

Consider-ables w/Max Lucado

Anvil Time

by Max Lucado

On God's anvil. Perhaps you've been there.

Melted down. Formless. Undone. Placed on the anvil for...reshaping? (A few rough edges too many.) Discipline? (A good father disciplines.) Testing? (But why so hard?)

I know. I've been on it. It's rough. It's a spiritual slump, a famine. The fire goes out. Although the fire may flame for a moment, it soon disappears. We drift downward. Downward into the foggy valley of question, the misty lowland of discouragement. Motivation wanes. Desire is distant. Responsibilities are depressing. Passion? It slips out the door. Enthusiasm? Are you kidding?

Anvil time.



It can be caused by a death, a breakup, going broke, going prayerless. The light switch is flipped off and the room darkens. *"All the thoughtful words of help and hope have all been nicely said. But I'm still hurting, wondering....."*

On the anvil.

Brought face to face with God out of the utter realization that we have nowhere else to go. Jesus in the garden. Peter with a tear-streaked face. David after Bathsheba. Elijah and the *"still, small voice."* Paul, blind in Damascus.

Pound, pound, pound.

I hope you're not on the anvil. (Unless you need to be, and if so, I hope you are.) Anvil time is not to be avoided; it's to be experienced. Although the tunnel is dark, it does go through the mountain. Anvil time reminds us of who we are and who God is. We shouldn't try to escape it. To escape it could be to escape God.

God sees our life from beginning to end. He may lead us through a storm at age thirty so we can endure a hurricane at age sixty. An instrument is useful only if it's in the right shape. A dull ax or bent screwdriver needs attention, and so do we. A good blacksmith keeps his tools in shape. So does God.

Should God place you on his anvil, be thankful. It means he thinks you're still worth reshaping.

From *On the Anvil: Stories On Being Shaped Into God's Image*
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1st Lesson: A slight adaptation of Psalm 23

You, LORD, are my shepherd; I shall not want.

You invite me to lie down in green pastures; You lead me beside still waters;

You restore my soul. You lead me in right paths for your name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil.

You are with me; your rod and your staff—You give me comfort.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

You allow goodness and mercy to follow me all the days of my life,
and You shall grant me to dwell in your house my whole life long.

2nd Lesson: 1 Peter 2:19-25

If you endure while you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. Bearing pain while suffering unjustly is a credit to you if you are aware of God.

And, to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."* When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Gospel: John 10:1-10

Jesus taught thus: *"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."*

Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again, Jesus said to them, *"Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."*

SALEM FAMILY EVENTS

“Due to not being able to gather, some announcements that are typically not put in the bulletin but simply spoken at the end of our service will be printed now. They’ll be found in this feature called “Salem Family Events.” Please pass on to us any special events, activities, or achievements that Pr. Rob might normally announce (like birthdays, anniversaries, awards, gatherings, etc.).”

Happy Anniversary

#68 - ROGER & SHIRLEY LEITCH
#50 - DUANE & VICKI BENETSON



The latest newsletter was sent out just before Easter...if you haven't seen it and we have your email address, look for it in your spam folder. Finding it there, mark it "not spam" and future editions will go to your inbox.

Remember to keep reaching out to our community members/each other, especially those who may not be connected electronically (share w/ them the newsletter info, bulletin, recorded service, etc.)



UPCOMING EVENTS



Food Shelf - they are in desperate need at local food shelves...if anyone can donate to Family Pathways at this time, please do so! You can donate either (or both) foodstuffs or dollars. For food, simply drop off at Family Pathways' building across from the North Branch movie theater. For dollars, simply mail a check to: **Family Pathways,**

6413 Oak St.



Prayer List – Updates – please send name to either Pr. Rob robkrajewski72@gmail.com or, Jerry Youngquist jerry.youngquist@gmail.com



Please send your offering to the parish's street address –

**Salem Lutheran Church of Oxford
26950 Furman St. NE
North Branch, MN 55056**



There are some adults in the congregation that have never been confirmed. Both Pr. Rob and the council have decided to offer an **Adult Confirmation Class** to any in the congregation that would (1) like to become confirmed or (2) like to have more information on Lutheranism, the Bible, and faith in general. If any of these options appeals to you, please see Pr. Rob!

Grown-up Confirmation