



them hear them...If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.” “Moses and the Prophets” was the Jewish way of referring to the Old Testament. The rich man did not listen to God calling him to repentance and faith through the Word. The rich man remained dead in sin, with no love for God and neighbor in him, because he failed to listen to "Moses and the prophets," that is, the Word of God.

I. Now, before you put on your Pharisee gown and point the accusing finger at this rich man in the parable, look at your heart, your life, and in the mirror of God's Law and know what you see? You see that you do not always listen to and believe God's Word. And, there is a rather simple reason for that, God's Word condemns you and your sin, and you don't like that very much.

The Bible says, "Love your neighbor," sure ya do, right? Especially when your neighbor gets that promotion to supervisor at work, and now you have to do what they tell you to do every day at work. Or, how about when your neighbor's kid gets to start on the varsity team and your kid sits on the bench, then you love your neighbor, and your neighbor the coach, right? Or, how about the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment? That Commandment teaches us to honor those in authority over us, but what about when you are driving down the highway? Then, honoring those in authority over you doesn't exactly include obeying the posted speed limit, does it? What about when you gossip about your neighbor's adultery? Is the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment more important than the 8<sup>th</sup>? Or, instead of being content, you hoard and hoard and hoard more earthly stuff for yourself, because after all, God may not keep His promise to open His hand and satisfy your every need, right? Honestly, it's a lot easier to trust in the lottery ticket than the empty tomb of

Easter morning, isn't it? "Love keeps no record of wrongs," the Bible says (1 Cor 13:5). And again it says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph 4:32). But, we don't treat our neighbor as Christ treats us, do we? We keep a solid record of wrongs, we hate, we refuse to be reconciled, we are not patient with our neighbor.

Yes, yes, you believe John 3:16. But, what about all of Scripture, especially those parts that show your sin? We do well to remember the words of James, "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (2:10). And the Law says, "the wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23).

II. Because you ignored, doubted, and didn't listen to "Moses and the Prophets," God spoke to us by His Son. Jesus, the very Word of God, became flesh and dwelt among us, to make God known to us. Chiefly, He made God and His love known to us by taking on all of our sin upon His flesh. He took on all of our sin, including those times we ignored, doubted, and didn't listen to God's Word and carried them to Calvary's cross. There, He endured all the wrath and anger of God against our sin, even our sin against the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment, shedding His blood all over that cross. Because He did that, we are forgiven, all of our sin. And, His resurrection from the grave means that God the Father has accepted His sacrifice as the atonement for the sin of the whole world.

And, He makes that forgiveness your very own through the hearing and learning of the Word. He distributes the forgiveness He won on the cross to us through the Word -- the spoken Word and the visible Word of the Sacraments -- so that that forgiveness may be our very own forgiveness in the water and Word of Baptism and in the eating and

drinking of His Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and the wine in His Supper.

III. “Fight the good fight of the faith,” Paul writes in our Epistle. Dear Saint of God, you can fight the good fight of faith -- striving to overcome sin and keeping 10 Commandments in your thoughts, words, and deeds -- because God is working in you through His Word and, of course, the Sacraments which are His Word joined to visible elements.

So, that we may know what a holy life is; what righteousness, godliness are; how we are to love God and our neighbor; God has given us the 10 Commandments. We are not saved by our good works, our keeping of the 10 Commandments, nor do we earn God’s grace and favor by keeping the 10 Commandments. Rather, the 10 Commandments guide us in living the Christian life.

You know my car illustration, right? If you want to go some place in your car; let’s say you need to go to get a Carson Wentz jersey, your car needs an engine, a transmission, gas in the tank and air in the tires. But, there is that one seemingly small part of your car you dare not overlook -- the headlights. Just as headlights guide, direct, your car, so the 10 Commandments guide us, direct us, in living a God-pleasing life.

Rather than trusting in lady luck, we call upon God in every trouble, pray, praise, and give God thanks. We hold preaching and the Word of God sacred and gladly hear and learn it, so that God can do His work in us. We respect all in authority over us, for these are the “masks” of God, as Luther calls those in authority over us, because there are God’s servants for a polite and orderly society; something our nation could use a little more of these days. We respect the gift of life; we do not kill unborn children, the aged or infirm because they are an inconvenience. We honor marriage as

the life-long union of one man and one woman, even with the jokes we tell. We thank God that He has given us the ability and opportunity to work for our daily bread, because by our work in our daily vocations, we glorify God. The words from our lips prove the truth of that old saying, “If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all.’ And, we know that satisfaction, peace and contentment do not come from how many toys, silver or gold one has, but come only from a heart filled with faith in Christ.

We hold God’s Word sacred and gladly hear and learn it so that you can fight the good fight of the faith until that time He sends His angels to carry your eternal soul to Abraham’s bosom.

To God be the Glory. Amen.