### April 11, 2021

## **GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**This Week:** 9:30 a.m. Reading Service, 6:30 p.m. Catechism Reading Service. Classes after the morning service.

Next Week: 9:30 a.m. Catechism Reading, 2:30 Student Slingerland. No Classes.

-All the Lord willing-

Offerings Today:1st General Fund<br/>2nd Living BreadNext week:1st General Fund<br/>2nd Hudson Taylor

#### We Remember in Prayer:

-The family of Mr. James Decker, whose funeral was Friday.

-The Classis meeting held this week.

-Our widows, widowers and lonely ones, the unborn, prodigal sons and daughters, those undergoing treatments, and all those with hidden crosses.

## **MEDITATION**

#### **Empty Places (a dream)**

A Word to Everyone

"And David's place was empty." 1 Sam 20:25.

There were good, lawful, justifiable reasons why David's place was empty. But in our days of excessive activity, cares and world conformity, many places are found empty, places of which God wills that man will gather together and where He has promised to be in their midst, even when only two or three are gathered together in His Name. And this place is the church, or the place of public assembly to hear God's Word.

When we in this day notice these places of public gatherings, we would think that we need not be so particular and it is sufficient if we let ourselves be seen only from time to time. And what can the reason of this be? What is the first influencing cause hereof? In order to present this to you demonstratively, let us for a while listen to what took place in a household respecting this matter, and see if we can also find a pattern of many in our day.

"Jane, what is your intentions; are you going to church this morning?" asked Doctor Freeman, reclining in his easy-chair and reading the news in the morning newspaper. Of course, it cannot be expected from a doctor who must be out day and night, that he should go to church. "No," said Jane, "yesterday I was so busy preserving and I am tired. Though I stay home this morning, I still will be considered faithful." Thus was Mrs. Freeman's answer and she lay down very comfortably into the sofa with the Bible in her hand which she, however, had not looked at, had not opened the entire past week. It wasn't very long before the Bible fell from her hand and she fell asleep, going into a dreaming state so that it appeared to her as if she had entered into the midst of the world of spirits, where she observed something which drew her attention. There she saw Prince Beelzebub sitting upon his throne, surrounded by a multitude of his servants, evil spirits, or devils.

"Well, my good servants, what have you accomplished today to weaken the Kingdom of God?" was the question of Beelzebub.

Many of those who circled about him seemed to be officers; they all appeared to be frightful. Some wore hats with a plate attached, upon which was indicated the office they occupied; each had to execute that work.

The general answer which was given was: "We were all busy making empty places in the churches," said one for them all.

"Nothing can give me more pleasure than that," answered their king.

"I convinced a man that he had a headache and it would be better for him to remain at home," said another. "I told him if he went, he would have nothing on the sermon and I kept him from a sermon which possibly would have changed his entire course of life and whereby he would be lost for our cause."

"And I, exclaimed another, "convinced a man of means, whose books were not in good order, to quietly go over them and put them in shape, inasmuch as it was so necessary for his bets interest and he would have no time to do so tomorrow."

"That is good," said Beelzebub. "That man will soon forget there is a Sunday. That day will be a sin-day to him and then he is one with us. You have done very well."

"I proposed to a young man who is a faithful church-goer, to visit a friend of his and thus two remained at home," said another.

"I brought a good old sister in great distress because of her old hat; that it looked so shabby for a woman of her station; that the people surely would speak shamefully about it if she came to church with such an old hat. She decided to remain at home until she had a new hat and tat took a few weeks. I made it so that she needed several weeks to decide what kind of hat she wanted and she had to wait several more weeks before the hat was finished, because the hat-maker was very busy. That was a good stroke," said on with a plate on his hat upon which the word "pride" was engraved.

(to be continued...)

#### FUNERAL SUMMARY OF THE LATE MR. JAMES DECKER

Family and friends gathered in memory of the late Mr. James Decker, who passed away from this life and entered into eternity on April 3, 2021, at the age of 94 years.

Reverend Hofman officiated the funeral service and opened with the reading of Luke 7:11-16. Prayer was then offered, after which Rev. Hofman addressed the mourning family, reminding them and all of us that though the day of our death may seem far off, our life will pass swiftly.

The city of Nain was a quiet, beautiful town, but was disturbed by a mourning funeral procession. No matter where we live, there is a road to a cemetery. Here they are carrying a dead man, the son of a widow. Whenever there is a casket scene, there is always much sorrow. The widow is surrounded by mourners. Think now of the Decker family. What a concentration of sorrow there is in their family at this moment.

Funerals disturb our schedule; they are calling to us to wake up. We were reminded that death is the wages of sin. Death confronts us with the result of our sin choice. May God open our eyes to understand the reality that we will all one day face this. Are you prepared? Death will have its way. No one can stop it.

Another crowd comes to meet the mourners and the one crowd now meets the other. Jesus stops the funeral procession. The pallbearers stand still. The centerpiece is Jesus Christ and wherever Jesus comes, sorrow must flee. Christ does not submit to death here. "Weep not," He says. Our Lord has power over all. The Lord Jesus Christ was and is Himself touched by sorrow. God knows all our thoughts and His Word says to us that He knows our frame and remembers that we are dust, so He sent His Son in the flesh. He, Jesus, was made to be sin, Who knew and had no sin. He understands our emotional grief, but is able to take away the sting of death. He commands, "Weep not", because He offers grace. Unrepentant sinners were reminded that they should weep because they are still on their own. We were encouraged to pause here and pay attention. Listen to God calling to us again. Hear Him calling us to Godliness. We need personal God glorifying grace

At the cemetery, Rev. Hofman read John 11:21-26 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

# Netherlands Reformed



Sioux Falls, SD



Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy. Psalm 99:9