

In the midst of the world's bad news,

THE GOOD NEWS!

Beautiful Savior's Weekly Worship & News

5/6/2020

PASTORS' PEN:

WEEK EIGHT of "ALL activity at Beautiful Savior - paused and postponed." **HOPEFULLY**, sometime this month some of us who can or want will be able to **RESUME** some church activities with "social distancing!" **WAHOO!** For we "hunger and thirst for righteousness!" (Mt 5:6). Until then, STAY IN, STAY SAFE, STAY WELL! We pray for protection and healing for all people around the world, an end to this virus, and that God uses this to bring ALL fallen sinful creation back to Him! Only Jesus is LIFE! Hear Him, believe Him, trust Him, share Him, live Him!

WORSHIP:

Until we resume our "normal" church activities, these weekly worship pages will be mailed and available on our website (bslcms.org) AND a corresponding weekly recorded worship will be on our facebook page (a link is on our website). Again, everything is coordinated so that all of us will be united in the same worship even though we are separated. **OPEN** your BIBLE, catechism, and hymnal and hear and worship the LORD!

CATECHISM REVIEW: LORD'S PRAYER: 4th Petition (for meditation and prayer)

"Give us this day our daily bread." What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like."

WEEKLY WORD - ONE CHAPTER EACH AND EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK: Acts 1-7

As we finished last week the life of Christ from Luke's Gospel, we continue this week with the early church in the book of Acts! With our brothers and sisters in Christ we read the exact same BIBLE chapter each and every day of the week! Wow, what a sense of unity and togetherness! Please include with your daily devotions. There is no greater blessing than being in Jesus Christ and His saving Word!

SERMON/DEVOTION: John 14:1-14 - "Vacancy!"

As some of you know, in Asheville, NC is the Biltmore Estate or Mansion, built by George Washington Vanderbilt II from 1889 to 1895 as - get this - a summer home! Supposedly it's the largest privately owned mansion or house in the US with over 135,000 square feet of living space! It has 250 rooms on 125,000 acres! Yes, it's the "Biltmore," and if Vanderbilt wanted, he could have even "built more!" Yet, it's not the biggest home in the world, not by a long shot. That possibly goes to the Palace of the Sultan of Brunei on the island of Borneo in Southeast Asia which has 1,700 rooms and 250 bathrooms! Wow, how'd you like to be their house keeper?!

When traveling, one of the worst things to see in the late afternoon/evening when all you want is a place to rest, relax, and refresh is a sign which reads, "No Vacancy," meaning there are no available rooms; the place is full! Those words bring anxiety, stress, doubt, worry, and fear! No, what we want to see is the word, "Vacancy!" which brings relief, calm, peace, and joy!

In our text, as we have heard many times before, Jesus says to His disciples between His last supper and arrest, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." Jesus tells them that the

Father's house has "many rooms," but how many is "many?" The Biltmore's 250? The Sultan's 1,700? Does the sign outside the door read "Vacancy" or the dreaded "No Vacancy?" meaning the place is full?

The Jehovah's Witnesses, among a few others, take the numbers in Revelation 14 to be literal - 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel equals the stated 144,000. To them that's the actual number of people who will be welcomed in to the Father's house in heaven! Unfortunately, that number has already come and gone; in order to get in today one has to be "better" than somebody already there and "bump" them out! Wow, what comfort!

At the time of this writing there has been around 75,000 deaths in the US and 260,000 worldwide due to the coronavirus. Now one death is too many, especially if it's someone we know and love, but these numbers are a lot of deaths - not the most, by far, in human history but nevertheless a lot! In the last couple of months three of our loved ones from Beautiful Savior - faithful Christians - have also passed from this life, though not from the virus. Are any of these, some of these, all of these, none of these in the Father's house in heaven? Again, how many is "many rooms?" 250? 1,700? 144,000? More? Less? Is there room or rooms for more or is the place full? Will our loved ones - and each of us someday - also discover, "The door was shut," and say, "Lord, lord, open to us," only to hear, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you?" (Mt 25:10-12). Are there rooms for any more? Is there room for one more - me? Does the sign above the door read, "Vacancy" or the dreaded "No Vacancy?" One brings relief, calm, peace, and joy, but the other brings anxiety, stress, doubt, worry, and fear!

In the all familiar Luke chapter two we hear, "She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (v7). The sign at the inn read, "No Vacancy," so they went to a manger, a place for animals, for it had a "Vacancy." There, Jesus - God Himself - was born! The Son of God left His Father's house of "many rooms" to enter this life in rather humble beginnings. Later His disciples heard Him say, as we did again last Sunday, "I AM the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture" (Jn 10:9), for to properly enter any house or mansion, one has to be welcomed and invited in through the door. Then Jesus said to His disciples, as we heard this week, "I AM the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus is "I AM" - Almighty God - who came to this life to bring His fallen sinful creation back to His Father's mansion in heaven. In the greatest any only definition of love, Jesus died for all sin, including ours, and passed through the door of physical and eternal death! The door or stone of His resting place, the tomb, was slammed shut! The gates of hell itself were slammed and locked shut! But on the third day the door of death and hell was thrust open! The stone of the tomb was rolled away! In Jesus Christ - "the door, the way, the truth, and the life" - there is forgiveness of sins and, therefore, restored created LIFE - true LIFE, eternal everlasting LIFE! By the power of God's Spirit, all who know, believe, and follow Jesus Christ as Savior ARE welcomed and invited in through the door to the Father's house of many rooms!

The 144,000, like much of Revelation, is not literal but instead stands for ALL - ALL who have Jesus Christ the LORD! For, indeed, the "Father's house has many rooms" - it is not full nor can it ever be! Although the door is CLOSED to all sinners without Jesus Christ, the door is OPEN to all sinners with Jesus Christ - for in Jesus ALL sins are forgiven! Jesus is "I AM" - "the door, the way, the truth, and the life!" So, Jesus also says to you and me and all His people, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." ALL who pass from this life in Jesus Christ have a guaranteed and confirmed reservation for a room in the Father's house! In Christ we have no anxiety, stress, doubt, worry, or fear but instead relief, calm, peace, and joy! We are not unsure and uncertain but sure and certain! For, Jesus says in the "Father's house are many rooms!" So He also says to us, "If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

The "Father's house has many rooms" - more than the Biltmore's 250, the Sultan's 1,700, or even 144,000! There is room and rooms for ALL who have received faith and trust in Jesus Christ the LORD! The sign over the door of heaven never flashes, "No Vacancy," but always, "Vacancy" - for there is always room for more in Jesus Christ - "the door, the way, the truth, and the life." AMEN!

*"If the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God,
a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." --2 Corinthians 5:1*