

Three Devotional Programs by Pastor Bill Link

Originally prepared for SCLMM in 1992 by Pastor William (“Bill”) H. Link (1935 — 2003). He served parishes in the South Carolina Synod (Bachman Chapel, Pine Grove, and St. Matthews [Pomaria]), the North Carolina Synod, and the Virginia Synod. (These devotional programs were edited, updated, and had footnotes and NIV references added by SCLMM President Verne K. “Ken” Heckel, III).¹

Devotional Program I: *THE CHISEL*

I left early for the Conference meeting which was to be held at Rural Retreat.² It had been a long time since I had been there and I was looking forward to the meeting at St. Paul Lutheran Church. The parking lot was empty, so I was surprised to find a man working on the front door of the church.

He had with him a home-made wooden box in which he kept his tools. The door of the church was sticking and he was trying to correct the problem. I told him that I did not expect to find anyone at the church because the parking lot as empty. He answered that he lived across the street from the church. He pointed out his home. Next to it was wood-working shop where he made furniture, chairs, and cabinets.

As I looked into the box of tools, I realized that he had made the box. I could not help but notice that the wood chisel was badly nicked and that it was really beyond repair. Before I could stop to think, I asked him what happened to his chisel.

His young son had been looking for a screw-driver and had used the chisel instead. The chisel had worked as a screw-driver but it could no longer be used as a chisel. Each tool in the box had a special use and a misuse of any of them would ruin the tool.

When we misuse what God has given to use, whether our time or talents, his gift is damaged and we wonder what has gone wrong. For the most part, we are head-strong³ and we will use what we have the way we want. Every time I see God’s gifts being misused, I think of the chipped chisel.

Scripture reading: 1 Peter 2:9

Pastor Link’s translation: But you are God’s chosen people. You are a group of royal priests and a holy nation. God has brought you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Now you must tell all the wonderful things that He has done.

NIV: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

PRAYER:

Almighty God, we use this world as though it belongs to us. We use our lives as though they belong to us. With Your Spirit, help us Lord, to use all we have in Your Service. Amen.

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²Rural Retreat is located in the Appalachian Mountains of southwestern Virginia between Marion and Wytheville near Interstate Highway 81. Pastor Link served as Pastor of the Konnarock Helton Parish (St. Matthew and St. Paul Churches) from 1961-1964.

³See Numbers 16:1-39 (Korah’s rebellion); Judges 11:30-40 (Jephthah’s rash vow); 1 Samuel 13:9 (King Saul’s unlawful sacrifice); and 2 Chronicles 26:16-23 (King Uzziah’s attempt to burn incense).