

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

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

I finished *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* by Eric Metaxas. It was excellent. Bonhoeffer spent the last eighteen months of his life in prison but was never charged. The SS didn't even know when they arrested him that he was part of the conspiracy to take Hitler's life. That was all uncovered by the failed attempt on July 20, 1944. Bonhoeffer was then tried for treason and executed on April 9, 1945 just weeks before Hitler's own suicide on April 30, 1945. Bonhoeffer remained a Christian model his entire life in that both guards and prisoners would comment on his kindness, calm spirit, and generosity.

Bonhoeffer's last written work published before his death was *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*. It is a very small book and I've ordered it and will let you know if it was helpful.

My Psalm for today is Psalm 15.

NRSV

¹ O LORD, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?
² Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
and speak the truth from their heart;
³ who do not slander with their tongue,
and do no evil to their friends,
nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;
⁴ in whose eyes the wicked are despised,
but who honor those who fear the LORD;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
⁵ who do not lend money at interest,
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.
Those who do these things shall never be moved.

It has five short verses and wants to answer the question of who is worthy to abide in God's sanctuary. Verse 1 O Lord, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill? What was so interesting to me was there was not a word about faith or believing, it all had to do with actions: walk blamelessly, do right, speak the truth, don't slander, do no evil, despise the wicked, honor those who fear the Lord, keep your word, don't lend with interest, and don't take a bribe. None of this means we are perfect, but the Psalmist is clear that holiness and faith are deeply connected.

One last comment about the last verse. The Psalmist says, "those who do these things shall never be moved." What an interesting thought. Does it mean we will never be moved from the presence of God? Does it mean we will not be moved in life in that we will not be wishy washy

or constantly influenced so that in thinking and actions we bounce around? Does it mean we will have a tendency for stubbornness? I don't have an answer.

Bonhoeffer felt that the Word of God was living and that we were to read every day and pick a verse or two to meditate on.

I continue to look forward to our soft opening on the 19th and 20th. Our online worship will continue so if you are not ready to be around people yet, no worries. Julie got word that kids will be coming back to school but in a limited way. I'm grateful for things opening up slowly.

We must keep reading our Bibles, our Lord has much to say to us.

Blessings,

Pastor Martin