

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY Matthew 5: 21-37 Mt. Cal, West View / Pent., Avella

02/12/17

Theme: Do As I Say, And As I Do

+ **Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +**

Our Text is taken from the continuation of the Gospel of Saint Matthew, the 5th chapter:

Let what you say be simply “Yes” or “No”; anything more than this comes from evil.

Liam is in violation of Scripture. I know, I know, you refuse to believe that such a cute, young lad could in any way be on God’s bad side, but he is. For you see, Liam has yet to make his statements be either “yes” or “no”. Looks to me like little Liam is in violation of Matthew 5, verse 37. At best, we get the evangelical revival “ALRIGHT” as he feels compelled by the spirit so to utter. But that is the training of a young mind is it not? We train our children to be polite, civil human persons – to say “Please,” and “Thank you”, Yes and No to questions asked. They do not learn this on their own; we train them – hopefully in the ways that we ourselves are to act and speak. Nikkie tells me of a country song where a father asks his son where he learned such a bad word “that started with ‘s’”? The young lad responded, “I’ve been watching you, dad, ain’t that cool?” Ah, ignoring the grammatical error of the non-functioning word “ain’t”, we come to the mouth of babes that utter eternal truths, that we learn from actions faster than we learn from linguistical disciplines.

So it seems that we need to watch what we say and do around our children, for we wish them to be better citizens than we when it comes to the big ten list of things that make almighty God upset. However, it seems that the mighty ten commandments are nothing more than a base line, a starting point, a point of reference to begin a study on what makes God upset. Jesus says, *“You have heard ... Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say to you, That everyone who is angry with his brother will liable to*

judgment: whoever insults his brother, will be liable to the council: and whoever says, 'you fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire." Wow! This is like a catechism learning! You mean there is *more* that upsets God than the simple killing of another human being? I can easily stop myself from killing another person especially with the five-day waiting period, but you mean to tell me that just being *angry*, something I cannot stop happening in my brain, is on par with *murder* in the strict biblical sense? Absolutely; it is right here, folks. As for adultery, it is not the act that causes problems, though the act is bad enough. Even the very thought of wanting something more than you already have is enough to send you to the fires of hell. Same with divorces, and the offensive use of the mouth, and dealing with impossible neighbors that want to sue you in court – there is so much more that violates these commands than just the act itself that we cannot list them all, and yet, every day we all fall guilty to these – some very obvious others not so obvious. I tell you, just watching the People's court the other day showed once again the degradation of our civil society. Here man was suing for his dog being injured by a newly hung blind by a professional installer. The owner of the company was willing to pay the vet bills, but the offended party could not be satisfied with just the \$875 in vet bills. No, he hired a lawyer, who tried to extract \$4,000 from the installer, which is why they were in court that day. Really people? Can we just be happy that the bills are taken care of, and not try to bleed out a fellow human being all that we can so that we can get more than we should?

It seems to me that all this can fall under the simple rule, "*let what you say [and do] be simply "Yes" or "No"; anything more than this comes from evil.*" A simple solution is all that is necessary to survive this world. We do not need to extract millions of dollars just because the coffee was too hot and the human was stupid enough to NOT put it in a cup holder and got their pants wet. A simple payment of hospital bills is enough for the matter to be settled. But as angry, human sinners we want more than that. We want pain and suffering and Phil Caftan to

get us \$300,000 for big trucks that make illegal u-turns and make the bumper fall off our Yugo. It works the other way as well, we don't want to pay for our mistakes, and if we can get someone else to be responsible, and not have to pay at all, all the better!

I liken this to the treatment of Jesus. Notice, even Jesus was not treated simply. When Jesus was going from town to town, if they did not like what they were hearing, why not just stop listening, or simply let Him move on to another town? Our sinful nature does not allow such simplicity. In one town, they tried to throw Him off a cliff! Why such hostility? And it is not just a one-way street. Recall the sons of thunder, James and John, apostles in Christ's midst, they wanted to rain down fire and brimstone upon a town for not receiving Jesus and His message. Not good, not good. If all this was not enough to show our sinful nature that wants more than it deserves, and when it is not satisfied, it goes out for blood, we take a prophet that does nothing more than offer peace and the Kingdom of Heaven to the hearers, and we beat Him, strip Him, rip His flesh from His body, march Him through town, nail Him to a cross, and even this is not enough. We have to rile Him and taunt Him to come down before we believe in Him as the Son of God.

We are poor excuses for the children of God. We have anger issues that we never notice until the Holy Ghost shows us the mirror of our sins. When the mirror shows forth, where can we turn but to You, O Lord? There is no argument we can make to satisfy our many sins. There is no rebuttal that we can offer when convicted of our sins of omission and commission. We can only answer "Yes," we have sinned, and "No," we did not do what was asked of us. Poor wretched sinners we are. The only other response that can be uttered is a heartfelt, "Forgive me, O Lord."

The best thing about all this is He does forgive the heartfelt confession of all that is done wrong, and by grace alone gives you the complete forgiveness necessary for eternal life. From

the smallest curse muttered under our breath, to the atrocious multi state murder spree, our Savior so saves the sinner so confessed, and covers sins with the blood shed from the cross, which we did to make Jesus take our place; for the wrong reason, but God turned our evil into good. Caiaphas may have wanted Jesus to suffer so that the rest of the Jews would be spared from the punishment, having said, "*You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.*" Yet he knew even less than they, for he had no idea that Jesus' suffering and dying would be for the whole world's salvation. Thanks be to God that He does save us from our damnation by giving us Jesus to bring us to the Kingdom of Heaven by the cross and resurrection!

Having now said all this, what are we to do? Well, in the message of Moses, we can either choose life or death. Death of this world, going to hell in a hand basket, carried by Satan himself, or life in Christ Jesus. Jesus gives us the example with His life. I say LIFE, because we cannot follow the example of His death. No one can die for another; we cannot even die for our own self. Yet, Jesus shows us how to live, by telling us and doing for us the life we are to lead for God and Neighbor. He bids us to follow not only what He says, but also what He does, in laying down our lives for one another. Perchance you have the opportunity to help simply by offering forgiveness to another. Freely you have been forgiven by the sacraments of the Holy One given to you, do so unto others, and forgive them their trespasses simply by faith. You have heard the world tell you how to get ahead in this life, now it is time to follow Jesus Christ and His words of Salvation. Follow life, with the Word and Sacrament ministry that makes you alive in the Cross of Christ with His forgiveness. In His most Holy Name we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS. AMEN+

Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment