

The Sermon Title: “Christianity Is Not Always Easy!”

The Sermon Text: Luke 12:49-53

Preached at Zion Lutheran Church

Fort Wayne, Indiana

August 14, 2022

Dear Friends of Christ Jesus,

Some people have the notion that following Christ is something that is easy to do. There seems to be the expectation that being a disciple of Jesus will ensure that one has a peaceful life, obedient children, a loving spouse, in short, a comfortable existence. But is that what Jesus teaches us about being His disciple? Listen to the words of our sermon text which are recorded in Luke 12:49-53:

Luk 12:49-53 ESV “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!
(50) I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!
(51) Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.
(52) For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. (53) They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Why is Jesus anxious for the division in the world to come as stated in our text? Jesus is not anxious for the division to occur. He is anxious to fulfill the Scriptures and the Will of the Father so that salvation will be accomplished through his meritorious work on behalf of all mankind. Jesus is anxious for the Gospel message to go out so that many might be called into true saving faith. Jesus is anxious for this even though He knows that there will be division caused in families over Him and confession of faith in Him. The Gospel is too important to be suppressed because it causes divisions between believers and unbelievers. Jesus is anxious for the period of the Gospel spreading throughout the world to begin.

First however, something must happen and that is the baptism that Jesus must go through, namely, His suffering and death on the cross of Calvary must happen. Jesus must complete the work of redemption that He came to do. Do not think lightly of the suffering that Jesus went through. Remember His own words about it. In Matthew chapter twenty-six we read the Garden of Gethsemane account, Mat **26:38-39** ESV **Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” (39) And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”**

In the book of Luke, we are shown that Jesus knew what He was going to undergo. Consider His Words in **Luk 9:22** ESV **“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”**

Further in the Gospel of John we are given a glimpse of Jesus’ dread of what He must go through

as well as His eagerness to go through the ordeal because of His love for His Father and for us. I am referring to these words found in John 12:27-28. **Joh 12:27-28 ESV “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. (28) Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”**

Be clear in your understanding that Jesus did not run away from the dreadful punishment and death that was before Him. His great love for His Father in Heaven and His great love for fallen humanity were foremost in His mind as He went on resolutely to the suffering he endured and to His death on the Cross of Calvary. Jesus went through this because He knew that this was the only way that the sins of mankind could once and for all time be paid up. Jesus, indeed, has objectively justified all of mankind with His perfect life lived under the Law of God and with His meritorious suffering and death on the Cross of Calvary. The purchase price for buying you back from the Law of God’s demands has been paid by Jesus. You have been bought back from death. Yes, the wages that you have earned with the sins that you have done is death – eternal death.

Notice that I said that Jesus has objectively justified the whole lot of mankind. Objective Justification is a wonderful teaching letting us know that Christ has paid the price of the sins of every woman, child and man who has ever lived on this earth or who will live on this earth. Another wonderful teaching of Holy Scripture is that God desires all people to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. We call this Universal Grace. So why then are not all people saved?

The answer is that Objective Justification does not do the individual any good unless it becomes his or her own. That is each person needs to be subjectively justified before God. Subjective justification occurs as one is brought to true faith in Christ Jesus.

Let me illustrate what I mean in this way. If I put a million dollars in the bank in your name, but you never knew about it and had no way to get the money out of the bank, would it do you any good? No! You need to know that the money is in the bank, and you need to have a way to receive the money for yourself. So it is with the Justification that Jesus has earned for us. The Gospel message is important for us to hear because it is how we know about God’s grace toward us. The Gospel message tells us of what Jesus has done for us with His life lived under the Law of God and with His death on the Cross as our substitute. Further it is through the Gospel message that the Holy Spirit enables us to have true faith in Christ Jesus. Faith is the hand which receives the blessings of God. Thus, it is through faith that you as an individual receive forgiveness of your sins and life everlasting. We indeed are saved by Grace through Faith in Christ Jesus! And remember that our faith is a gift from God. We learned these words in our catechetical instruction because they truly reflect what the Holy Scriptures say of conversion and faith:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He

calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.¹

There is the notion that one must give oneself faith or at least make a decision to be a believer in Christ Jesus. This is an impossibility. St. Paul reminds us that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. This is the way that things are naturally for us. King David reminds us that we are conceived in sin and born in sin. Do not think lightly of your sin! Your sin is obnoxious to the Holy Pure Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Your sin is not good for you or anyone else. Sin done by you to others destroys your relationship with them. It hurts them. The truth is that you and I are totally corrupt in our sinfulness. We are walking dead in our sins people until God comes to us and changes us by giving us spiritual life. Paul points out to us that the natural man cannot discern the spiritual things of God. And Holy Scripture through King David in Psalm 51:5 teaches us that we are totally sinful from our conception. There is no little spark of good in us so that we can decide to be followers of Jesus.

No, dear Christian faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ. Faith comes to us as the Holy Spirit enables us to believe in Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Do not think this an odd set of circumstances. It is no odder than your physical life. Did any of you make a decision to be born? No, your parents and God gave you the gift of physical life. So also, God gives you the gift of faith and thus spiritual life. And as you can reject your physical life and do away with it, so also the only thing that can be done spiritually by the natural man is to reject the life that God is offering through the Word of the Gospel and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. This is not what God wants for anyone. But it is a reality. And this is what Jesus understands does happen in families.

One of the greatest forms of suffering for Christians is when family members reject the Christian Faith.

No one can believe for anyone else. Therefore, the husband who states that his wife and children go to church and thinks himself a good godly person because of it is only fooling himself. The faith of your family will not bring about the forgiveness of your sins before God. Christians are people who guided by the Holy Spirit desire to hear God's Word proclaimed regularly. In a similar vein, no child can hope to be blessed by God because their parents go to church regularly even though they themselves abstain from church attendance. Non-Christians within a family can cause great heartache and suffering. But it is not only in the family that Jesus is talking about.

Christians live in society and society today is increasingly anti-Christian. This is not surprising

¹ [*Concordia Triglotta—English: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#), electronic ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996), 545.

because when one disdains and ignores the Word of Truth, namely, the Holy Scriptures one is slave to sin, the old sinful man, and the devil. All manner of transgression against God's Law occurs in such a state.

Why do we go through suffering?

Jesus points out in our text that all Christians will suffer trials because of their Christian walk on this side of heaven. This is born out in Acts 14:22 where is written, **Act 14:22 ESV . . . through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**

The big reason that Christians suffer trials and tribulations in this temporal existence is due to the unbelieving world. People who are unbelievers do not like Christians because Christians will not follow nor embrace the ways of the world, the sinful flesh, and the devil.

Jesus tells us that this will happen as one of the signs that the end of the age is coming.

Mat 24:9 ESV "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

It is right to ask the question, "What does suffering for the name of Jesus do for us?"

St. Paul gives us a succinct answer. We read his words in Romans

Rom 5:1-10 ESV Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, (4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, (5) and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (6) For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— (8) but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. (10) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Even though our Christian walk may not be easy, we rely upon God to strengthen and encourage us through His Sacred Word. We pray as we sang in our Hymn of the Day, "Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word!"

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.