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ARTICLES

Cats Scratch, Dogs Bite, and People...

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

We have two cats that live mostly outside, but lately they've not wanted to go out much. So, if we are leaving or going to bed, we occasionally have a good chase through the living room. Once they are caught, you must be prepared for the claws to come out. Maybe they are afraid, but mostly I think they want what they want.

Dogs, on the other hand, tend to bite while they are playing or threatened. Growing up, my family's mixed mutt, Euler, did just that. He was pretty harmless, as he was not much bigger than our cats, but he loved to play tug-a-war and nip at you in play. I remember a few times when he would bare his teeth and growl. He was threatened and not happy.

We are not much different. When I feel threatened, afraid, denied, questioned, or disrespected, my fight or flight responses flare up. I either want to retaliate and hurt

the one who hurt me, or I want to walk away. I am learning to be “slow to anger” (James 1:19) and to take time to pray before responding.

Part of the challenge we all face is the heightened animosity in our culture. If you can step back from your political positions for a moment and really listen to what is being said on the news and social media, you’ll see the hostility boiling up from all sides. Some are able to disengage from all this and surround themselves with like-minded folks, but even then the conversation seems to slide into a disheartened attack of others.

Our nation is polarized. Our state is antagonistic. Our community is divided. And James says to us...
What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. (James 4:1-2 ESV)
Ouch! James not only bluntly confronts us on our self-seeking motives, but our lack of prayer. Oh Lord, forgive me for seeking what I want and not seeking Your will in prayer.
After this scathing rebuke, James confronts another issue...
Do you not know that friendship with the

world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4 ESV)

James does not want us to abandon Godly convictions and simply acquiesce to the cultures immoral views. We need a backbone and heart. The challenge is how to be in the world, but not of the world.

- When should believers stand their ground?
- Are there issues we need to let go of?
- Are there issues we need to confront more aggressively?

This is the tension I plan to address in a series after Easter. Join me for...

- “Living in Babylon: How to thrive in an anti-christian culture” Sunday mornings, April 11-May 2.
- “We Will Not Be Silenced: Responding with Courage to Our Culture's Assault on Christianity” A book discussion on Sundays @ 6:30PM. April 18 (Chap. 1-4), 25 (Chap. 5-7) & May 2 (Chap. 8-10) See below on getting a book.

Lord, help us navigate the tension in our culture. Give us wisdom to know what is right and the grace to walk with others who disagree. Helps us to be slow to anger and willing to listen carefully. As well, help us to be courageous in standing

for truth.

OPTIONS TO READ THE BOOK

- Sign-up at the Information Desk and order a book for just \$10 by April 5.
- Borrow it from a digital library. The Beaver Dam library uses an app called Hoopla to give you access to ebooks or the audio books for free. (Waupun and FDL use Libby which does not have this book.)
- Purchase the ebook from ebooks.faithlife.com or christianbook.com. Most phones now have accessibility features that will read it to you, though this is a digital voice. Faithlife worked for me.

On Mission

By Pastor Doug Shotsky

Colossians 3:17 - And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Body of Christ is called to make every part of our lives, every day, to be on mission for Jesus. God is moving in so many great ways at Alto, and I wanna praise the Lord for each person who is doing what God has called them to each day.

This past week 21 of us had the privilege of going down to Camp Manitoqua in Frankfurt, Illinois to use our gifts and talents to serve another part of the body that was in need. This all began when the camp sent out an email last fall asking if any groups would want to come down on a work trip, because the camp was in need due to losses in staffing from covid-19.

I know that one of the gifts that the ARC has is that God has given us a desire and ability to work hard, and to use this desire and ability to serve others. I told the staff at Manitoqua that we needed a list that was going to be harder than they thought because we get stuff done; and get stuff done we did!

We painted shelter houses, and nearly the entire inside of two cabins. We cut and split a pile of wood in one day that the camp staff said other groups had not been able to get to the bottom of in 10 years! We hand dug two new mailbox posts and installed new posts with new mailboxes. We cleared underbrush and trails with heavy machinery that would have been impossible for small work groups to do manually. We also moved piles and piles of extremely large rocks that aren't able to be moved by hand. We totally gutted a kitchen and bathroom, while tearing out several rooms of flooring in two different

houses. Then we rehung the drywall, put new cabinets in, put new vinyl flooring down in 3 rooms, and installed a new shower. We put in new plumbing in two of the houses and one of the buildings. We tore off the top of a deck, reinforced the stringers, and put a new deck on. We fixed lawnmowers, UTV's, and other equipment. And we built 30 ½ picnic tables (yes 30 ½).

On top of that we worshipped together each night, prayed together, and sat around for hours talking and laughing! We were truly blessed to serve and I hope that the work of our hands will be a part of furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ for generations to come.

I also hope our work will be used to remind all of us to use our gifts each day to serve our great God in all we do!

Praises and Prayer Requests in Youth Ministry By Jessa Ter Beest

Praises:

- The middle school overnigher brought in 35 students and I wish everyone could have heard the joyous noise they made during the teen led worship service that night!
- We were very thankful to take 20 high school students to Silver Birch Winter Retreat at the end of

February where we studied the I Am statements in the Bible, and spent great quality time together in the beautiful winter weather.

- All of the kids continue to ask such great questions for our Q&A nights every 4-6 weeks.
- Some of the questions we've gotten this semester are: How do I minister to a Mormon, Agnostic, or someone who is transgender? Why do people think they can change their gender? Why does God let bad things happen to good people? Did Jesus have a wife or girlfriend? Are aliens real? What does God say about getting mental health help?
- During our lesson on "The Church (Acts)" our high school students spent the last 15 minutes of the night sharing where they had seen or been the body of Christ at work in our community. It was incredibly inspiring!
- Prayer time with the middle school students has been incredible. Their prayers are heartfelt and sincere and they truly seem to love talking with Jesus!

Prayer Requests:

- Life is particularly difficult for a handful of our teens right now

struggling with anxiety and depression. Please pray that they will find peace through their relationship with Jesus and the courage and resources to find trustworthy professional help when needed.

- Our teens have many things weighing on them from parents separating to pressure in school. Please pray that these burdens can be lifted and that they will be able to find joy.
- Please pray for the darkness and sin our students feel and see in school, and that they would have the courage to be the light and share Jesus with the people around them by sharing and admitting their own need for a Savior.
- Pray that we all - as kids, as teens, as adults - grow in our passion, joy, and love for our Savior so that other people will see and want what we have.

MESSAGES

Thank you to my church family for remembering me at Christmas, my birthday, and through this covid experience. Your prayers are greatly appreciated.

-Junice Vande Zande

I would like to say "thank you" to our church family for the many prayers for healing, words of encouragement, cards received, and the delicious food that was brought in during my recent knee replacement. They were all very much appreciated. Thanks again!

-Donna Bruins

Thank you for all the love and support to our family during this difficult time.

-Kyle, Jess and Emma TerBeest

EVENTS



Join us for Easter at 8am or 10am or live on [YouTube](#).



Join us for family night! We will start out the night having pizza with a family lesson and activities

to follow. We are focusing on building strong foundations. The night will also

have a service opportunity.



April 16th 6-9pm
April 17th 8:30am-12pm



Registration opens in May! Keep an eye out in the bulletin for volunteer opportunities, donation requests, and more.

NEWS

Baptisms

3/28/21 - Beckett Robert, son of Brant & Bridgette Flier