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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Time has surely flown by! It is hard to believe that today, Thursday, May 17th, is my last day of class for my first year of Seminary. I am officially free to enjoy the summer and all of the exciting plans and memories that are waiting to be made. While a relaxing and exciting summer lies ahead, I have already taken a few moments to look back and reflect on the past year and to see all of the various things I have learned, the ways in which I have grown and have been shaped, and the tremendous and faithful people I have met in these nine months. The close brothers in Christ, professors, field work congregants, staff members... you name it, there are some incredible people here at Concordia Seminary and in St. Louis. With each day that has gone by, God has guided me as I learn about His Word, study the faith and teachings of the Church Fathers, and have been taught ways to care for and address the needs of His Flock and our broken world. Needless to say, I am very thankful to be where I am at: a place that is forming me to be a pastor and servant to God's people.

Updates/News:

Now that classes are done, the focus turns to the wedding and moving. All of the details are falling into place, and Kari and I appreciate all of the help our families and friends have offered to us as we get ready. Kari recently graduated from Concordia, Nebraska, on May 5th, with her degree in Early Childhood Education. What an exciting day it was to celebrate her accomplishments, to see old friends and a few of my favorite professors from Seward, and to spend time with family. I am now looking forward to spending a week in MN leading up to Memorial Weekend. God-willing, I will be able to see and visit with a few of you. After the time in MN, I will be busy with work and moving into the apartment on campus while Kari gets everything ready in NE to move here to campus. In addition, I am looking forward to keeping up with my on-campus vegetable garden, catching a few baseball games and exploring more of Forest Park, having some Ted Drews custard, and reading all of the books that I was tempted to read in place of my required reading during the school year! Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we move and transition in the weeks and months ahead.

Devotional thought:

Today, I want to share with you one of my favorite Scripture passages. This section of Scripture that I am about to share with you was one of the passages I memorized my senior

year of high school at Concordia Academy, Roseville (Go Beacons!). Quite frankly, it is one that has stuck ever since! It is in Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 3 verses 7-11:

“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith – that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

Yes, Paul just did say ‘rubbish.’ This passage gets to the core of what is truly important and meaningful in life. Earlier in the chapter, Paul tells the Philippians to be on the look-out for evildoers and others who do things according to the ways of the world. These evil people put their faith and trust in matters of the flesh, and work to deceive others by it. However, Paul in this section calls out the world's bluff; he says there is nothing in all the world that can save us or reconcile ourselves. Except Jesus. Everything around us, our money, homes, toys (for all ages), relationships, careers, cars...you name it, pales in comparison to Christ and what he has done for us. We cannot be made right with God on our own accord or strength. No! God has done this already through Christ on the cross. For those who have faith in Christ as the Son of God, we share in what he experienced: death and resurrection. We “bank” on what Christ has done for us, and put all that we have into his care.

Life indeed has its moments. Moments when death claims a loved one, or a job offer falls through, or our health deteriorates. Wars wage, arguments increase, and ignorance abounds. However, we know that things in this life are only temporary. What matters is Christ, and what he has done for us. The surpassing worth of Christ Jesus our Lord is far greater than anything in this world, and stronger than anything the devil hurls at us. In Christ, we have been brought into his life and resurrection. As God's own child, bought and redeemed with Christ's blood, may you rest and find hope in that amidst all of the evil of the world, death, and devil.

God's grace and peace to you all, as we anticipate all that summer has in store, while waiting in hope and faith for the coming of Christ.

In His name,



Ryan Maser

*Thank you all
for your prayers +
support this past school
year!
-Ryan*