

Sermon Fourteenth Week After Pentecost 08/24/2024 Pastor Staehr

OT; Isaiah 29:11-19 The words of Isaiah 29 are quoted by Jesus to the Pharisees in the Gospel message for this week. There is a common theme between these two passages which is replacing the commandments of God with the traditions of men. In Isaiah 29 we see the people "pretending" to not be able to understand the Word of God or that they cannot even read so that they can avoid following what the Word of God says and how it directs our lives. It is often how we live that does not line up with how we worship. Isaiah which is quoted by Jesus says, "this people... honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me." This passage challenges us to consider if we just use our lips to recite what we are called to speak in a worship service while the rest of our lives remain unchanged. Only giving your lips to God is short-changing God who wants your heart. God wants your every desire to be in step with Him and His Word.

Ep: Ephesians 5:22-33 (This reading will be covered in the sermon)

G: Mark 7:1-13 - This Gospel account has an encounter with Jesus and the Pharisees who are beside themselves that the disciples did not wash their hands before eating. We are told that this is a custom made by men and not commanded by God along with the washing of certain dishes and eating utensils. Jesus points out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees by quoting our Isaiah passage. He says that the Pharisees were even guilty of worshiping in vain. This kind of worship is of no benefit to the worshiper. Worship without benefit comes from the lack of faith. Once again, we are reminded that God wants your heart. When your heart is not in it, then the promises of God do not benefit you, and your worship has no benefit for you (it is in vain). The example that Jesus uses to demonstrate this point is that the Pharisees have rejected the commandment of God is found by an example where they broke the 4th commandment. The Pharisees rejected this commandment by allowing people to break the Law of Moses in 4th commandment. So sons and daughters were allowed to stop caring for their parents in their Old age by designating the money that they used for their parents to be given to God instead. This allowed sons and daughters to revile their parents. Reviling is a term that includes being angry with and even being abusive toward someone else. So Jesus is making the point that the practice of Corban looked good on the outside, but Jesus says that this makes "void the Word of God by your tradition". This is not the only instance where they make God's Word void by tradition either, for our Lord says, "And many such things you do" When you merely go through the motions and do not love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, you end up rejecting God's Word and finding ways to make His Word void in your life in many and various ways.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1 :2)
Amen.

The Love of Christ for His Bride, the Church

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to witness what marriage is all about. The bridegroom Christ and His bride the Church. Marriage is something that we must consider more often than almost any other relationship in life. For the two who are joined in this matrimony are

preceded them in death. A married couple spends time with one another day in and day out, and, as a result of two sinners living in the same space, their relationship can easily decline into something less than wedded love and faithfulness. Marriage has been cheapened and reduced and robbed and become a laughing stock. It is easily entered and just as easily exited. Satan attacks this holy estate in many ways because it is truly a gift from God given to us when the world was still perfect in the Garden of Eden before Eve was deceived and before Adam chose to stand and watch as his beloved wife ate the fruit that would surely bring death. From that time onward, the enemies of the faith (sin, death, and the devil) have made it a goal to break down this gift, this wonderful relationship. For God Almighty declared, "It is not good that man should be alone"(Gen. 2:18). Yet, the enemy Sin creeps into wedded love and faithfulness creating snippy comments and unfaithfulness. The enemy Death snatches our loved ones from our arms. The enemy the Devil makes a mockery of this blessed union and parodies it with various profane marriages. All these and much more have become commonplace, Yet, sadly, even those who are married may at times forget how blessed they are to have entered into this holy estate and they no longer love and cherish one another in sickness and in health until death do they part.

Therefore, Paul writes concerning the Christian marriage in Ephesians 5. Beginning this chapter Paul writes, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Paul is encouraging us to be like God since we are called His children by Baptism. Therefore, there are certain things we should not do because that is what the children of darkness do. Paul says we should not engage in sexual immorality or impurity of any kind including crude jokes.

We should be on guard against coveting with our eyes or committing secret sins in the dark.

You are beloved children of God. So let every relationship including the relationship of husband and wife be impacted by who you are as a child of God. Walk in love because Christ has loved you so much that gave Himself up on the cross for you. On that cross, then, the sins of the whole world were lifted up including: every sin of sexual immorality, every impurity, every crude joke, every failure of husband or wife, every bad temper, every unfaithfulness to husband or wife, and even every rejection of God's marriage to chase after a parody. These and any other sins against this holy union of one man and one woman Christ has taken in love for you and for the world and gave Himself up to die for His bride, the Church. In the process, He has opened up the way for the Church to be sanctified (to be considered holy and without blemish before God). By the Baptism, we pass through the portal from darkness into His marvelous light, and we are presented in splendor, without spot or wrinkle, We are presented as holy and without blemish. The death of Christ shows just how great the love of Christ is for His bride the Church.

So now, brides are given their example to follow as Paul writes, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior, Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit everything to their husbands." Brides are called to submit here,

but this word "submit" is not different from what the previous verse calls each Christian to do, "Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ". So the one takeaway brides should hear is this, let yourself enjoy your husband all the more, respect him, and place yourself under His love. I also encourage wives to listen carefully to what your groom is to do for you. Now, men, it is your turn to hear what grooms are to do for their beloved brides. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her," Grooms, if you are supposed to be Christ to your lovely bride, you should ask yourself what you would not be willing to do. If Christ died for his bride, then what can you do for yours. Likewise, just as Christ presents His beloved bride, the Church as holy and blameless, you are to present your wives without spot. She is the most beautiful she has ever been. She is your bride, and in your eyes, she must always be considered as the most lovely and beautiful of any woman alive for Christ has considered His bride, all of us here to be considered so lovely that He was willing to die to get her out of harm's way.

Now Christ, gets us today out of harm's way as well by providing us His body and blood for our forgiveness so that all you partake may join Him in a wedding feast which has no end. This feast conquers sin by forgiving them. This feast conquers death by joining us to the courts of the heavenly realm where all the company of heaven partake with one another of this glorious Sacrament. This feast conquers the Devil by reassuring each of you in your faith and driving out doubt and despair. So, each of you, consider Christ's example with His bride, the Church in your own marriage, so that you may be imitators of God in all things, and walk in love just as Christ loves His Church and gave Himself up for her. Amen.

Now may the peace which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.