

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 10:23-37
September 3rd, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He That Showed Mercy on Him

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?’ And he said, ‘He that showed mercy on him.’ And Jesus said unto him, ‘Go, and do thou likewise.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before 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 Thine 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 only Savior and Redeemer; and we beseech Thee, enable us by Thy Holy Spirit to love Thee, the true God, with our whole heart and 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 Thy example of love and service, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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.

The Lord + Jesus had sent out seventy men to prepare the way of His coming by preaching the Gospel that the Messiah—the Anointed One—of the Lord God had come down from Heaven to earth. When the seventy who were sent out returned, they rejoiced at how fruitful the Word of God was. Even the demons were subject to them. The gates of Hell could not prevail against the Word of God. For this our Lord + Jesus responds with the words that opened up our Gospel pericope for today; the words that are often overshadowed by the parable of the Good Samaritan. These words are not unrelated to the parable. Our Lord is basically telling His Apostles that those who hear the Word of God and understand that even the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it are blessed. For such a person understands this only by realizing Who the Messiah truly is: the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One of the Lord God is the Lord + Jesus. He is the One Who has come to save us from the powers of Hell and its dominion.

Enter then a teacher of the Law, a certain lawyer, who would “make trial” of the Lord + Jesus. In other words, the gates of Hell and its horde approached our Lord to test Him on whether the Word of God can be a blessing to those who hear and believe the Word of God. The certain lawyer makes trial of the Lord + Jesus by asking, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” See, this is what the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh are always trying to get us, and the rest of the world to ask. Those that war against faith and the Word of God always want us to be doing something to earn or pay for our salvation. We do not inherit eternal life because of what we do, but on account of what we believe.

But since the certain lawyer asked a law question— “What must I *do*?”—the Lord answers with another law question. Lawyers in the Scriptures are to be understood as we would understand what a lawyer is today. A lawyer in the Scriptures was someone who studying diligently the Word of God—the Scriptures. Especially would they study the Law of God and what it meant for them and other people. So when our Lord asks the lawyer about the Law of Moses this man would have a thorough knowledge of what our Lord asked of him. The answer to “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” is to love the Lord God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

On the surface this sounds simple enough. Just love the Lord God and your neighbor and you will be saved. Fortunately for us in the Church and the rest of the world, the lawyer did not think this to be as simple as it sounded. He asks, “Who is my neighbor?” The Evangelist St. Luke tells us that “he wanted to justify himself.” In other words, the lawyer wanted to make sure he was doing the right works that would inherit for him eternal life. He did not need to ask, “Who is the Lord God?” because he already knew Who the Lord God was from the Scriptures. He probably did not openly commit idolatry, so he justified himself by believing that he had fulfilled this side of the Law already. But he wanted to make sure that he was doing the same for his neighbor, whoever that might be.

Our Lord’s parable is meant to show us that the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh are wrong when they assume our salvation is in some work or keeping of the Law. The hordes of Hell want us believing that our salvation depends upon our works; that we must do something in order to obtain eternal life. The Word of God rescues us from this false teaching. The parable of our Lord + Jesus delivers us from such false notions. Our spiritual enemies can easily distort this parable into something we must do, and basically negated the point that our Lord + Jesus is trying to make. For they would have us make ourselves out to be the good Samaritan; place ourselves into the character of the Samaritan, and then say, “Go and do likewise.”

But the point of the Lord’s parable is that HE is the Good Samaritan, and we are the ones who have been robbed and left naked and half dead on the side of the road. This man who fell among robbers on his way down from Jerusalem was not able to do anything for his salvation. He was half dead. He was destitute having had all of his earthly possessions stripped from him. Even if he was not unconscious, he still would not be able to help himself for he would not have the physical means to do so. Even his fellowman, a priest and a Levite, could not help him. In fact, they even refused to help him. They passed by on the other side of the road. Only the Lord + Jesus, the Good Samaritan, could help this individual.

For in truth this man who fell among robbers represents mankind. All of mankind is unable to do anything to inherit eternal life for we have been stripped and left for dead by the hordes of hell on account of our manifold sins and trespasses. Sin, death, and the devil and his horde have left us destitute and unable to anything to save ourselves from their grasp.

But along comes the Lord + Jesus with the Word of God and binds up our wounds and bandages all our injuries, and He sets us upon His own beast and brings us into the Church, where the innkeeper, the host of the inn, continues to care for us through the Word of the Lord God. Just as the seventy who were sent out saw how the Word of God could subject even the demons to them, the Word of the Lord God continues to drive away the false teachings of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. For the Church teaches that salvation is found only in the Lord + Jesus, and not in our fulfilling of the Law of the Lord God. We are saved because the Good Samaritan had mercy upon us. We are saved from sin and inherit eternal life because our Lord + Jesus had mercy upon us and took upon Himself our sins and bound up our wounds by laying upon Himself the stripes and wounds which He endured in His Passion.

He showed us mercy by not treating us the way that we deserved to be treated. He was a

neighbor to us by showing us mercy. He came down from Heaven and took upon Himself our nature all so that He might fulfill perfectly the Law of God which we are unable to fulfill. For He perfectly loves the Father, and He perfectly loves us as His neighbor. We do neither of these because like the priest and the Levite we often refuse mercy to others. We are prone to question and doubt the Lord God when things do not go our way, or we do not receive the things we think we deserve. We do not even show our Lord God perfect mercy. It is only the Lord + Jesus, the Good Samaritan, Who shows perfect love for both the Lord God and man. It is only Him Who has driven back the gates of hell and its horde through His perfect keeping of the Law.

It is because He has first shown us mercy that we are also able to show mercy to our neighbors, our fellowman. For through the in-working of the Holy Ghost, Who creates faith in us, we can clearly see how merciful our Lord has been to us. In thanksgiving we desire to also be as merciful as our Lord has been to us. The greatest way to show mercy to our neighbor is to give to Him the Word of the Lord God, just as it has been given to us. For by the Word of God men's hearts are changed; they are led into repentance; they are led to forsake the question of "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" For by the Word of God we, and all those with whom we share it, see that our Lord + Jesus has already done all that is necessary to redeem us back from the hordes of Hell, and has prepared for us who cling to Him in faith an eternal home is Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same 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!