

# Mark's Remarks

On earlier occasions I have shared my deep appreciation for the waters of Northern Minnesota. Vacationing along the shores of a glacier formed lake for 32 years has not only produced an abundance of memories, it has taught me to cherish the sights, sounds and stillness of nature which have warmly welcomed and graciously enfolded the voices and actions of my family for generations. While this is all good, it appears that I have a dreadful case of "Summer Days in Minnesota Syndrome" during these winter days in Iowa. Let me explain.

The ~~Holidays~~ ☺ Christmas Season has been quite busy with the life of the church intertwined with family gatherings and other responsibilities; hence, my mental check list the past few weeks appeared something like this.

Staff Christmas supper completed. CHECK. Reservations for summer vacation at Evergreen Lodge on Big Sand Lake completed. CHECK. Research and prepare message on Irresistible Grace completed. CHECK. *I wonder if we should spend one day away from the lake this summer, Maybe travel north to Bemidji. I suppose it would be okay on a cool... rainy... day.* Brenda's family driving from the north, south, and east to witness the Baptism of Christian Logan and to celebrate Christmas with us in Rock Valley completed. CHECK. *I wonder what kind of weather will greet us this summer by the lake. Sure was cold tubing in 47degree temps back in 2004 ...mental chuckle.* Research and prepare message for Christmas Day completed. CHECK. My family driving from Sioux Center to celebrate Christmas with us in Rock Valley completed. CHECK. *I really should do more fishing this yr. Had good luck last year just south of the resort. Good spot for Logan and his cousins.* Former seminary classmate and his wife arriving for dinner completed. CHECK. *Would be fun to ski around the lake with Logan. That would be a first for us.* Invite dad over to watch Rose Bowl completed. CHECK. *I should get that small tear in the boat seat repaired before spring. Oh, yeah, we need a new tube this year. I wonder if we would like a kneeboard. That would provide another option and certainly some good laughs.* Layout message ideas for the next few months and other goals completed. CHECK. *How many more weeks until we go? This year we have a fireplace in our cabin. Wonder if that will affect how often we use the fire pit by the lake?*

You get the point. I have it bad. And the sun visible only four hours since Christmas hasn't lent itself to healing this ailment. I would imagine there are many thinking of bike riding, golfing, gardening, motorcycling, patio reading, swimming, camping or the many other outside activities we eagerly anticipate when cooler blustery winds will yield to warmer gentler breezes.

Today I am reminded that regardless of the season, our thoughts and dreams are to be pleasing to God.

Therefore, in those moments and seasons when our minds powerfully reflect upon interests, desires and passions, may He graciously bestow to us the wisdom we need to keep all things in their proper perspective.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things (Philippians 4:8).

Basking in His warmth,

Pastor Mark