

21ST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10/21/18

Mount Calvary, West View

ECCLESIASTES 5: 10-20, HEBREWS 4: 1-13, MARK 10: 17-32

HYMNS: WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS LSB #770,

ALL FOR CHRIST I HAVE FORSAKEN LSB #753,

AMAZING GRACE LSB #744

Theme: Forsake All for Thee

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

Our Text is from the continuation of Saint Mark's Gospel, the 10th Chapter:

Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left everything and followed You." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for My sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."

To Forsake. To Abandon or to renounce; to give up. To turn away from entirely. These are all technical definitions to the verb "Forsake", and certainly this is the intent of the disciples, well, Peter at least, who declared in our meditation text, "See, we have left everything and followed You." This is of course a response to last Sunday's text, where the man had great possessions and since he could not part with them to give to his fellow man who was less off than he was, went away sorrowful.

But not the disciples, no sir! They are quite happy, well, Peter is, to remind Jesus that, "Hey. We left everything and are following you, so we get kudos, right?" Ah yes, we are back to that classic argument the disciples had, who is the greatest in heaven. Past instructions: of being chastised for not praying before trying to do the miracle of casting out demons; of being chastised for thinking they were better than others who were casting out demons in Jesus' name but were not one of them; of understanding that salt is good but losing it is so horrendous how will you be made salty again?; of understanding that

following the laws of God come from the heart and not the law as in divorce, which leads to the heart of child-like faith for to such belongs the kingdom of God; these are all wiped out, by the great declaration of Peter, that they are better than the rich people because they have forsaken all, ***left everything and followed*** Jesus. Indeed, the teachings fell upon seemingly deaf ears for Peter still seeks approval for his work, for his choice, for his decision.

See, even the best of Christians fall into the temptation of self-exaltation. I guess, the answer is to really forsake everything, just as Jesus says, ***Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for My sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.*** Indeed, we do not need to win the mega ***Billion***, all we have to do is leave our house, and family, and lands, and take up that cross and follow Him! Follow Him, all the way to the humiliation, to the cross, to the death, so that others can have life in our names!

Whoa, did Pastor just say that? You better believe I did, because that is the point, my friends. If we are giving up everything to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, then we would be Christ Himself. For Who else had given up His home in Heaven, given up His rightful place next to the Father and the Holy Ghost, and come into this place to be among brothers and sisters, and gave up His life so that you and I could be forgiven? Yes, to be the least of all is to be Christ, Who is greatest of all, and saves all through His body and blood shed on the cross for the salvation of the world.

Indeed, Jesus became the ***last*** so that He could be the firstfruits of them that liveth. As Saint Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, ***But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But***

*each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.*ö

Therefore, it is simple to understand there is no greatest in the kingdom of heaven, just believers. It should care not who is the öbetterö Christian and who has ösacrificedö more, but sinful man continues to try and gain a position over and above his fellow redeemed and even the non-redeemed simply because he craves attention and recognition to satisfy fleshly desires.

So, when you sang our sermon hymn, what were you thinking? Have you taken up the cross? Have you counted worldly joy and fame and fortune as worthless dross? Have you taken the plow, the work of the kingdom and not looked back? Unknown truly is the future, is grace your daily breath? Do you trust that God will watch over those you love when you die, do you accept that God will watch over you if a loved one dies? If these questions were asked of you, simply put these are all Law laden questions, because there is no proper answer given. So as per my humble opportunity as I am given to preach to you the wonderful Law AND Gospel, I tell you that you are secure with the Lord because you have been baptized into His family. You are now forgiven of sins and made a child of the Heavenly Father through His grace resting upon you in your washing of water and Word. Believing this, you are a Christian and therefore able to hear the Word and rejoice that Jesus is the full atonement for sins, and in confessing sins as you have this morning, received the blessed absolution making you able to live life in His name, not seeking to do enough, but to simply do. And with the proper reception of Body and blood at the supper offered at the Altar, you receive again the greatest meal that sustains the soul to trust in the Cross of Calvary, and rest secure in the blessed assurance of Christø death and resurrection in the face of the scoffers of this world.

When Jesus declared, ö*How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter into the Kingdom of God!*ö what He was reiterating was the Old Testament lesson we have where the lament of King Solomon explains the vanity of loving money and wealth. The trick, as the 18th verse and following

attest, is enjoy life as God intended. Life is short; a hundred years is but a half-blink of the eye in relation to God's eternity. There is more in the drop of water into the ocean than our earthly life compared to the heavenly, so why spend it all in acquiring wealth that you cannot take with you? Those that do are admonished by the writer to the Hebrews, *“Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”*

Indeed, you and I have a great opportunity and responsibility to let people who have been staying away from God because they seem to need to chase after possessions and wealth hear again the great good news that all is not lost ó Jesus still loves them enough to save them from themselves just as He has saved you with His Word, His forgiveness, His death, His life, His resurrection. Indeed, it is difficult to enter the kingdom of God on one's own terms. However, extremely easy to enter with Christ Alone. In our Triune God's 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 OUR LORD. AMEN+

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