

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Matthew 6:24-34  
September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## You Cannot Serve God and Mammon

*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 thank Thee for all Thy benefits: that Thou hast given us life and graciously sustained us unto this day: We beseech Thee, take not Thy blessing from us; preserve us from covetousness, that we may serve Thee only, love and abide in Thee, and not defile ourselves by idolatrous love of mammon, but hope and trust only in Thy grace, through 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.

Our Triune Lord God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost want to give us every blessing. They desire to do this not just for us here in this place, but for every person on the face of this earth. This is seen in the fact that the rain falls on the fields of both believers and unbelievers. The sun shines on both the righteous and the wicked. This is what our Lord God desires to do for each and every person on the planet, and yet many choose to worship other gods. This is evidenced by how few we are. Too few are faithful to the Triune Lord God. Too few choose to come and worship the Lord God. Too many have “more important things to do” with their daily lives.

For many I believe it is a false notion of what the Church is. Many view the Church as place where one gets a whole bunch of rules that one has to follow in order to be a good person and be saved. They know, as well as we do, that the Law of God is harsh taskmaster. They want to live under the false notion that they can do whatever they feel like doing. Certainly, there are those who live wanton lives doing whatever their depraved nature prompts them to do, but the majority of people live their lives not seeing that even their own conscience restrains them doing the most vile of acts.

Sadly, others are under the delusion that they are “basically good people.” They do not need the Church or the Lord God, because they have it all figured out; they live “good” lives; they are “good” people, and their friends and family tell them so. They do not see how lost they truly are. They do not see that sin has corrupted them to the very bottom of their soul. They are, like us, conceived and born in sin. They have inherited their sinfulness from the same place we have, from our first parents, Adam and Eve. They also chose their own lot by disobeying the Lord God and eating from the tree which the Lord God told them they could not eat. They gave up the Garden of Eden with all of its abundance for the wilderness of thorns and thistles where they had to provide for themselves their bread and meat by the sweat of their own brows.

The Triune Lord God desired to bless and take care of Adam and Eve forever, but they chose a god of their own; a forbidden fruit which soon became bitter in their mouths when they realized just what this disobedience to the Lord God’s will produced. Mankind also lives their lives in this way. The

apple truly does not fall far from the tree, for we are just like our first parents. We also daily and often choose our own way; we choose ourselves as our own god to live and do as only we can say and do. This is why many stay away from the Church, because they want to go on living their lives with no one telling them what they should or should not do. They do not want the Law of God in their lives telling them what to do.

We do not want the Law of God in our lives, either. But not for the reasons that the world does not want it. It is not because we hate the Law of God, or we want a different set of rules that we can follow. It is because we know that we cannot keep the Law of God perfectly. We try to obey the Commandments. We try daily to think pure thoughts, to say chaste things, and to do God-pleasing acts, but we fail miserably every time. Every day we are reminded just how much of a poor, miserable sinner we truly are. For some of us, all we need to do is get behind the wheel to be reminded how poorly we keep the Law of God; with how much hate and anger we are filled.

No, my dear friends, the Law of God is harsh taskmaster which we can never satisfy. The blessings of the Lord God are not found in our keeping of the Law. The blessings of the Lord are not found in our obeying a list of rules which we can never hope to obey perfectly. We cannot serve this god of the Law. The blessings of our Triune Lord God are found in the Son of God, our Lord + Jesus Christ. It is through His works and merits that the Lord God truly desires to bless each and every one of us. The Son of God was sent to us by the heavenly Father in order that He might fulfill the Law which we are unable to fulfill. He was sent to suffer our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. The punishment which we deserve for choosing ourselves as our own god.

This is the blessing with which the Triune Lord God desires to bless all mankind. This sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross is for the atonement of the whole world. It is for everybody. Our Lord + Jesus offered up His life as a ransom for everyone. In the same way that the Lord God feeds the ravens that call, or the birds of the air; in the same way that He clothes the grass of the field and arrays the lilies He desires to care for us. Not only does He take care of these simple things in nature; not only does He provide us with sun and rain to produce for us all that we need to support this body and life, but He also blesses us with our greatest need: He gives us a remedy for our sin-sick souls.

We can never hope to obey the Law of God perfectly, so it is a very poor master to choose for ourselves. Anyone who thinks their righteousness is the reason for their salvation has chosen the Law of God to be their god. That god will let them down. Their false sense of righteousness by thinking that they are “basically good people” will betray them in the end. Our salvation is not found in our keeping of the Law of God, it is found in the One Person Who kept the Law of God perfectly: our Lord + Jesus Christ.

We have our salvation in His righteousness; in His works and merits on our behalf. If He cares for the little, seemingly unimportant things of this world—the lilies, the birds, the grass of the field—how much more of value are we? In the same way that the Lord God blesses these small things, He desires to bless you and me, and all mankind. And, He does not just supply our earthly blessings—clothing us, feeding us, and quenching our thirst—but more importantly, He supplies our spiritual blessings, too—forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

My dear friends, you cannot serve God and mammon. Mammon is not just money. It is all of the riches and treasures that we possess. Since the Law of God is such a harsh taskmaster that no one but the Christ can satisfy; since people’s false notion of righteousness does not satisfy, people turn to another false god, the false god of their possessions and income. People already think that they are the only person that matters in this life. They are their own god. When their self-perceived righteousness fails—when they see that they are not the person that they think they are—they seek after a god they can touch and feel. They turn to the worship of earthly things. This leads only to worry, and then more

worry, as they slowly (sometimes quickly) sink themselves deeper and deeper into debt. They owe more and more to their false god. Just like the Law of God which they can never keep perfectly, their possessions also sink them deeper and deeper into a debt they can never satisfy. They do not realize that the Lord God desires to bless them and provide all that they need to support this body and life.

The Triune Lord God desires to bless each and everyone of us. That blessing does not always include personal possessions. We here are blessed with the gifts that our Lord + Jesus desires to bestow upon us. Today He blesses us with His precious Word and His wonderful sacraments—with the means of grace. We are blessed with hearing what our Lord + Jesus has done for us on the tree of the holy cross from this pulpit as we hear the words of the sermon. We are blessed with the remembrance of our Holy Baptism when we make the sign of the holy cross and hear the Name placed upon us at the font: The Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. We are blessed with the proclamation that our sins have been forgiven for the sake of the Christ. The minister blessed us with the absolution when He declared that our sins are forgiven in the Name of our Holy Baptism, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. We will be blessed, too, when we come to this holy altar and kneel before our Triune Lord God and receive from Him the Body and Blood of our Lord + Jesus Christ in bread and wine.

By all these things our Lord God desires to bless us and all mankind. It is good therefore that we have come to this holy house to receive our Lord's blessings. It is prudent also of us to pray for all those in the world who cling to their false gods that they may cease their enmity toward the Lord God and come and be with us that we might all serve Him in meekness and in peace. For in the Triune Lord God all worry melts away, for in Him we find all that we need for both our bodies and souls. In Him we find contentment with all that we have in this life. For we find in Him not a harsh taskmaster, but a loving and caring Lord God Who knows all that we need and well provides them. Especially does He supply us with righteousness—the righteousness of works and merits of the Son of God—and provides us with a home in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thanks be to the Lord God for all of His blessings. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast given us body and soul, and hitherto bountifully provided for us all the necessaries of life; and we beseech Thee, strengthen, confirm, and uphold our faith, that, trusting fully in Thee, and seeking before all things Thy Kingdom, we may avoid all undue anxiety and greed of the Gentiles, and by Thy grace overcome every affliction; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee 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!*