, it is natural to think that perhaps the money was too big a temptation. The text doesn't say this, but Paul goes overboard in telling the church that Epaphroditus really did get sick. Listen to Paul:

Philippians 2: 25- 30.

25 Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus—my brother and co-worker and fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need;

26 for he has been longing for all of you, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.

27 He was indeed so ill that he nearly died. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, so that I would not have one sorrow after another.

28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, in order that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.

29 Welcome him then in the Lord with all joy, and honor such people,

30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me.

It is such a touching and loving way to send someone back to the main group. He calls him "my brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier (of God.)"

In verse 28 Paul says that he is eager to send him, so that you may rejoice at seeing him and Paul can be less anxious. Less anxious about what? I'm not sure.

It makes me think of a time when we can see each other weekly. We will rejoice.

Have a wonderful Sunday.

Pastor Martin