

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany— February 12, 2023

*“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.
So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything,
but only God who gives the growth.”*

– 1 Corinthians 3:6–7 –

It won't be long and farmers will be back in the fields planting seeds with the hope of a ripe harvest in the fall. I have had the blessing of serving my pastoral calls in rural farming communities. Spending time in those communities has taught me much about God's Word and how he works.

This past summer was one of the driest summers much of our country has seen for some time. Wild fires burned out in the west. The plains saw their crops drying up by mid-July. Droughts are hard on farmers and anyone who intends to plant seeds and produce fruit of various kinds: crops, gardens, orchards, etc. For the gardener and farmer, they know they must rely on God to provide the rain waters to nourish the seed in the ground. They must rely on God to bring forth the warmth of the sun to allow the seeds to sprout and grow.

In the same way, Christians need nourishment. Unfortunately, the Christian can experience times of drought. We get caught up in the busyness of life that we push our faith to the back burner. Church is no longer a priority but sports and activities are. After some time, we might notice that begin to wilt. We need to be nourished regularly by God's Word.

Martin Luther reminds us, “We should fear and love God so that we do not despise his Word and the preaching of it, but acknowledge it as holy, and gladly hear and learn it.” As Lutherans, we believe that sabbath is based first and foremost on the hearing and preaching of God's Word. When we take time for that each week, we are blessed with nourishment and recharge. We can rest and relax all we want, but if we don't have God's Word, we will never grow. “Only God gives the growth” (1 Cor. 3:7b). Are you going through a time of drought? Is God calling you to return to sabbath, to rest in His Word?

Prayer: Gracious and Merciful Father, we give you thanks that you have blessed us with your Holy Word. May we eagerly hear it and gladly learn it. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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