

Pentecost 6 7/17/22  
 Luke 10:38-42 11C

“MARTHA, MARTHA, YOU ARE ANXIOUS AND TROUBLED ABOUT MANY THINGS, BUT ONE THING IS NECESSARY”.

Page 321: 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment

What is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment?

*What does this mean?*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment is not about worshipping on a certain day of the week. God is teaching us to honor His Word. Why do we "not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it?" Because "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). Through His Word, God creates, strengthens, and preserves saving faith in Jesus Christ. Through His Word, God does His work in us so that He can do His work through us. You can't serve the Lord, unless He first serves you.

Think of it this way: Do you recall our Gospel reading last Sunday? The parable of the Good Samaritan. The closing words of last Sunday's Gospel were the words of Jesus, "You go, and do likewise". You can only "go, and do likewise," being a Good Samaritan to your neighbor if God first does His work **in you through His Word**.

Which brings us to Martha in our Gospel lesson this Sunday. She "was anxious and troubled by many things" (v. 41). She was busy, providing the daily bread for Jesus. Yet, in the midst of all her busy-ness, she forgot the one thing needful – to hear and learn the Word.

Seems to us that Martha is being a Good Samaritan to her neighbor, showing her love for her neighbor by providing for the needs of her neighbor. Meanwhile, Mary sits at Jesus' feet and she is doing the right

thing? Dear Saints of God, neither Martha nor Mary is wrong. Both are doing what needs to be done. But, we learn this Sunday that we cannot get **so** busy that we forget to hear and learn the word of God.

When we talk about stewardship, we often talk about it in terms of time, talents, and treasure. We poor sinners have lost what it means to be a steward of time. Time – has become the god we serve today.

We are busy, busy, busy -- so busy we have no time for God's Word. We have to get to work in the morning, so we have no time to begin our day with devotions. Your favorite TV show is coming on, so you have no time to teach God's Word to your children. Sunday, well Sunday, is your only day off during the week, so it's a good day to ... well, you know – do this, do that, which means you are not in God's House. We think we can live a Christian life and be strong in our faith **without** the Word of God.

II. The Good News for us is that just as Jesus came to Martha and Mary, He comes to us. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," John writes (Jn 1). The very Son of God took on human flesh and all the sins of the world were laid on Him, including our sins against the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment. He was crucified, killed, for those sins. He died the death our sin demanded. Then, God the Father raised Him to life again, bringing life and immortality to light. This Jesus did so that we would have the forgiveness of our sins, and where there is forgiveness, there is life and salvation.

It is through that life-giving Word that became flesh and dwelt among us that the Holy Spirit makes the forgiveness the Son of God won on the cross, your forgiveness. Remember the words of the Rev. Dr. Luther:

"We treat forgiveness of sins in two ways. First how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has

achieved it on the cross, it is true. But he has not distributed or given it on the cross...He has distributed and given it **through the Word.**"

Do you remember what happens in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel? A large crowd was on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus feeds them. They see Jesus as the goose that laid the golden egg and want to take Him "by force" to make Him their king, so He withdraws from them. But, they follow Jesus and He turns out to be a disappointment to them; He didn't meet their expectations. So, they go away. And Jesus asks the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" And Simon Peter answers, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (vv. 67-68).

III. Jesus has the words of eternal life. That's why Mary "sat at Jesus' feet and kept hearing His Word." Yes, that's the way it literally reads. Hearing and learning the Word is not a momentary or once-in-a-lifetime thing. It is a discipline, and, throughout our earthly sojourn, it must be regular, continual, persistent. We typically think of the word "disciple" as being a student, but, literally, the word "disciple" means, "hearer". To be a disciple is to be a hearer of the Word.

That is important for us to remember because, in this restless age in which we live, we are ever led away from the Word. We become bored with it. After all, we've heard it before. We don't like parts of it, so we just ignore those parts we don't like.

And, we are blessed with peace and prosperity. When we are blessed with food and drink and all that we need to support this body and life; when family and friends and possessions are secure, how easy it is to turn a deaf ear to God. The Word of God seems so unnecessary, because we think we have everything we need.

Then, troubles come. When the anxieties of earthly life have piled up on us; when everything is going wrong, and the weight of the world is on our shoulders, then we begin to feel that God has abandoned us. His Word seems so powerless to help us.

It is the devil who draws us away from the Word. It is the Father of all lies who causes us to doubt the power and the promises of God's Word. We must look for God where He has promised to be found – His Word.

That's what Jesus Himself did. When the Son of God was tempted by the evil foe, Jesus relied solely of the Word, "It is written".

In the hearing and learning of His Word, Jesus breathes His eternal life into us. We remember our baptism, for "Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's Word". In the eating and drinking of our Lord's own body and blood, the words "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins" give us the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Through His Word -- to be clear, the spoken Word and the visible Word of the Sacraments -- God plants the seeds of faith within us that they may grow and produce a bountiful harvest of the fruits of the Spirit. Saints of God, we hold God's Word sacred and gladly hear and learn it, because God works through His Word. And, we have firm faith in the promise of God,

"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Is 55).

Through His Word, God brings us to faith and preserves us in that faith, doing His work in us so that He can do His work through us, so that we can "Go, and do likewise".