

Jan/Feb 2020 Newsletter

Parable of the Dairy Farm ~ Pastor David Niemela

It is sad to see the declining influence of the dairy farm upon American lives. I have a few of these memories myself through visits, but memories shared with me by those who actually grew up on the dairy farm are countless. In my childhood, the dairy seemed to get in the way. One friend couldn't be in as many sports as me because of the cows, and extended stays at my cousin's ensured I would be helping with chores. Why did *they* have to work? Simply put, the family needed them. Fortunately now, I see the benefits for those growing up on the dairy farm, and I have heard from many of you (and countless others) the appreciation for this upbringing (and I will not discount raising beef cattle, crop farming, or other hardworking upbringings). Parents didn't just raise quality milk on the farm, but, along with that, kids with high-quality skills and character. It was either instill a work ethic in the children, or have no food on the table. The economy demanded it: work or suffer (or die). Since I do not have the research to back this up, and it may be oversimplified, too, I will leave you to be the judge on the following statement: the decline of the dairy farm in America is in some way connected to a decline of work ethic in America.

Concerning your work in the congregation, you won't necessarily die if you don't have a work ethic in ministry. The need for congregational work is not obvious, because your family's next bite of food does not depend on it. Since neither our stomachs nor bank balances drive us forward to do ministry work, we must be intentional. Do not be "lagging behind in diligence," but rather "fervent in spirit" (Romans 12:11). Paul did not treat ministry like a jog in the park or boxing the air, but was like a disciplined athlete in reaching others (1 Corinthians 9, especially vv. 24-27).

What is congregational work, and are you qualified? Congregational work is working together to spread the Kingdom of God on earth. It can't be done alone, since the Bible constantly calls us to minister to "one another"¹ and more specifically says "let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24, ESV). It is having the Word of God in your home. It is gathering around the Word of God to study and hear it with fellow believers. Here the Spirit presses us forward to sharpen our focus in how to minister to our family, church family, and community. It can't be a lax approach. The farmer adapts his methods with experience; together, we must adapt with *God's Word* applied to experience.

Are you qualified? To answer this, I ask, do you trust in yourself or in God? In other words, do you trust in the salvation of Jesus Christ? If yes, you have God's Spirit and are qualified (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). While your stomach won't drive you forward, God's Spirit will, even as He is now, and won't let you settle down as the world is dying.

To be more specific, the world (specifically unbelievers) is dead to God. This is not because of God, but because of their sin. Like the false teachers Paul described, "whose god is their appetite," (Philippians 3:19) they are driven forward by their senses to fulfill both needs and pleasures. "Love of money" (1 Timothy 6:10) also characterizes this idolatry. These are slaves to sin (Romans 6:16), which we all were at one time (see 6:17). That slavery might be veiled in false holiness of hard work, but it is really to serve the god of their stomachs and/or bank balances (among other idols).

Some even fail to justify their false holiness in work, and would rather simply not work. Some are surprised at this attitude. As I look at this, appalling as it may be to me at first glance, it makes sense in

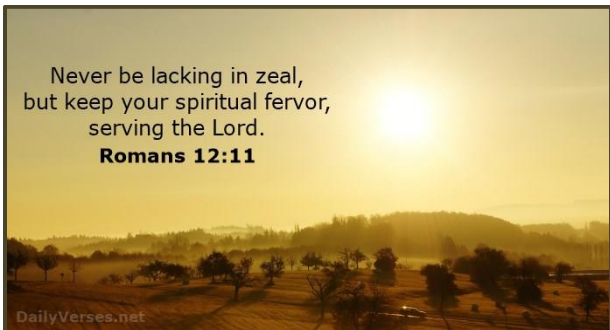
light of the Scriptures. Most are on the broad road to destruction, as Matthew 7:13-14 makes clear. So, it makes sense things like the work ethic, and therefore the economy, fall apart. So, is it a surprise the next generation, in general, lacks work ethic when the days of prosperity made raising a bank balance easier than raising hard-working kids? The gods of the stomach and money won the day again.

These gods did not win eternity, though. Christ's cross and resurrection put Satan to shame (Colossians 2:15), along with his work of distraction through false gods. While the United States slips, remain confident in God's Spirit and Word. He called the Christians "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). Salt is used for preservation and/or taste. If society is to be preserved, or at least made agreeable to taste, it will take a work of God. God worked by resurrecting you and me to life in Christ, and sprinkling us Christians throughout society.

I don't want to see our nation fall in my lifetime, but whatever does happen, our confidence is in God, and His sure Kingdom. The parable of the dairy farm reminds us that work ethic counts, especially in the congregation. Stomachs or money won't motivate congregational work, but the decline of America should get us seriously thinking about it. The true motivation will be from God's Spirit, the Spirit Who revealed to us Christ's salvation from this dying world. "The Lord is King forever and ever; the nations will perish from his land" (Psalm 10:16, HCSB). It's a guaranteed cause worth working for.

In Christ, Pastor David

1 John 13:34-35; Romans 12:10 and 16; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Galatians 5:13; and numerous other examples in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and other books.



Calendar of Events: Jan/Feb 2020

Sunday, Jan 5th: 10am Worship Service

Sunday, Jan 12th: 8:45am Sunday School, resumes
10am Worship, with Holy Communion

Wed, Jan. 15th: 3:30-5pm: Kid's Bible Club
6pm Confirmation & 6pm Youth Group

Sunday, Jan. 19th: 8:45am Sunday School
10am Worship
Fellowship Potluck, Sarah group

Wed, Jan. 22nd: 3:30-5pm: Kid's Bible Club
6pm Confirmation & 6pm Youth Group

Sat, Jan. 25th: 10am Bridal Shower for Michele Green

Sunday, Jan 26th: 8:45am Sunday School
10am Worship

Wed, Jan. 29th: 3:30-5pm: Kid's Bible Club
6pm Confirmation & 6pm Youth Group

Sunday, Feb. 2nd: 8:45am Sunday School
10am Worship

Wed, Feb. 5th: 3:30-5pm: Kid's Bible Club
6pm Confirmation & 6pm Youth Group

Feb 7th & 8th: NW District Mid-Winter Bible Conference,
East Grand Forks, Christ the King Free Lutheran Church

Sunday, Feb. 9th: 8:45am Sunday School
10am Worship, with Holy Communion

Wed, Feb. 12th: 3:30-5pm: Kid's Bible Club
6pm Confirmation & 6pm Youth Group

Sunday, Feb. 16th: 8:45am Sunday School
10am Worship
Fellowship Potluck, Martha group

Wed, Feb. 19th: 3:30-5pm: Kid's Bible Club
6pm Confirmation & 6pm Youth Group

Feb 21-23: Missions Conference, Our Saviour's, TRF

Sunday, Feb. 23rd: 8:45am Sunday School
10am Worship

Wed, Feb 26th: 3:30-5pm: Kid's Bible Club
6pm Confirmation & 6pm Youth Group
6pm-7:15 Soup & Sandwich Supper
7:30pm Lenten Service

2020 Officers/Committees

Council Members at Large

Brian Berg-President (2020)

Doug Green (2021)

Murray Jacobson-Secretary (2022)

Deacons

Matt Green (2020)

Brandon Waage (2021)

Jamie Sikorski (2022)

Trustees

Curt Christianson (2020)

Randy Dvergsten (2021)

John Harder (2022)

Treasurer

Don Christanson (indefinite)

Christian Education Committee

Joni Wiskow (2020)

Anna Sikorski (2021)

Kelly Christianson (2022)

Music Committee

Jody Kirkeide (2020)

Shania Waage (2021)

Robin Waage (2022)

Librarian

Jennifer Niemela

Memorial Fund Committee

Sharon Christianson (indefinite)

Rachel Green (indefinite)

Nominating Committee

Blaire Berg (2020)

Roger Green (2020)

Steve Sovde (2020)

Auditing Committee

Steve Harder (2020)

Gary Vacura (2020)

WMF OFFICERS:

President: Angie Truscinski

Vice President: Arlene Jenson

Secretary: Dawn Baumgartner

Treasurer: Paulette Nelson

Cradle Roll: Deb Vacura

Missions Coordinator: Anna Mattson

Alter, Flowers, Pictorial Display &

Communion: Sharon Christianson

United Free WMF

(Women's Missionary Federation)

1 Chronicles 16:34: "Give **thanks** to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

The new WMF Bible Study is here and we will be starting lesson one on January 8th. The Theme for this year's study is "**Don't follow your feelings**" by Linda Korhonen. "Our world is confused and hurting. Young and old are being deceived by a culture that doesn't know what truth is! Many don't want to know! Most people just want their own way. They think they can follow their feeling to find pleasure and satisfaction, regardless of the consequences.

Where can we find hope and healing? How can we protect our children and grandchildren from the lies that are bombarding them every day? GOD through His Word is our source of absolute truth. May these lessons equip and prepare us to know what God says and to help others whose feelings have misguided them."

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" John 8:31-32.

Ladies of all ages are welcome to attend. We meet at 6:30 on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the dining room. Lesson 1 is titled: The Truth about Feelings. Lesson 2 will be **February 12th**, and the lesson is titled: "**When I doubt if I am Saved**"

If you are gone for part of the winter and want to make sure we keep a book for you, please let myself or Paulette Nelson know. Blessings, Angie

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:

Welcome back teachers and kids! Sunday School is back in session January 12th, 2020, after our Christmas break. We meet every Sunday starting at 8:45am and ending about 9:50am. We are continuing to learn about prayer, and we are also working on **memorizing the Lord's Prayer**. It is important for our children to learn and remember the words of the Lord's Prayer. It is equally as important for them to start understanding the meaning behind these words and why we can all find comfort in reciting them. We hope to pass on to our children a passion for prayer through the Sunday School lessons, singing and crafts.

It may seem early, but we are beginning to plan for **VBS 2020**. The exact dates are still to be determined, but we would love to hear from you if are interested in volunteering. We will keep you posted on the dates.

We all know that this time of year can bring bad weather, and we want our kids and families to stay safe! If Sunday School is cancelled due to the weather, we do our best to post on Facebook in a timely manner. Please feel free to check the United Free Lutheran Sunday School page for notices.

Thank you from the Sunday School Staff!

If you have any questions regarding Sunday School or VBS 2020 please feel free to contact Joni Wiskow at (763)486-9150 or joni.wiskow@gmail.com.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done
in earth, as it is in heaven:
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

YOUTH GROUP UPDATES:

Youth Group continues to meet Wednesday evenings at 6pm ~ led by Shania & Brandon, and Jenny.

Even if you cannot join every Wednesday – you are welcome ANYTIME!

Upcoming Events & Fundraisers:

****Lenten Soup & Sandwich suppers – Pastor David and Sharla will be working on the sign-ups**
****Palm Sunday Brunch April 5th – This is a great annual fundraiser. Look for more info in Feb/March.**

****MOVIE NIGHT: Let's schedule a Dinner & Movie Fundraiser! If you'd like to help coordinate this, get in touch with Sharla or Shania!**

If you have any ideas for activities for our Youth, we'd love to hear from you too!

Above all, keep our Youth in your prayers. Culture and Social Media throws a lot of lies and negativity their way and works very hard to pull them from their faith. Thanks for being a positive influence in the lives of our Youth!