

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

HEART FAITH NOT HEAD FAITH

Romans 1:21 "For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."

Having knowledge without putting that knowledge to proper use is useless. This is the way it is spiritually with many people in this world. They have the natural knowledge of God, that is, they know God exists, may even be aware He is almighty and demands obedience from their natural knowledge of Him. BUT, because of this natural knowledge of God and His almighty power they are afraid of Him.

Native Americans lived in fear that the god's they worshipped would become angry with them because of something they did or because of something they did not do. Missionaries over the centuries, when learning to know a new culture, have found their natural knowledge of God led them to develop what best can be described as religious rites and rituals centered upon worship of nature and/or other parts of creation such as the sun, moon, or other heavenly bodies. Again, among these groups they are afraid of God and feel a great need to appease Him even causing some to sacrifice their children to their god(s.)

The more these cultures strived to appease their god's the more they thought they had to do. The greater the sacrifices they offered the more they thought they had to increase them. There was, as St. Paul says in today's devotional verse, futility, and foolishness in their understanding of God and worship of Him.

By God's grace His Son has revealed that God is not appeased by your foolish, vain, futile attempts to earn His approval and pay Him off with your good works for the wicked, evil, and ungodly things you do against Him. Jesus, His Son is the one who has removed your guilt. Jesus took upon Himself God the Father's condemnation of your sins through the shedding of His blood on Good Friday. Thanks be to God who grants you victory over the Devil, the world, and your sinful flesh. By the mercy of God, He has replaced your futile and foolish thoughts, words, and actions with the truth of His word and the saving work of His Son. Thanks be to God who gives you this victory for Jesus' sake.

Prayer: Remove from my thoughts and way all that is futile and foolish giving me instead peace, hope, and everlasting security in and through faith in Your Son Jesus. Amen.

Through Jesus' blood and merit I am at peace with God.
What, then, can daunt my spirit, However dark my road?
My courage shall not fail me, For God is on my side;
Though hell itself assail me, Its rage I may deride.

There's nothing that can sever From this great love of God;
No want, no pain whatever, No famine, peril, flood.
Though thousand foes surround me, For slaughter mark His sheep,
They never shall confound me, The vict'ry I shall reap.

For neither life's temptation Nor death's most trying hour
Nor angels of high station Nor any other pow'r
Nor things that now are present Nor things that are to come
Nor height, however pleasant, Nor darkest depths of gloom

Nor any creature ever Shall from the love of God
This ransomed sinner sever; For in My Savior's blood
This love has its foundation; God hears my faithful prayer
And long before creation Named me His child and heir.
(LSB 746)