

Levenhagen λογοι

May 2021

Thoughts from Aaron

“Come away...and rest for a while.”

Today is the last day of the semester. The concluding seminarians have received their first calls and will celebrate commencement tomorrow. The 2nd year seminarians are packing up preparing to leave for their year on vicarage. And for me, the first year is finally done, and a brief break awaits. If I'm honest, the end couldn't have come soon enough. This year has been so much harder than I expected. It has challenged me in every possible way—intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. And I'm exhausted.

I'm reminded of the commissioning of the disciples in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 6. Jesus sends them out in pairs to preach repentance, drive out demons, and heal the sick. My seminary curriculum doesn't compare to that! But I want you to notice what happens when they return to Jesus some time later. Mark records that the disciples “gathered around Jesus and reported to Him all that they had done and taught” (Mark 6:30, CSB). And while the disciples are reporting back to Jesus the crowd continues to demand the attention of both Jesus and His disciples: “Many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat” (Mark 6:30, CSB). You can *feel* the tension and pressure. They can't get a moment for themselves. How does Jesus respond? They report back to Him and He says, *Great job, guys...get back to work!* Right? Absolutely not! Mark tells us Jesus said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a remote place and *rest* for a while” (Mark 6:31, CSB). Rest. Can you hear the caring...the concern...the tenderness in Jesus' voice?

Of course, the crowd doesn't cooperate. Jesus and the disciples leave in a boat and the crowd runs ahead and is waiting for them when they come ashore. Even though their plan to slip away and rest was disrupted, Jesus has compassion on the crowd and begins to teach them. This remarkable day of ministry would end with the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples may not have received the rest and privacy that they thought they needed. But they received what they *truly* needed, a reminder of who Jesus was and is. The Creator who formed the earth, the Provider who

**“Come to Me, all of you who are weary and
burdened, and I will give you rest.”**

(Matthew 11:28, CSB)



Above: Aaron leading the liturgy at Timothy Lutheran Church on Easter Sunday.

Summer Happenings

MAY

- Aaron & Nathan attend Indianapolis 500.
- Jill & Faith visit grandparents in NE Missouri.

JUNE

- Family road trip to Grand Teton National Park.
- Nathan attends CIY Move! youth gathering in Toledo, OH.
- Aaron preaches at Timothy Lutheran Church.
- Aaron begins summer Hebrew intensive at Seminary.

AUGUST

- Aaron preaches at Timothy Lutheran Church.
- Nathan attends Camp Motorsport in Virginia.
- Nathan attends in-person at Clayton High School for first time.
- Faith starts as new student at Christ Community Lutheran School.

Thoughts from Aaron

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fed a multitude with a few loaves and fish, the Almighty God who walks on water and calms the wind and waves, and the gentle Shepherd of the sheep who still promises rest.

Roughly 1,000 years earlier, David wrote Psalm 62 to proclaim that rest is found not in a certain place or in privacy, but rather in God.

*Rest in God alone, my soul
for my hope comes from Him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold; I will not be shaken.
My salvation and glory depend on God,
my strong rock
My refuge is in God.
Trust in Him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts before Him.
God is our refuge.*
(Psalm 62:5-8, CSB)

We find our rest in God alone. In our weariness we can pour out our hearts to Him because He cares for us and longs to give us rest.

My prayer for you—and for me in these few weeks without classes—is that we will enjoy the rest of body and soul that only our Heavenly Father and gentle Shepherd can provide.

As the 2020-2021 year at Concordia Seminary comes to an end, I want to again say how grateful our whole family is for the way that you have come alongside us and encouraged us. One of the things that has kept us going through all of the changes, new challenges, and even discouraging times is knowing that you are cheering us on and praying for us. You'll never know how a well-timed letter, card, text, or email has lifted our spirits. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

LEFT: Faith with the Seminary Youth Group taking a fun picture for the Missouri District Youth Gathering; TOP RIGHT: Nathan (black and silver helmet) competing in the iDrive Karting League at WWT Raceway; BOTTOM: Jill and the kids on Mother's Day



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