

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 10:23-37
September 6th, 2020
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

What Shall I Do?

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 most heartily thank Thee that Thou hast granted us to live in this accepted time, when we may hear Thy holy Gospel, know Thy fatherly will, and behold Thy Son, Jesus Christ! We pray Thee, most merciful Father: Let the light of Thy holy Word remain with us, and so govern our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may never forsake Thy Word, but remain steadfast in it, and finally obtain eternal salvation; 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.

Oftentimes in preaching on this text the preacher makes the mistake of getting the hearer to identify with the priest or the Levite, all so that that he can make the point that you should be more like the Good Samaritan, and not like that evil priest and Levite. But this is moralistic claptrap! It misses the point of the parable entirely, and it takes the focus off of the person in the parable with whom one should actually identify. The person in the parable that describes you is the certain man who went from Jerusalem down to Jericho and fell among thieves, who was stripped of his clothes, wounded, and left half dead. This is a picture of what sin has done to us—to mankind.

Adam and Eve lived in the paradise of the Garden of Eden. On account of their sin their nakedness was uncovered. They had lost the image of the Triune God in whose image they were created. They were no longer clothed with righteousness, but because they freely ate from the tree in the Garden which they were not to eat—because they chose to break the command of the Lord God—they were stripped of the righteousness in which they were created and left with only their nakedness. On account of this they also received the penalty of their breaking the command of the Lord God. They would continue to live lives filled with sin and they would die.

This was passed onto all of their children. We have inherited the sin of our first parents. We also sin daily and much. We also have been stripped of our righteousness in which our first parents were created and are conceived and born in sin. We are also hounded daily by the devil, the world and our own flesh, which beats us severely and leaves us wounded and half dead. Death will also come to our door no matter what precautions we choose to take for ourselves in this life. So, you see we are the certain man in the parable who is robbed, beaten and left for dead by the thieves of this world: the devil, the world, and our very own sinful flesh. Identify with that character and the parable will make sense.

This individual has no strength to rescue himself. He is left half-dead. Even his fellowmen, the priest and the Levite, cannot do anything for him. He can only be rescued by the Good Samaritan—the Lord + Jesus—Who undertakes the long journey to come down from Heaven and find us stripped of

our righteousness, beaten down by sin and shame, and left half dead by our trespasses and iniquities. He is the only One Who can actually show mercy to us in a way that actually saves us. He clothes us with His righteousness in the waters of Holy Baptism; the waters into which we are covered with the Blood that He shed on the tree of the holy cross. He binds up our wounds with oil and wine. Convicting us of our sins with the Law. Just like alcohol burns when poured on an open wound, the sting of the Law cuts deep in order that the infection might be removed. So that the soothing anointing oil of the Gospel might be used to heal us of our iniquities.

Our Lord + Jesus sets us on His own animal, and carries us to the inn of the Church. The innkeeper, the minister of the Lord, is tasked with our care until the Son of Man returns again in glory. In the Church we continue to find healing and strength. We are clothed with the righteousness of the Christ through Holy Baptism. We are fed with the very Body and very Blood of the Lord + Jesus in bread and wine at this altar for the remission of our sins. We hear the Word of God preached into our ears from this pulpit reminding us of the promises and rewards that belong to all those who believe on the Lord + Jesus; all those who are justified by the faith created in them by the Holy Ghost working through the means of grace. The innkeeper also proclaims to us that our sins are forgiven for the sake of the Good Samaritan, Who came down from Heaven to bind up our wounds and give us of Himself in order that we might find eternal life in Him. He is the One Who shows us mercy. He is the One Who treats us in a way in which we do not deserve.

Now, we can certainly imitate the Christ in showing mercy to others. In fact, it is required of the Law of God to love the Lord our God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. In the same way that the Lord God shows us mercy by sending the Second Person of the Holy Trinity to us to bring us into the Church where we receive His saving grace, we can also show mercy to our fellowman, by bringing them into the Church. The sin of the priest and the Levite is not that they did not care about the certain man left for dead on the side of the road, but that they left this man in his condition. They did not show mercy or compassion. They left this man in his sins and trespasses.

When the world talks about love for fellowman, it often takes the form of some wishy-washy claptrap about how we should let the person live their own life. We would not want to be “judgmental” after all. What garbage! Love—true love—cares enough about the other person to correct them when their soul is in danger. We would not leave a child to run free in the middle of a street. We would love them enough to take them out of danger. We would not allow someone who has fallen into fire to remain in the fire and continue to be burned. No, we would rescue them from the fire, and heal their wounds. We should not leave our fellowman wounded and naked and half-dead on the side of the road when they have fallen among the thieves of this world, either. This is what mercy and compassion look like. This is what love looks like. It rescues those who need rescue by bringing them into the Church of the Triune Lord God. For in the Church is where they hear about the Good Samaritan Who shows us all mercy and compassion.

This is the lesson that our Lord + Jesus wanted to impart to the lawyer who questioned Him. Remember that our Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke begins with the Lord + Jesus telling His Apostles that many people had desired to see and hear the things that they were seeing and hearing but were not granted such grace. The prophets and kings of old depended upon faith in the coming Christ, just as we depend on our faith in the Christ revealed. In other words, our pericope for today begins with our Lord + Jesus telling His Apostles that the way of salvation is found only in Him.

The lawyer, who is well-versed in the Law of God, cannot rectify what he has been taught with what the Lord + Jesus is teaching. Remember that lawyers in the holy Scriptures are those who study the Law of God and know the scriptures well. He was always taught that in order to inherit eternal life, he must obey the two great commandments of the Lord God: “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and “your neighbor as yourself.”

He has fallen into the trap that many do. He has fallen into the trap of self-righteousness. He, like many others today, believe that their salvation is found in their ability to obey the Law of God. This is why many preachers what to direct our eyes to the priest and Levite and compare them to the Samaritan. They want you to believe that somehow if behave like the Samaritan, you will find salvation. This could not be further from the truth.

The point of our Lord's parable is that the kind of mercy required to rescue the certain man on the road to Jericho can only be accomplished through His compassion and mercy. Salvation is only going to be found in Him alone. This is why the Lord + Jesus ends the discussion with the lawyer by saying, "Go and do likewise," because it shows the lawyer his inability to save himself by his keeping of the Commandments of the Lord God. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The answer should scare the ones who try to earn their salvation by their works. Perfect obedience to the Law of God is required to be saved by our keeping of the Law. We are unable to do so. But our perfect, sinless, innocent Lord + Jesus fulfills the Law on our behalf for us. He is merciful in a way in which we can never hope to be merciful. He is compassionate in a way that we can never show compassion. For after fulfilling the Law perfectly for us, He sacrifices Himself on the tree of the holy cross to pay the penalty of the sin of our first parents; indeed, the sins of all of mankind, including us.

Therefore, my dear friends, we should not picture ourselves as the priest or the Levite—or even the Samaritan—for we are the certain man who is robbed, stripped naked, beaten and left for dead on the side of the road by our enemies of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. We are unable to help ourselves at all. Our fellowman cannot even bring us salvation. Only the Good Samaritan can bind up our wounds, clothe us with righteousness and carry us by His Word to the sanctuary of the Church. And it is only our Lord + Jesus, working through the Holy Ghost, who keeps us by faith in this holy catholic, and apostolic church through the means of grace until the Last Day; until we see the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day, and are called from this valley of tears to our eternal home in Heaven.

Rejoice, my dear friends, that the Lord + Jesus has shown us such compassion. He has not forgotten His covenant to redeem us by His own innocent and precious Blood. He was also stripped naked, beaten, and was killed on the tree of the holy cross, in order that He might redeem us, and bring us by faith into our heavenly abode. This is the mercy that our Lord shows us, and it is the mercy by which we and all mankind are saved. Let us give thanks that He has shown us such mercy by rescuing us from our enemies, and placing us into the healing inn of the holy catholic Church. What shall we do to be saved? Stop looking at our works and look to the works and the merits of the Christ, and believe that on account of Him and His mercy we have forgiveness, life and salvation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Samaritan and only Mediator, Who, seeing us in our guilt and blood, didst have pity upon us, and of Thy infinite mercy didst give Thine innocent Blood in payment for our sins that we might live, we humbly thank and praise Thee that Thou hast saved us from destruction and by Thy holy Word hast brought us to the saving knowledge of Thee, our Redeemer; and we beseech Thee, enable us by Thy Holy Spirit to love Thee, the true God, with our whole heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves, that we may show mercy on all men in their need, bind up their wounds with tender care, and ever in this evil world follow Thine example of love and service, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!