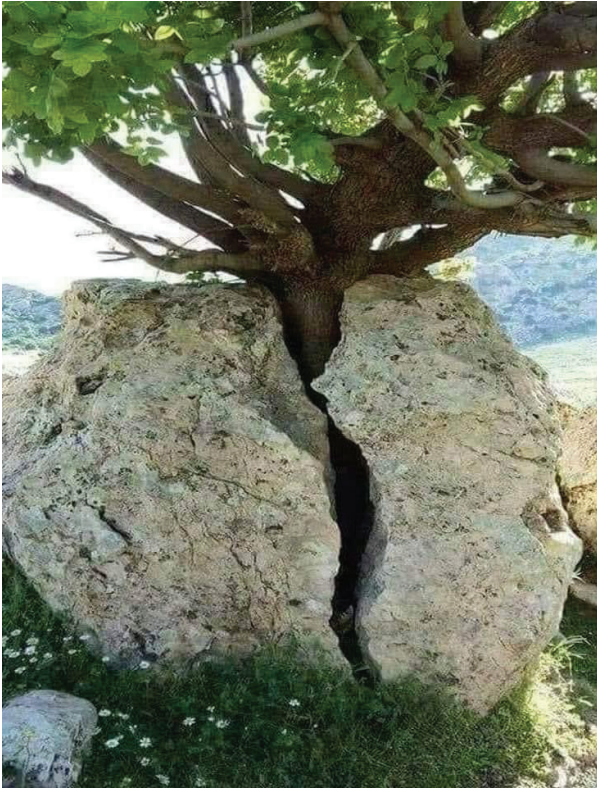


Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020
What do you see?



Rock-breaking Cherry Tree. The tree grew between a crack of rock. Approximately 400 years old. Uchimaru, Morioka, Iwate prefecture, Japan. (From Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository)



Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church

Rural Eden

Sundays

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

In The Parking Lot -

Tune in to 89.3 FM



AFLC

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

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Hymn Fest at Buffalo Lake -
led by Sheila Oreskovich

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Minister: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (Said in unison) And Also With You.

Prayer

Hymn Fest at Buffalo Lake - led by Sheila Oreskovich and Julianna Kosel

Today's Supporting Scriptures

Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Luke 18:1-8: 1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'" 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Nahum 1:6: Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him.

Psalms 78:15-16: He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.

Jeremiah 23:29: "Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

Philippians 3:13-14: Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Acts 1:8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

James 1:2, 4: 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Romans 5:3-4: Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Psalms 73:26: My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Ephesians 6:10-18: 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the

full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

1 Corinthians 10:13: No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

2 Corinthians 2:15-17: For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.

2 Timothy 3:16: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

Psalm 40

Message

Apostle's Creed: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offering

Prayers

Lord's Prayer

(Said in unison) Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On 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, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

What do you see?

By Paul Irvin Kosel

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden

Heaven Bound Ministries, Pierpont

Nov. 15, 2020

Prayer

Father, I bless and thank You for a brand new day and for the fresh opportunities and challenges that this day will bring. Thank You, that Your mercies are new every morning and I pray that I will walk worthy of You today and be a faithful witness in thought, word and deed, demonstrating a Christ-like attitude to all with whom I come in contact.

Keep me ever-focussed on You Lord, and keep my heart steadfastly trusting You for all my needs and necessities. Help me not to function in my own strength, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. May I stand firm in the truth of the gospel of grace, and remain steadfastly looking to Jesus, trusting in Him to supply His sufficient strength for all occasions. Teach me all that You would have me to learn today and give me the courage and strength to press on toward the goal for the upward call in Christ Jesus. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

If you look at the front of your bulletin, you will notice a tree growing through a rock. Throughout the week, I am in search of something that will inspire me for my message. I came across the photo on the left and the heading was, "What do you see?" Now I want you to take a moment and in your mind, ponder of what you are looking at. And then we'll gather back together as I unleash my thought of the rock and the tree.

Throughout scripture, there are many references made to the Rock - Peter said on this rock I will build the church.

So how can we put this into a spiritual reference when we talk about the rock and the tree.

There are things in our life that seem as hard as a rock. It seems like whatever we do, we can't break the mold, so to speak. We can't break out of the shell of the rock. It seems so tough. Trying to reach out to God may even seem harder. But that rock that is stopping you is dead. It is not alive. The spirit of God is very much alive, as recorded in Hebrews 4:12, 12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

The tree is a breathing, living plant that can virtually grow anywhere, including a rock.

Over in Morocco Japan, there is a 400-year old Cherry Tree that started growing in the crack of a rock and to his very day, it has split the rock in half and the tree continues to thrive. It remains a favourite for tourists and the pride of the local people because the tree represents the values that Japanese favour most - perseverance, strength and survival. A visit to the tree is a lesson learnt, rather than an attraction enjoyed.

Perseverance, strength and survival. Three elements needed to live a good life.

The first thing I want to talk about is perseverance. Perseverance towards God. Perseverance

about not giving up. In Luke 18, Jesus tells the story about the persistent widow who would not give up.

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

You see, perseverance is much stronger than any rock. You could look at the rock as a stumbling rock, but with faith, God can split the rock and free you from the problems you are having.

In the book of Nahum, there is A prophecy concerning Nineveh. That even though Nineveh may have allies and are numerous, the Lord said they will be destroyed and pass away. So while Nineveh thought it was tough as a rock, in verse six of Nahum 1 it says, Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him.

God can shatter rocks. He can bring peace to your life. The rocks may prove to be a dam in your life, but if you allow God in your life, he can break the dam and allow the Spirit to flow freely through you. As David said in Psalm 78:15-16 New International Version

15 He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them water as abundant as the seas;
16 he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.

You see, the word of the Lord is powerful. Jeremiah recorded in 23:29, 29 "Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

Winston Churchill said, "If you are going through hell, keep going." In other words - don't give up. Don't give in. Don't stop. Keep on moving towards the prize because eventually, you will escape and be freed.

Paul says it best in Philippians 3:13-14: New International Version

13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Not only can a tree split a rock, a river can wear it down just like the widow wore down the judge. Jim Watkins said, "A river cuts through rock, not because of its power, but because of its persistence."

So in summary, what is perserverance. Perseverance is the ability to keep doing something in spite of obstacles. People who persevere show steadfastness in doing something despite how hard it is or how long it takes to reach the goal.

With the development of perseverance, you will have the development of strength. You can overcome obstacles when God has your back.

In Acts 1:8 New International Version

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

And we need strength for the journey. That is why God is there for us. Billy Graham once described why people are put into challenging situations.

The Bible tells us about troubles, namely, that God can use them to make our faith stronger and draw us closer to Himself. The Bible says, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds ... so that you may be mature and complete” (James 1:2, 4).

Think of it this way: Suppose you never got any physical exercise; all you did was sit in your chair or lie in bed all day. What would happen to your muscles? You know the answer: They’d grow weaker and weaker, and eventually you might not even be able to get out of bed. Our muscles only become strong if we exercise them and challenge them to do more. The more resistance they face, the stronger they’ll get.

The same is true spiritually. If our faith is never challenged ... if we never have to put it to work ... then our spiritual “muscles” will grow weaker and weaker. But when hardships and trials come into our lives, we’ll be forced to exercise those spiritual “muscles” — and when we do, our faith will grow stronger. We’ll discover that God still loves us and is with us, and He can be trusted to lead us through life’s storms. The Bible says, “We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Romans 5:3-4).

Thank God that He will never abandon you, no matter what comes your way. And when hard times do come, turn to Him and ask Him to use them to help you grow in your faith.

Asaph was an important Levitical priest, and his families served as singers and liturgists in the temple. Psalm 73 is the start of Book 3 where the next 10 Psalms were written by Asaph. The temptation, when it had reduced him to the brink of atheism, is broken, by a discovery of the connected purposes and providences of God in his word and ordinances. He found strength in the Lord as recorded in Psalm 73:26, My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

The third element about our tree growing in the rock represents survival. How do you survive? You survive by fighting the good fight. By keeping your faith strong. By always connecting with God. And by putting on the armor of God!

Paul writes in Ephesians 6:10-18: 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

Here we have the full armor of God - belt of Truth, Breastplate of righteousness, Feet fitted with readiness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the spirit. With the full armor, we can survive the evilness of this world and be lifted into heaven.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:13 New International Version

13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Perseverance, strength and survival.

You become stronger, more compassionate, and more grateful when you strongly believe in your capacity to persevere. It's not survival of the fittest. It's whether your faith will survive the trials of this world. Consider the man Job who was attacked by Satan, yet his faith survived. David's strength of using his brain was stronger than all of the strength of Goliath and David won. The widow proved that with perseverance, you can win the battle. So we, too, will win the battle.

And when spring time rolls around, that Cherry tree in that rock will bloom and fill the area with its sweet scent of life. As Paul was traveling around, he talked about the aroma in 2 Corinthians 2:15-17 New International Version

15 For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? 17 Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.

As with everything that we talk about with God, it is supported by, well, Paul says it best in 2 Timothy 3:16: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

When we feel there is a pile of rocks piling on top of us, remember, God can break through the rocks. Life does not have to be the pits. We have to believe in God and he will rescue us like he rescued David.

Psalm 40 is a song about the pits. It falls into two sections. In the first half (40:1-10), David tells how God got him out of one pit and he sings God's praise for doing so. But he did not then live happily ever after. Rather, it is evident from the second half of the psalm (40:11-17) that he is in another pit, crying out to the Lord to deliver him from this one. Because David waited intently on the Lord to rescue him from the first pit, he knew how to wait on the Lord to get him out of the second pit. So it's a psalm about what to do when you're in the pit.

Psalm 40

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

1 I waited patiently for the Lord;

he turned to me and heard my cry.

2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit,

out of the mud and mire;

he set my feet on a rock

and gave me a firm place to stand.

3 He put a new song in my mouth,

a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the Lord
and put their trust in him.

4 Blessed is the one
who trusts in the Lord,
who does not look to the proud,
to those who turn aside to false gods.

5 Many, Lord my God,
are the wonders you have done,
the things you planned for us.
None can compare with you;
were I to speak and tell of your deeds,
they would be too many to declare.

6 Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—
but my ears you have opened—
burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.

7 Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—
it is written about me in the scroll.

8 I desire to do your will, my God;
your law is within my heart.”

9 I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly;
I do not seal my lips, Lord,
as you know.

10 I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;
I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.
I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness
from the great assembly.

11 Do not withhold your mercy from me, Lord;
may your love and faithfulness always protect me.

12 For troubles without number surround me;
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.
They are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails within me.

13 Be pleased to save me, Lord;
come quickly, Lord, to help me.

14 May all who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.

15 May those who say to me, “Aha! Aha!”
be appalled at their own shame.

16 But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
“The Lord is great!”

17 But as for me, I am poor and needy;
may the Lord think of me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
you are my God, do not delay.