

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Luke 18:9-14  
August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

### Some Who Trusted in Themselves

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we beseech Thee so to guide and direct us by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not forget our sins and be filled with pride, but continue in daily repentance and renewal, seeking our comfort only in the blessed knowledge that Thou wilt be merciful unto us, forgive us our sins, and grant us eternal life; through Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

How useful and necessary a medicine is repentance! If we have some ailment and go to the doctor, we tell him what is wrong with us so that he might apply the proper cure. It would do us no good if we were to tell the doctor all of the symptoms that other people have and ignore the problems that we have in ourselves. The doctor cannot cure someone if the symptoms are not known. The Pharisee stood in the temple of the Triune Lord God, and instead of confessing the sins that infected his soul, he only praised himself for not having the sins that other people have. The tax collector on the other hand standing afar off did not even lift up his eyes, and told the Healer of souls exactly what sins troubled his soul. That is why this man went away cured—that is, forgiven—of his sins, and the Pharisee did not.

The tax collector prized the medicine of repentance and was healed. The Pharisee puffed up with pride in his own righteousness—who trusted in himself and his works—spurned the medicine that was available to him and he was not healed by the Triune Lord God. The Pharisee was deceived by that great deceiver—Satan—to look inside himself for his faith and salvation. In trusting in his own works—in trusting in himself—he was denied the medicine of repentance that could heal his soul. Instead, the devil would take the pride that he led this Pharisee into and use it against him. The devil would have grounds to accuse this man before the throne of the Lord God. Nothing good dwells within him. Nothing good dwells within any of us if faith in the Lord + Jesus Christ and His works and merits are ignored by us. We, with the Pharisee, can rightly be accused by the devil before the throne of the Lord God if we rely on our own works and merits—our own righteousness.

The parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee is actually the second part of two parables back to back at the beginning of the Eighteenth chapter of the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Luke. Our Lord + Jesus tells the first parable to impress upon His hearers that they should always be praying and never lose heart. At the end of that parable is the famous saying of our Lord + Jesus, “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the Earth?” The point that our Lord was making was that a person should never stop praying for faith; should never stop petitioning the Lord God for help against the adversary, the devil, in this life. In the first parable the woman never stops asking for the judge to

avenge her against her adversary. Her plea is generic in nature.

In today's parable, the tax collector specifically lists what the adversary has against him. In his humility, he petitions the Healer of souls to grant him the medicine that comes from repentance—the forgiveness of his sins. The Pharisee, however, never asks the Judge of All things to avenge the enemy of sin from him. He is too busy pointing out other people's sins to even look at his own sinfulness. When our Lord + Jesus asks if he will find faith on the Earth when He comes, the Pharisee represents those who think that faith comes from their own striving and doing; that faith is something that they produce in themselves by their virtuous lives.

Faith is a gift of the Holy Ghost, given to us through the means of grace. In the means of grace, we learn that we are poor, miserable sinners who are fully deserving of all of the accusations of our adversary the devil. We do indeed deserve the Lord God's eternal wrath and displeasure. We do not deserve to stand in the house of the Lord God, but in our sinfulness only deserve to stand afar off and not even lift up our eyes to Heaven, but only declare that the Lord God Almighty have mercy upon us poor sinners. The faith that is gifted to us through the means of grace also teaches us that in the promises bestowed upon us in these gifts that our Lord + Jesus is the One Who comes as the Healer of our souls to give us the medicine of life. In our repentance we take the medicine of our Lord's saving works and merits; of His sacrifice for us on the tree of the holy cross.

He sheds His innocent and precious Blood for us so that the devil—our accuser before the Lord God—can no longer have an accusation against us. For the Lord + Jesus' Blood cries out to the Lord God on our behalf. We are joined to our Lord's crucifixion—His payment of our sins—through the waters of Holy Baptism, wherein we are washed in the Blood of the Lamb, and in the Lord's Supper, wherein we receive His Body and Blood that were offered on our behalf on the tree of the holy cross in bread and wine. These means remind us over and over again as we daily live in our Holy Baptism through repentance and daily drowning of the Old Adam, and by our weekly coming together at this altar to receive His Body and Blood, that our sins have been paid for by our Lord + Jesus. He is the One Who provides the medicine for our soul. He is the One Who heals us of all of our sins.

This is why we should resist the temptation of the devil to be puffed up with pride in our virtues like the Pharisee in today's pericope. This is also why we should avoid comparing ourselves to other people like he did. The ailments of other people do not make us better people. St. Cyril of Alexandria put it this way: a good person does not ridicule a sick person for being ill and bedridden. Instead he considers that this same ailment can also infect him. Our sins are just as great as the person's sins who is sitting next to us. None of us can claim some greater sense of virtue over the person next to us. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are all sinners in need of the Lord God's grace.

That grace is found in the works and merits of the Christ—our Lord + Jesus. The tax collector knew where to find the medicine for his soul. In his repentance of his sins—in his admitting that he is a sinner in need of the Lord God's grace and mercy—he found the medicine that cured him; that granted him forgiveness of his sins. Therefore, in the medicine of repentance we find justification. For faith teaches us that salvation is found in the Lord + Jesus alone. We are justified when we cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus and the salvation found in Him alone.

This is why our Lord + Jesus began by instructing his hearers in the first parable from the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Luke to never stop praying and never lose heart. For our adversary the devil is constantly tempting us into pride and self-righteousness; to consider the sins of others greater than what we say, do and think. Our adversary wants us to trust in ourselves. He never wants us looking inside ourselves, but always at other people. For if we look inside ourselves, we may find that no good thing lives in us. If we see that no good thing lives in us, then we can look to the Christ, Who

offers up His life for ours on the tree of the holy cross. Our adversary the devil, in his hatred for us does not want us looking to the Christ, for he desires that we do not go down justified, but go down unjustified into the eternal hellfires.

Therefore, my dear friends, never stop resisting the devil and his temptations. Never stop praying the Lord God to grant you forgiveness of your sins. Never stop praying like the tax collector for the Lord God to be merciful to you, a sinner. For there is no more useful and necessary medicine than repentance for our sins. For our Lord + Jesus desires to heal us of all of our sins and iniquities and bring us into His eternal home in Heaven. Trust not in yourself and your works, but trust solely in the works and merits of the Christ. For in Him is eternal salvation and healing for your soul. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

O God, Who resistest the proud, and givest grace to the humble, grant unto us true humility, after the likeness in which Thine Only Son hath revealed it in Himself, that we may never be lifted up and provoke Thy wrath, but in all lowliness be made partakers of the gifts of Thy grace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*