

March 6, 2021

*To Live with Christ*, by Bo Giertz. This is the devotion book I have been reading each morning since around 2008. Giertz was a Lutheran pastor and bishop in Sweden. He wrote for ordinary people who go to church and believe in Christ as their Savior. Each day is a brief meditation on a text from the Bible, followed by a prayer. Why do I value this book so much? It is written by a conservative Lutheran who believes the Bible is God's Word, and he's not swayed by false teachers who no longer read the Scriptures. Giertz helps me learn, helps me remain steadfast, and helps me pray.

*Unveiling Mercy*, by Chad Bird. I began reading this each morning in 2021. The author is an Old Testament scholar teaching about a single Hebrew word each day. His devotions are very brief: a line of Scripture, two brief paragraphs, then a one-line prayer. The language is clever, the references are modern, and he leads the reader to think upon Jesus.

*Of Good Comfort: Martin Luther's Letters to the Depressed and their Significance for Pastoral Care Today*, by Stephen Pietsch. This is among my resources to explore depression and learn the language of those experiencing it. Reading about anxiety and depression leads me to pray for all on whom that spirit descends. On p. 178-79 there's a discussion of Luther's "theology of the heart." He says righteousness is God's gift to help a struggling person stand again. He writes, "For depressed persons, who are so frequently locked into their own spiraling self-negativity and guilt, this shifts the focus of attention to the counterpoint of God's promises and assurance of unconditional acceptance in Christ." The whole book is full of Luther's insight into the human condition, and his prayerful concern that they remember Christ is in them.