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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of my goals for 2018 is to read through the entire Old and New Testaments. While this may be an ambitious goal, I am using the one-year reading plan in the back of my personal Bible to help keep me accountable. In the last few days, I have meditated on Israel's journey from the land of slavery in Egypt to the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In Exodus chapter 19, the Israelites find themselves at Mount Sinai in the wilderness where they camp for the evening. While the people are setting up camp for the night, Moses goes up the mountain to speak to God. God not only reaffirms to Moses the promise he gave to the forefathers of Israel, but God also says something near the end of the chapter that caught my attention: "[But] do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out against them" (Exodus 19:24b ESV). Even if the people wanted to, they were not even allowed to come into the presence of God at Sinai. It was their brokenness that kept them from approaching and experiencing God personally.

In this season of Lent, we are made aware once again the deep depravity of our broken human condition. Our sinful nature and filthiness reminds us that we are not able to save ourselves. Like the Israelites, we are not worthy to come into the presence of God Almighty. As we go into this season of reflection and meditation, may we be reminded of God's redemptive work on the cross. May we fix our eyes on the cross, as a reminder of the son of God, who came in human flesh, dwelt among us, and died for us. While we have not seen Jesus in person, we wait in faith for the day when we see him face to face, being brought into His presence for eternity.

Now to give an update on life at Seminary: Spring semester classes are up and running! I am currently taking four classes (Homiletics, Intro to Practical Theology, Creeds and Confessions, and Synoptic Gospels), and Hebrew and Formation Labs. These classes will keep me occupied, as I dive deeper into various theological topics and work on important skills, like preaching and developing Bible studies. In addition, I am becoming more involved with my Field Education congregation (Good Shepherd – Collinsville, IL), as they have asked me to do more of the liturgy and various other tasks.

In my free time, I am still working for Campus Safety as a watchman. This position has given me an opportunity to learn more about the campus and to work with the students, staff, faculty, and visitors of the seminary. In the last week, I wrapped up my first season as a Preacher on the basketball team. I had a lot of fun with this year's group, and it gave me an opportunity to be on the court and lace up my old Nike's again. I am looking forward to keeping up with intramural sports, lifting, and pick-up basketball. While life may be busy with many different activities here on campus, I am incredibly blessed to be at seminary, studying and preparing to become a pastor alongside some very amazing and God-filled people.

Kari is enjoying her student teaching in a Kindergarten classroom at Huntington Elementary in Lincoln, NE. This has been a wonderful opportunity and challenge for her, as her students come from difficult backgrounds and face several obstacles in life. It is hard to believe that she will be done there in a few weeks! Kari's next stop will be at Zion Lutheran School, St. Charles (Harvester), MO, where she will be in a preschool classroom. We are both excited about being only a half-hour apart—much closer than 7 hours! Kari has also received several inquiries from local Lutheran schools in the St. Louis area for next year, and has had one interview already. Praise God! Please continue to keep Kari in your prayers, as she completes her student teaching and gears up to begin her teaching career.

Thank you very much for your continued prayers, thoughts, messages, and support. I look forward to sharing regular newsletters with you all, that you may receive a glimpse into my seminary life and to hear of the things God is doing here in St. Louis. I am truly blessed to have the opportunity to study and prepare for a life of service in His Kingdom.

May you look to Christ this Lenten season.

In Christ,



Ryan Maser

*Thank you very much
for your support + prayers!
It means a lot to be
here to study God's Word + to
grow in the knowledge of Him.
God's blessings + peace,
Ryan*