

The Festival of St. Timothy, Bishop and Confessor
St. Luke 14:26-33
January 24th, 2022
All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Myrtle Beach, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Whoever Does Not Bear His Cross

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

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

Our Lord + Jesus in the Gospel reading today from the Evangelist St. Luke tells us that “If anyone...does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” At first hearing, this sounds like our Lord is contradicting the Scriptures. For, does not the Commandments teach that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves? This would include our father and mother (the Fourth Commandment), our spouse (the Sixth Commandment), and our children and brothers and sisters (the whole Second Table of the Law). If we are taught to love our neighbors as ourselves, why does the Lord + Jesus say that we should hate them if we desire to be His disciple?

It is not the people we are to hate, but the earthly relationships. What our Lord is saying is that earthly things get in the way of heavenly things. There are many in this world who do not do what our Lord would have them do, simply because of family ties. They want to please their spouse, or their parents, or their children, or other family members to the detriment of their soul. How often do we hear of someone remaining in a heterodox church body simply because of their family? What our Lord + Jesus is saying to us in this Gospel pericope is that we should not allow our family relationships cause us to break the First Table of the Law, the table that requires us to fear, love and trust in the Lord God above all things.

Our Lord + Jesus tells us that we should bear our cross. He does not imply that we may or may not have a cross. He tells us in these words that we are going to have a cross. We will endure suffering, persecution, shame from the world. Just as our Lord + Jesus suffered at the hands of unbelievers, we to as those in Christ will also suffer at the hands of unbelievers. Just as He bore a cross, we will bear a cross. Being a Christian means having and bearing a cross. It means having and bearing shame and mockery from this world.

What our Lord warns us against today is that we should not try to escape these things by clinging to our earthly relationships. In essence we make a god of our earthly relationships, fearing, loving and trusting in those closest to us, rather than in the One Who can actually save us from our troubles and woes. To do this also does not really serve our family relations. Our Lord is calling us to be a bold witness to the truth in the face of the earthly relationships that would pull us in another direction. And, often times this pull by our families is not done out of malice. They are not seeking to cause us harm

or angst, they are doing it because they love us. They think they are doing us a good service, when in fact they are pulling us away from the Lord + Jesus. Our Lord is telling us that we should cling to Him and His works and words rather than those who would pull us away from Him. In so doing, in boldly clinging to the Christ, we bear our cross, and stand as a witness to how important the Christ, the Savior of the world, is to us, and how important He should be for all those whom we love.

St. Augustine uses the illustration of the Lord God calling the faithful to battle by the sound of the trumpet, and we as Christian soldiers heeding the call to join the Lord's army are held back by our loving mothers who do not want us to endure the suffering that war brings. Out of love our family holds us back from the cross that being faithful to the Lord God brings. Let us not fear the cross, nor our loved ones, but take up our cross and follow the Lord + Jesus. Those who profess to be Christians will have a cross, let us not forsake the cross, but gladly and willingly follow our Lord + Jesus. Even as He suffered on the tree of the holy cross to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil, all those who are in Christ will also suffer at the hands of the unbelieving world.

Today is the Festival of St. Timothy, Bishop and Confessor. He was taught the Christian faith by His mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois. These two women show the proper understanding of our Lord's words in the Evangelist St. Luke's Gospel. For, St. Timothy's father was a Greek. He was not of the Jewish faith, like St. Timothy's mother and grandmother were. This is why not circumcised. However, St. Timothy was raised in the Hebrew faith by both his mother and grandmother. And when the Messiah—our Lord + Jesus—came, they believed on Him, and taught St. Timothy to do the same. This is how we are to hate our father and mother, son, daughter, brother and sister, by not allowing them to pull us away from the truth.

Even though Eunice's husband (St. Timothy's father) was Greek, she did not allow her son to be led away into believing the things of the false Greek religion. He was not taught to worship many gods like the Greeks. He was taught the truth that there was only One God. This One God was revealed in the Person of the Son of God—the Lord + Jesus. He was revealed to be both Man and God. He was revealed to be the Messiah—the Anointed One of the Lord God—Who had come into the world to fulfill the Law perfectly and suffer and die on the cross to redeem mankind from sin, death and the power of the devil. St. Timothy's mother and grandmother loved him enough to teach him the truth, even though it was contrary to what his father believed. This serves as an example for us in regards to our earthly relationships.

St. Timothy, as the title of the Festival that we celebrate today implies, became a bishop and confessor. According to Church tradition and history, he was the bishop of Ephesus. This is why he is sometimes referred to as St. Timothy of Ephesus. The title "confessor" is given to those who confessed the faith in the midst of persecution, either by unbelieving pagans or heretics. This is to separate them from those who suffered death at the end of their persecution. These we call martyrs. The color of martyrs (the paraments, vestments, and the like) is the color red. Confessors, on account of their faithful adherence to the truth of the Lord God's Word, receive the color white. Which is why this is the color of the day today.

The confessors, and the martyrs, gladly and willingly took up and bore their cross in the midst of persecution. They hated their father, mother, son, daughter, brother and sister more than the Lord + Jesus. They did not allow their earthly relationships to draw them away from the truth of the Word of the Lord God.

St. Timothy was taught at a young age by his mother and grandmother to bear his cross; to love the Lord God above all things even earthly relationships, which may only last for this life. He became a minister of the Lord + Jesus and learned from St. Paul who to preach, when he accompanied him on his missionary journeys. He would eventually settle in Ephesus for a time, and would teach and lead

the faithful in that city as their bishop. He would oversee all the teachings of all the other pastors in that city of Ephesus. Let us give thanks for such faithfulness, that we may use St. Timothy as an example to follow.

Let us also, my dear friends, take up our cross and bear the sufferings of this world so that our earthly loved ones may see us as an example by which to follow. Let us not shrink from the battle, but heed the call of the trumpet of our Lord to go to war diligently reading, hearing, studying and believing the Word of the Lord God, so that we may teach our earthly loved ones to do the same. Let us not be timid when they refuse, but lovingly and humbly continue to urge them to the faithfulness which we would desire for both ourselves and them.

For salvation is not found in any of our earthly relationships. Our father, mother, son, daughter, sister, or brother are not going to win or earn salvation for us. Salvation is found only in the One, True, Beloved Son of the Father, our Lord + Jesus. He took up His cross, and endured the mocking and shame of crucifixion, so that He might win for us forgiveness of our sins, eternal life in Heaven with Him, and salvation from the enemies of the cross and us. He now gives out the gifts He won for us on the cross through His precious means of grace. These means in which we participate today on the Festival of St. Timothy, Bishop and Confessor. Thanks be to God for his faithful service to the Church! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!