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ARTICLES

“So I will destroy your mother” - God

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

Wow! That’s harsh. My mom! She was not that bad.

I hope you are reading the Minor prophets with us this summer. If not you might miss some gems like this one. “So I will destroy your mother”.

Why my mom? Check out Hosea’s reason...

“You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother— my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.” (Hosea 4:5-6 NIV)

Four reasons are given for destroying your mom (as well as rejecting the priests and ignoring your children).

1. You stumble. First note this is referring to all Israel. It's not a personal letter to an individual. Second, "stumble" could refer to falling in battle. But given that the use of the word in Hosea 4:5, 14:1 and 14:9 is related to sin, it's more likely to refer to stumbling in darkness apart from God and his truth.
2. You lack knowledge.
3. You reject knowledge.
4. You ignore God's law.

So, should you be concerned that God will destroy your mom for your sins?

Well, that is not the intent of this passage. The straying of the Israelites (priests and children) will result in their rejection and being ignored. This results in the destruction of the nation of Israel, the mother. So, this is not about my mom or yours. What a relief, for me and my mom.

Yet, this does not exclude us as God's children. Yes, we live under grace. Jesus died and forgave our sins. We live in a new reality! But that does not give us a license to sin.

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to

sin; how can we live in it any longer?... What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!" (Romans 6:1-2, 15 NIV)

There was and is a lack of knowledge. I'm sure you have learned a lot about viruses and politics over the the past few months. How many articles have you read? How many hours have you spent reading headlines? How does that compare to your efforts to learn about God?

There was and is an ignoring and rejecting of God's word too. Not only do we fail to read and listen to God, but we tend to respond with apathy. What's the last biblical command you intentionally sought to obey? Sacrificially loving your spouse? Instantly obeying your parents? Blessing your kids (spiritually, not materially)? See our [Connecting Well](#) series.

The challenge is clear: don't be found ignorant or ignoring. You have a Heavenly Father who longs to walk with you, to give you hope, peace, and direction. Will you dig into God's word this summer? Will you walk in his grace and truth?

Summer Minor Prophets reading plan, along with video overviews and our sermons can be found here... <https://www.altoreformedchurch.org>

</minor-prophets.html>

Heavenly Father, help us learn. Teach us of your love. Help us walk in your path and never stray from your truth.

Leading Well

By Pastor Doug Shotsky

1 Kings 3:7 - 7 “Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

As we navigate this uncharted territory of life these days, this scripture has come to mind many times lately. I am not a king, but as a leader of a home and one of the pastors of Alto Reformed Church, I can certainly relate to Solomon’s request here, and this too is my prayer. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed with feelings of inadequacy, and I certainly don’t need more things, but I need God’s wisdom.

God has blessed me to be in a place of leadership in my home and I need His

wisdom to be able to have a discerning heart to love my wife as Christ loved the church, to train my children in the way they should go, and to make decisions that will lead our family in the ways of God.

God has blessed me to be in a place of leadership at Alto Reformed Church and I need His wisdom to be able to have a discerning heart to equip the adults here to do the work of ministry and to lead us towards maturity in Christ. Please pray that God would grant the leaders in this Church wisdom far beyond ourselves as we navigate many areas.

Specifically pray that God would unify the leadership of our church as we decide whether or not we are going to stay with the RCA. Pray for true discipleship to be taking place within the church. Pray for a hunger and desire for all of us to be in God’s Word; and pray that we would not fall prey to the enemy’s schemes. Now, more than ever, Satan is luring more and more people away from God’s truth, and we have to stand firm on God’s Word.

The Power of Prayer

By Jessa Ter Beast

Just over a year ago, the Tuesday morning prayer ladies asked Adrea and I

for a list of all of the students, preschool through college age in our church. They began praying for each of these kids by name, both together and in their individual prayer time. Over this last year I have

seen incredible growth and desire for Jesus in our



middle and high school students and I know that a huge part of that is the power of prayer.

At the beginning of COVID, I sent out prayer cards so that our students would be prayed for specifically during that difficult time in their life. But I've heard of so many positives that came out of quarantine for our students. They spent more time with their siblings, they spent more time as a family, they were active in the online sermons, some of them even began, for the first time, to read the Bible all the way through! Wow! God heard your prayers for these kids and is doing incredible work in them.

And so now I'm coming to you again to ask for prayer for our students. I have seen the incredible impact it has on their relationships with Jesus and would like to set up prayer partners again starting in August. My goal is for our students to be

praying for adults in our church and for our adults to be praying for our students.

If you have a prayer partner from the past, or would like to keep the same student(s) you received during COVID, please contact me to let me know you'd like to keep them. The COVID cards were sent out at random so I have no idea what family you might have received.

If you do not have a student assigned to you yet but would like to be involved, please let me know either by calling or texting 920-979-1853 or signing up on the information desk. Starting in August I will begin assigning students and you will receive a card with your student's name, picture, grade, activities, address, and phone number, and they will receive a card with your name, picture, address, and phone number. My goal is to get enough adult prayer volunteers to cover every single student, from preschool to college.

Thank you for loving and supporting our next generation!

Golden Lifers Update **By Roxy Schouten**

Events are happening so quickly and on such a large scale that as I write this it may need to be updated within the

hour! We do note, however, that the spirit of Lawlessness is in plain sight all across the world. There is flagrant lawlessness and it assaults our senses -all the way from us as Golden Lifers to children. It is not that Jesus did not warn us Himself to guard against deceit (e.g. Mt 24:5-8).

Even in our Christian language we wrangle over the role Law plays in our Born Again lives in pitting Grace against Law. To support whatever side we are on we quote Scripture to support the position we have sided on. Can Grace and Law live in harmony and both needed for us to live the lives that Jesus has called us to? Let's look at both of them in an abbreviated form. This discussion comes up quite often in our Bible study in Golden Lifers and both sides are passionate about it.

GRACE – Years ago I was taught a simple way to define GRACE – God's Riches At Christ Expense. Grace cannot be earned, it can be abused, and it is a gift. On the abuse issue is Hyper-Grace (other labels may be used also) in which the extreme is the practice of living outside of Christian values and lifestyle. Paul would be appalled as he was when he addressed that in Romans 6:1-2 admonishing the abuse of God's GRACE.

Grace has at least three levels/experiences – 1. Grace is offered to all mankind. The rain that waters your field or garden so we can eat falls on the believers and unbelievers fields alike. 2. All mankind has sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23) but God's unearned grace is offered to whomever (John 3:16) will acknowledge Jesus as their Savior from their sin. 3. There is a special grace experienced in an intimate relationship with God the Father, Jesus the Christ, Holy Spirit. Psalm 91 calls it the 'secret place' as if we are as intimate as an unborn baby is in the protective womb of their mother. If we claim to be in Christ then that is our home.

LAW –What then is the Law? In the Hebrew language a meaning for Law is "Teaching". It is God giving instructions to make us wise. Therefore, the Law is not just the Ten Commandments or various other Laws listed in scripture but every word, verse and book is to give us wisdom. That puts a different slant to the word "Law" and is evidence of God's grace at work in a practical way. Law and Grace are like two bookends in our life experience.

There certainly are scoffers who point to various scripture passages and say these

are examples of how out of touch scripture is in these “modern times”! But they forget that even the most challenging practices/laws have a spiritual basis that is applicable to our times. I found this interesting when years ago I puzzled over the passage in Ex 34:26b “Do not cook a young goat in its mothers milk.” This was given as a “Law” to the Israelites as they settled among the remaining Canaanites in the Promised Land. This was common practice in which they would then use this milk to scatter over their land to assure they would have a good crop. God forbade this practice as this would lead them to adopt other practices where they would look to a source other than Himself to bless and answer their needs.

This has current applications as reported in the summer 2020 addition put out by Samaritan’s Purse, an organization who provides practical and spiritual assistance all over the world and led by Billy Graham’s son, Franklin. On one assignment they were in Kenya and they helped a group of people construct sand dams to provide clean and accessible water for their daily needs. When the project was completed, the villagers said they would do a ceremony of applying the blood of a slain goat to assure that if in the digging they had disturbed any “spirit” and made them angry. The volunteers

explained how Jesus had shed His blood for the things we did that were wrong. After providing the whole village with this teaching 2 women came forward to ask Jesus to be their Savior and since then have been a witness to the whole area. Praise God!!! The point in time was different when this “law” was given but the spirit of the “law” did not change and addressed a similar practice that we in our present day culture in the USA would have not an idea of the practical observance that would matter.

Another example is Ezek 8:17b in which the Israelites were reprimanded for “putting the branch to the nose”. Today, with the uptick of occult practices and nature worship we find that this was and is a practice to worship nature. Recently, a video clip came out of a college course that had the class kneel before plants and apologize for the damage they had committed against “Mother Earth”. Bizarre, yet a real happening.

When we see Grace and Law together as God intended we find that Grace releases us from our absolute slavery to sin so that we can follow the spirit of the Law in all circumstances and all ages. Once we see that we can again agree with the Psalmist in Chapter 119 how we can love the Law – not as a way to salvation but of a joyful

service to our Lord.

Plain and simple – Lawlessness is rejection of both Grace and Law. Satan is trying to build his own Kingdom patterned after God’s perfect plan. In Isaiah 14:12-15 Satan’s plan is outlined – tear down God’s plan and His people and all the Laws meant to give wisdom and replace it with his exaltation, subjugation to himself and destroy the wisdom that will make our lives rich and fruitful. Don’t fall for it people of God! Don’t fall for it children, teens, adults, Golden Lifers!

Duet 30:19b-20a “Choose Life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him.” Amen

Library Update **By Renee Bruins**

We hope that everyone is staying healthy in body and mind. During times of crisis it is so easy to become depressed, rejected, discouraged, and lost. What a better way to uplift us than to read God's word or Christian literature to help us find the direction that God wants us to explore.

In the library, we have added many new books that can help us to feel God's love and control in our lives. So, come on in to

the library and browse!

MESSAGES

Subscribe to our

You Tube Channel

EVENTS

Vacation Bible School

July 20-24 -

Join us for a week of fun-filled VBS activities right from home! We are excited



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SUMMER 2020

to have the opportunity to utilize these amazing VBS materials put together by Faithkidz this year. More information and details will be coming out in an email soon. We'll be sending out additional info, sign up opportunities, and material pick up options. We are looking forward to partnering with families this year to bring VBS to our kids and see how God works in the lives of our kiddos and the kiddos of our community!!!

NEWS

[Baptisms](#)

6/7/20 - Gentry Owen, son of Chris & Kerry Quade

6/21/20 - Emma Diane, daughter of Kyle & Jessica Ter Beest

New Members

6/21/20 - Jessica Ter Beest

Updates

The congregation did approve the recommendation of the elders to ordain Doug as a ministry elder. We will be scheduling that service soon.

The consistory is currently waiting to see the report from the RCA's 2020 Task Force, which is due out on July 1. We are also waiting for the Denver Collaborative to meet in July. While COVID-19 has added a year to the denomination's process, I trust that this too is in God's hands. I am sure this will not be merely a year of sitting idle, but of careful preparation for the new reality.

The elders also approved a policy regarding sexual offenders attending Alto Reformed Church. A great deal of work went into this as we obviously want to protect children and youth from predators while also giving offenders the opportunity to turn their lives around. You can read more [here](#).