

Confirmation Devotion - May 14, 2017

Psalm 111:10

**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.**

Dear Confirmation Students, Parents and SotV Members and Guests,

There are many graduations this time of year. At graduation there will be speeches. These speeches often focus on what the students have accomplished and how they will be looking to use the skills to succeed at the next level. For our three young people they will be graduating from their different schools and putting their skills to work in high school.

I mention this because what we are doing here, today is not a graduation. Confirmation is different. You are not at the end of anything, but you are at the beginning.

What are we doing today? In verse 1 of Psalm 111 the author says, **“Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.”** One of things we are doing today is praising the Lord, our Savior God. We are praising him for the things he has revealed to you and the wisdom he has given you. The Confirmands will praise him by making their confession at the altar (this) morning. We are praising God by praying over them and asking him to continue to reveal his salvation treasures to them throughout their life. We will also pray that the Lord will help them each day to use what you have learned to live wisely.

So for a few minutes today we are going to review why you should **Praise the Lord for Your Wisdom.** We will see also why we should do this, not only today, but the rest of our lives.

1. Wisdom comes from trusting the Lord.

In 1 Samuel 17 is the famous event of David verses Goliath. What is impressive is that David, although, he was young, saw the biggest person in the room. The biggest person in the room was not the 9 foot 400lb Goliath. The biggest person in the room is always God. David believed this. It gave him the wisdom and courage to win the day.

I have impressed this on the students in Confirmation class and I will say it again today. The Lord God is always the biggest person in the room. The

author of Psalm 111 is right when he says wisdom comes from trusting the Lord.

A. You and I are trusting the Lord to help us with something much bigger. We are trusting him with our salvation.

As the author is writing Psalm 111 he wants the people to praise the Lord for their salvation. In verse 9 he writes, “**He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever.**” The Israelites needed to be rescued from slavery in Egypt. They also needed to be rescued from slavery to sin. Like the Israelites we are very blessed, but as they grumbled against the Lord in the wilderness, so we grumble about our situations. Every year the confirmands memorize, “**The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.**” (Romans 6:23) The Israelites had sacrificed a Passover lamb and put its blood on the door post to save the first born from death. Jesus was sacrificed as our Passover lamb at the cross to save us from eternal death in hell. Through our Savior who rose from the dead, we have peace and life.

B. The author tells us that “fear” or trusting in our Lord and Savior is wisdom. He may be thinking of the time the Israelites walked between walls of water at the Red Sea. It was a frightening sight to see those walls of water, but they trusted the Lord and went where Moses told them. It was wise. The Lord had provided an escape route. He used it also to trap their enemies and get rid of them.

Throughout our lives the Lord wants our Confirmands and all of us to trust in him. There may be difficult and even frightening situations at times. We can trust him. He is faithful and always comes through. We have this promise in Proverbs 3:5,6, “**Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.**” When we trust in the Lord who is faithful, we are wise.

There is more.

2. This wisdom leads to a good understanding.

One of the questions graduates have when they get out on their own is “*How do I do this?*” *How do I buy a car? How do I get along with people at a new job?* We may trust someone’s word of guidance. Confirmands ask, “*How do I live as an adult Christian?*” The answer is that we trust the Lord’s word of guidance just as we trust his word about salvation.

A. God's word of guidance is found throughout the Bible. One the beautiful examples guidance was on Maundy Thursday evening. Jesus got down on his hands and knees and washed the feet of his disciples. When he was done he said, **"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."** (John 13:14-15)

I did not wash the feet of the confirmation students, but in Christian love I served them with the Lord's word on Monday nights. Their parents didn't wash their feet, but love moved them to get their student to class each Monday. Love summarizes the commandments and it is our guide to live as Christians. Love for Christ moves us to love and serve others. I pray that all of us do this.

B. When we follow the Lord's precepts or commands, the author of this psalm says we have a good understanding. We may not understand right away. As we live through the years we will see the blessings that come from faithfully following God's word. In the book of Genesis we have the events from the life of Joseph, the son of Jacob. He was sold into slavery by his brothers. He was falsely accused of rape and sent to prison. In the end he admitted to his brothers that God had worked everything for good. He had been released from prison and he had saved many lives while working for the king of Egypt. St. Paul promises, **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."** (Romans 8:28) This is what wise Christians understand.

3. As a result we praise the Lord.

Over the years various students have told me that they enjoy studying and discussing God's word in confirmation. That is nice praise. We all can join the author of Psalm 111 when he says, **"To him belongs eternal praise."** When the Lord gives us wisdom and understanding we need to praise him.

A. At the end of the book of Joshua, their leader Joshua gathers the Israelites. The Lord has given them the victory and the promised land. He asks them what they are going to do. Will they serve the Lord? He says, **"as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."** (Joshua 24:15) This is a good confession. We praise God with our mouths in church and when we confess him to others in our daily lives.

B. We also praise him by living for him and serving him. I pray, and I hope

you will pray with me, that the three young people who are being confirmed will praise God in their lives every day by living for him and serving him.

It is not always easy, however the same Lord who led the Israelites through the wilderness and gave them the Promised Land, the same Lord who defeated death and the devil at the cross, will help them and us so that we can praise and serve him throughout our lives.

Conclusion: I would repeat what I said when I started. This is not the end, this is not graduation, but this is really the beginning. Now our confirmands begin living as adult members of the church.

They don't have to be afraid and we don't either. Trust in the Lord and listen to his word. We also come to Holy Communion and we have the added blessing of his body and blood given with the bread and wine for forgiveness and the strengthening of our faith. When you do these things you are wise and you are showing understanding. Amen.