

13th Sunday after Trinity: September 15, 2019
“Parental Agreement is a Blessing for Children”

Grace, Mercy and Peace be unto you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Our text for this morning is our Gospel reading, Luke chapter 10.

The context of this text in Luke is important. This portion of Luke is a larger section of Jesus teaching just what it is to be a disciple; that is what the life and work of His disciples are to be. The word disciple is the word for student; like a child, it is one who learns. Jesus teaches the 72 they are to speak God’s message of peace; that is to speak peace and salvation is in Christ and in Him alone.

Today the picture is fleshed a bit more; to be a disciple involves hearing and doing. It is thoughts, words and deeds. Last week Jesus opened ears and loosed tongues, this leads directly to today; today is the necessary fruit that naturally flows from a cleansed and regenerated heart.

To be a disciple is to be fed One Holy Food, it comes from one place. Not by my own reason or strength, but through God’s Holy work. A disciple is given, then he or she lives out in speech, in actions, as Christ to their neighbor. Everything a disciple does is for the glory of God, and the welfare of the neighbor.

The work of a disciple of our Lord requires doing acts of mercy. It is not that doing merciful acts will save; rather, because one is saved, acts of mercy flow as fruit from the tree. In our text for today, a lawyer tests Jesus by asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asks him, “***What is written in the Law? How do you read it?***” The man responds with the summary of the two tables of the Law, and these we know. You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. Jesus responds to this summary with the very simple, but profound statement, “***You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.***” We read further in the text that the man wanted to justify himself, so he then asks Jesus, “***Who is my neighbor?***” And Jesus answers with a familiar parable to us all, the parable of the Good Samaritan.

To do the work of a disciple requires speaking and doing. We as God's Children, as Jesus' disciples, are to do the work of a disciple. We are told to speak peace, and also to do the works of peace. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

We, like the lawyer, do not always like the answer either. We like God to be right, but only when He agrees with me. Many today will run from church to church, party to party, friend to friend, searching for someone to say exactly what I want to hear. Much like my children, when Dad says no, go ask mom. A child is raised rightly and properly when father and mother are on the same page.

We have many struggles in this area of our current culture. By changing the teachers, the disciples are changed. Single-parent households know this struggle. Households that have experienced divorce or remarriage know this struggle. One current progressive thought to fix this is simply to get rid of God's design for marriage, remove the gender gap, and keep the same amount of people. Two dads, two moms, strength in numbers, without the mess of having to communicate.

Who suffers? The child. The one who is to learn. The same must be heard in the church. The analogy can be taken too far, but the early Church Fathers speak of your role as child, with God as Father, and the Church as mother. Our Roman Catholic friends have taken this to the extreme and worship the Holy Mother Church, but let us not throw the baby out with the bathwater. When Father and mother are not on the same page, when they speak different things, the child suffers.

How many children suffer today, because they don't like what God's Word says? How many are trying to change it fit their own lifestyle? How many of us are equally guilty of wanting to change what our Mother says, change what our church says, because we don't like what our Father says?

God's Word is hard. His Law is a Word that kills. It cuts me right to my American-pride of self-centeredness. If you truly examine yourselves in light the Ten Commandments, you find that you do not measure up to inherit eternal life. You cannot honestly say that you love God with your entire being; not every moment of every single day. You have sinful thoughts. You put yourselves before the preaching of His Word. You try to fix it yourself, before reaching out to God, because "what if He is too busy"?

The sinful nature seeks to hide, and just like a child, it looks for a way out. A child doesn't quickly stand up before the wrath of parents and happily declare, "I did it. I have sinned. It is my fault." Like Adam and Eve, we search for someone else to blame; someone else who is worse than myself. Or, to make ourselves feel better, we get this Pharisaical attitude, and what if we limit our neighbors? Think about it, if I can redefine who my neighbors are, than I might just be able to squeak by God's measuring line. Our culture is deeply committed to sharing this notion of "my truth is different than your truth" nonsense, and our sinful nature listens.

It thinks, "Maybe there is more than one truth. Maybe Father is old and crotchety and is scared of technology. Maybe Dad is too set in His ways and mom really knows what is going on; after all, she has twitter.

So who is my neighbor? Or to which neighbor's do I really have to show mercy? Do some count, and not others? We may have loved family, but all of them? What about church family? What about pastor? Do we have to include him? What about those in the house next door, or across the road? Just who is it for whom I am to care?

While we seek to redefine words, God's Word doesn't change; His word endures forever, and even the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Jesus teaches us with the parable of the Good Samaritan that everyone is our neighbor. If someone needs help in anyway, you are called as a disciple to help. If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member rejoices, all rejoice together. It is good when we dwell in unity. Unity, can only come from one place, through one Man, through one sacrifice.

To this end, the Holy Spirit speaks through St. Paul, "***walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.***"¹

You are called to do the works of peace in a peace-less world. It is not enough to sit here on Sunday, hear the words and then leave being a Christian here in church.

¹ Ephesians 4:1-6

Being a disciple, a child, is also not just being out in the world. It is a both/and. A disciple sits and listens to the Words of the Lord. A child is fed and strengthened with God's Word and Christ's Body and Blood. A disciple also goes and speaks the message of peace, and does the works of peace.

Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, you are disciples. You are heirs of God's Kingdom, Children, through the Blood of Christ shed on the cross. You have been brought into God's family through the blessed waters of Holy Baptism. You don't make yourself a child, just as you didn't decide to be a child of your own parents. Through His Word, washed over you at the font, He has washed into His family.

As Father, He places you into the lap of your mother, the Church, and as a Child, He continues to speak His Words of life. Through the mouths of sinful men, He ordains them to speak only His words and administer His gifts. Through each of you, he places you in families, gives you neighbors, places you in occupations, provides opportunities for volunteerism, even allows you to shop for groceries, and get gasoline where you have to interact with another person for whom Jesus has died, another person created in His image, another brother in the human family, to whom you may share the One True Word, and give glory to God while helping your neighbor.

It all starts here. The Gospel changes you. Being in Christ, hearing His Word, changes how you live and act. In a great event, weekly you are given opportunity to die to self, and receive the greatest gifts of mercy from God Himself through His appointed means of Word and Sacrament.

Here at the Altar, Jesus Christ comes to you with His Body and His Blood and gives to you the forgiveness of sins. If the forgiveness of sins was not enough, He strengthens and preserves you in body and soul to life everlasting. And if that wasn't enough, He gives to you each other. As you have been baptized into a family, into a body, as you commune, you commune not only with God, but you commune with each other.

Look around, those who are sitting next to you in the pews are your family. Some of you may be part of the same earthly family, but all of you are part of the same

heavenly family. God has given you each other. He has given you each other to both celebrate the good times and to help in times of struggle.

So when it comes to loving your neighbor as yourself, the parable of the Good Samaritan is great. Who exactly is our neighbor? While the world works to redefine many different things, it is truly God who gives the definition. We don't shy away from His Word, even when it is hard, after all, "***Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.***" When the Father's Word is spoken rightly, and the Church does and speaks nothing more, and nothing less, it is the children who are blessed eternally. Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all human understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. For the Church throughout the world, and especially this congregation, that we would not bypass those in need, but rather be filled with God's grace and love to care for all our neighbors, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Lord of the harvest to send forth workers into His vineyard, that through their service, the world would know the compassion and care of Jesus Christ, the Good Samaritan, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all pastors, especially Matthew, our Synod president; Brian, our district president; and Sam, our circuit visitor; that they would be faithful in their preaching of the Gospel and in their administration of the Sacraments, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who suffer violence and evil in this world, that God would provide safety, comfort and healing, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are enemies of God and His people, that by the working of the Word and Spirit their hearts would be softened and they would be given the gifts of repentance and faith, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For a good harvest, protection from drought and famine, and abundant provisions for all, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the good gift of the estate of holy marriage for one man and one woman, we give thanks to the Lord; that God would use this holy estate for the blessings of families, that these gifts would be cherished and honored in our society, and especially within the household of faith, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those whom God has granted another year of earthly life, especially His servants *Diana, Amber and Ruth*; that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and that God would strengthen their trust in His goodness all the days of their life; let us pray to the Lord: **Lord have mercy.**

For all governments and those in authority, that they would justly and wisely use their position and authority to promote the general welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all the sick and the suffering, *[including Dennis, Larry, and those we name in our hearts,]* that God would provide care and rest for them and, according to His will, a restoration to earthly health, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant, that all who have received the inheritance of eternal life in Christ would be united forever in a holy communion and dwell in the Promised Land of the new heavens and new earth to come on the Last Day, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**