

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 5:20-26
July 7th, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Ye Have Heard That It Was Said

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not kill;’ and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, ‘Thou fool,’ shall be in danger of the hell of fire.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord God, enter not into judgment with us, who have not from the heart kept Thy Commandments, but regard the precious merit of Thy dear Son, and let us ever be partakers of His righteousness. Enable us also by Thy Holy Spirit to walk in Thy fear, true faith, and holiness of living and to beware of pride and security, that we may not be cast into everlasting prison, but enter into Thine eternal Kingdom; through Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee 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.

My dearly beloved, we can in no wise be saved by our keeping of the Law. But neither can we do away with the Law as our society wishes to do. The society in which we live really has no use for the Law. A spirit of antinomianism pervades our society. People are taught that they can do whatever they feel like doing, and there will be no consequences. This philosophy is usually tied in some way to love. The concept of love has become for our society allowing people to do what they want. If you love someone, let them be and do whatever it is that they want to be or do. To actually put forth requirements and conditions is not considered to be love. It is unloving, according to our society, to tell someone that they must obey certain rules and regulations. This is the spirit of antinomianism that exists in our society.

The fulfillment of the Law of God, however, requires love. Love is at the very center of the fulfillment of the Law. Love for both the Lord God and for our neighbor. We cannot keep the Law without love. But it is love that requires obedience to the Commandments not doing whatever we feel is right in our own hearts.

Consider for a moment each of the Ten Commandments with me: In the First Commandment we are fear, love, and trust in God above all things. Loving the Lord God alone is at the heart of the very first Commandment. All the other commands are just like it. We should fear and love God so that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His Name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks. We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it. We should fear and love God that we may not

despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger, but give them honor, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem. We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need. We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and each love and honor his spouse. We should fear and love God that we may not take our neighbor's money or goods, not get them by false ware and dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business. We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, nor defame our neighbor, but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything. We should fear and love God that we may not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, nor obtain it by a show of right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it. We should fear and love God that we may not estrange, force, or entice away from our neighbor his wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

At the heart of every Commandment is love, but love that is obedient to the Law of God. True love is doing what someone else wants, and leaving your own desires and will out of it. The Commandments require our love of God and our neighbor. We love the Lord God by doing what He wants us to do. We love our neighbor by doing what is good for them and not for us. We love our spouse by doing what they want, and not what we want. We love our fellowman by doing for them and not for ourselves. This is completely opposite to the concept of love in our society. Love for this world is doing whatever one wants and everyone else nodding along with it. And if they do not agree with what we want then they are being unloving. True love requires sacrifice of one's self. It looks to the benefit of another, and not to our own benefit, that is, what we get out of it.

Part of the problem is that our society thinks that they are all basically good people. That there is no inherent corruption in them from which they can in no wise set themselves free. This again is tied to the rampant antinomianism in our society. This concept that we do not need the Law. If people are basically good, they do not need the Law. They do not need to be rescued from the hell of fire. This has led to people pushing the envelope even further. Not only are they basically good, but everything they do, no matter how evil it may be in the Lord God's eyes, is basically good. A person can do whatever he wants and there are no repercussions, because to do so would be unloving. This is the society in which we live. A society that has no use for the Law of God.

In essence, it is not really that different from the society in which our Lord + Jesus lived. The scribes and the Pharisees had reduced the Law down to its basic tenets. If you did not openly bow down to another god, or make an image of wood or stone, you had kept the First Commandment. If you did not commit theft or robbery, you had kept the Seventh Commandment. If you did not cheat on your spouse, you had obeyed the Sixth Commandment. And, if you had not killed someone, you had kept the Fifth Commandment, and so on. In diligently obeying the outward tenets of the Law, the scribes and Pharisees were considered righteous by all the people. By keeping the Law in this way, they were free from the outward penalties that came with breaking the Law of God. They would not face the wrath of man. But they were not free from the requirements that the Lord God had placed upon the Law. They were not free from the wrath of the Lord God. What had been lost was the minutia of the requirements of the Law. It is this that our Lord + Jesus points out to the people who had gathered to hear Him preach the Sermon on the Mount. Man may be appeased by your outward keeping of the Law of God, but the Lord God was not appeased by it.

Murder was not just killing someone. Murder also involves hatred for your fellowman. Even calling them hurtful names is murder. "Raca" is an insult that implies someone is "empty-headed." "Thou fool" is the same as calling them a moron, for that is what the Greek word literally means. What our Lord + Jesus is telling those on the Mount is that no one is righteous. We may not have lifted our hands to murder someone, but we have all called someone else "empty-headed" or a "fool" whether justified in our own minds or not. We have all said hurtful words toward our neighbor. We have not shown them

love. Nor have we shown love for the Lord God Who created our neighbor. No one is righteous, no not one. Even these small infractions anger the Lord God. No one will escape the fire of hell if even these things are not kept.

What our Lord has done is make the Law of God impossible to keep. If no one can keep the Law of God and be saved, how can anyone inherit eternal life? How will anyone enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? We cannot by our keeping of the Law. If we rely on our own righteousness, we will be lost. We will be condemned.

But even though our society, and we ourselves, may be without true love for our neighbor, our Lord + Jesus is full of sacrificial love for us, and all mankind. It is a foreshadowing of things to come that our Lord + Jesus discusses the scribes and Pharisees and their keeping of the Fifth Commandment. For it would be them who would literally murder the Lord + Jesus on the tree of the holy cross. They would charge Him with false charges, and haul Him before Pontius Pilate all so that they could hang Him on a tree to be cursed.

St. Paul talks about this in the Epistle to the Church at Rome. We who have been baptized, have been baptized into the death of the Lord + Jesus. His innocent suffering and death washes over our sins. Our sins are covered by His Blood—by the blood of the Lamb of God. This is why we live daily in our Holy Baptism. Why we rise each new day and make the sign of the cross—the sign of our Holy Baptism—and why we go to bed each night with that same sign. For by it we daily remind ourselves that not only are we poor, miserable sinners, who fail miserably at our keeping of the Law; not only do we fail to love our neighbor as ourselves, and love the Lord God above all else, but we have also died to sin. Through Holy Baptism we have died with the Christ, and been buried with Him in the grave, so that just as He is risen from the dead, we too, are risen again from the first death.

We who were dead in our sins and trespasses, are now alive again in Christ + Jesus. When we daily confess in all contrition and sorrow that we are sinners, we remain in our Holy Baptism. If we become puffed up with pride in our keeping of the Law, or rely on our own righteousness, as the scribes and Pharisees did, our baptism does us no good. For we are no longer placing our faith and trust in the Lord + Jesus, but are looking at our own love and good works as the means of our salvation.

And this is the warning that our Lord is giving us today. That we do not rely on our love, but on His love for us and all mankind. For His love caused Him to be sacrificed for us on the tree of the holy cross for the remission of our sins. He now gives us to eat and to drink His true and substantial Body and Blood in bread and wine at this altar for the remission of our sins. This meal is an expression of our love for both the Lord God and for each other. For by it we share with one another the sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus which won for us forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

Let us therefore, my dearly beloved, love one another as our Lord God has loved us. He has fulfilled the whole will and Law of God for us, so that we may also love one another in truth and in deed. Let us love one another not as the world loves, seeking its own benefits and glory, but let us love as our Lord loved us and gave His life as a ransom for us. For in so doing we show that we fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need. Lord, grant this unto us all. 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 the 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!