

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity: Luke 10:23–37

Don O'Connor

19 November 2006

Hebrews 3:12 (KJV)

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

What would a hard heart look like? It would look like mine, before the Lord. Intrenched in my thing - turned inward. everything is here for me to judge today. Perhaps you're here to judge me today. Perhaps you'll approve of what I say, or perhaps you'r indifferent towards it. What would a hard heart look like? It's an evil heart of unbelief. We're in a war - this is just a fact. Winter has hardly begun and how many of you are looking forward to Spring? You're deceived. Dec. 21 is my happiest day. Because, as the poem says, "If this is winter, can Spring be far away?" When there's still some fruit on the trees, we start hoping. The birdies in the trees praise him, and the angels sing along, so why shouldn't we. Birds don't sing so loud when it's raining. HAVe you heard them in Spring? You could have Jesus in your heart, and though there are seasons, you'll always have the resurrection in your heart - who he is. We become hard and cynical. Honest doubt can be a very good thing. "Wait a minut, Lord. What about this?" job had some honest doubt, and he was still a sinner.

Hebrews 3:13 (KJV)

But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Without a continual exhortation, l proclamation, going on, common grace, or mutual conversation where you are being fed, where is there left to go but inside your own brain.

1 Cor - I don't have any need to hear you - to receive from you - to partake of teh sacraments. I'm doing alright. If you look at the earthly realm, tehre are millions of people doing alright, but it doesn't mean they have the fruit of the Spirit. It just means that they are doing alright by

earthly standards, but it is all vanity. Getting a cheeseburger, or watching the Seahawks win, will help, but no it won't. You'll still be empty.

Be aware of how quickly that can sneak up on you. Before you know it, you no longer relate as brothers or sisterse, now they're just people you judge, people who are weird, and there is a separation. This is sin. And if it's not being taken care of by the blood of Jesus, we'll just have to do it ourselves, be a little wiser, or smarter, or get a name the world can give us, or the worldliness of the church. Jesus said to condescend to men of low esteem. I'd rather condescend to men of high esteem, those who can hep me out.

2 Phil Lte this mind be in you, a mind which empties itself of reputation, the thing we strive for our entire life. Pharisees are those who love the praise of men more than the praise of God. "Who me, I don't want the approval of men." Yes you do, if you don't believ eyou have the approval of God, which is not based on merit, or anything you or I could do, but on what He has chosen to do.

Parents do love their small infants. What did they do to deserve that love? nothing. If anything, they are a problem and they cause their parents suffering. When the children are suffering, it causes us to suffer. They are loved. "Well, I'll love you as long as you don't get the flu, or stop crying at night."

The first thing we empty ourselves of is reputation, the glory that comes from men, even men in this church. We don't fellowship on that basis. We fellowship as sinners. This can come from a hard heart. God has to let us know there are still consequences for sin. Not in the heavenly relam, seated with Christ Jesus, eschatologically, perfect, but in this earthly realm. How did you do with loving your neighbor last week? Will you try a little harder? The root of sin is, "I will try. I can do this."

Here comes a very bad man, though he is successful according to the world. He doesn't know it, though.

Luke 10:25 (KJV)

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He's a "certain lawyer", a certain debater, a certain theologian. We all are theologians of one thing or another. This is just a short-hand way of saying something about us. This guy

reminds me of Don. He tempted the master. There's something to see there. Why would they use the word tempted. Jesus is already on to his question. He knows what's in man. He's already been tempted by the devil. Prove it, make bread out of rocks, throw yourself off the pinnacle. You become ashamed of God's Word, or ashamed of one another. We have actual sinners in this church. "You've got nothing on me, sinner." I'm saying this because it is true. Look at your heart outside of Christ, but don't stay there too long, flee to Jesus. Look what Jesus does. There might be some other things you'd like to say, but you're Christians, when people start tempting you and asking you certain questions.

Knowing Jesus loves this young man:

Luke 10:26-27 (KJV)

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? [27] And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

ALL - means all. You want to get to heaven, you can get to heaven by keeping the law. Yes you can. Imagine loving the Lord with all your mind. What would that mean to you? Look how stubbornly you refuse to even hear this question. Pride. It's just pride. All that is in the world; pride that comes before destruction and causes contentions and separations in your lives every day. I've got my robe on. It's saved my life many times. You can't shoot through it; it's bullet-proof. If I take it off, I'm just one of the boys. Let the robe speak, through the grace of God.

See this question? Have you ever loved the Lord with all your mind? Here is the law for you. Have you ever approached God on that basis? If you want to approach God on the basis of law, when was the last time you judged someone for not measuring up to something or someone? You are right. How many of you have valued being more right than having peace? Peace is of a higher commodity than being right. It was only that I thought I was right. If you could get everybody in the church to agree on just one thing, what is that? Who killed Jesus? The deniers are still judging. They still think they're not as bad as the woman caught in adultery or Peter denying the Lord. Even though Keith Greene was into a little legal stuff with Finney, I still like the line, "I bet I could deny you too." With all he knew, he had to come to the conclusion that there is nothing good in my flesh. If you don't have a flesh, disregard that - pay it no mind.

But, speaking of mind. Contrasting that mind, loving the Lord with all your mind, your thoughts continually before the Lord, unto the Lord, with Let this mind be in you that was in Christ. Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, he emptied his mind and he emptied his reputation. What's the highest attainment you had for your reputation - before you got here? It's a game, a facade. What do you mean by here? Well, look around. How could you have been so bad as to end up here? What punishment... It had to be the Lord who brought you here. If you had a brain in your head you'd be 1000 miles from here. Look who is here? The only ones that are here have nowhere to go.

You may have another flaw in your members that allows you a legion of places you can run to when suffering and the cross come into your life.

Paul said the mind of Christ is the mind that empties itself of reputation. This attorney is messing with the Master.

Luke 10:26-27 (KJV)

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? [27] And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Just to bring it down to earth: Love your neighbor the same way you love yourself. Okay, anything else? Now the hilarity of the Gospel is that you can't and he has. But if you want to give the law a shot, go ahead. But bear in mind, if you don't love your neighbor, according to this (2 realms, heaven perfect, but down on earth wherever we live daily, there are consequences for not loving our neighbors, our wives, our children, our parents). Our vocation is where we get to do that. In a family you get to do that; love your neighbor as yourself. You have a boss, clients, you get to love them as you love yourself. If you fall short in that, there are consequences. Maybe you have your scene together where you can just hide. There are still consequences.

Here is the root of his theological questioning.

Luke 10:28-29 (KJV)

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. [29] But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

I'm going to take the rabbi on. After all, I'm a lawyer. "Bless God, I'm not like that guy." Oswald Chambers said there are only two men in the Bible; Adam and Jesus, which is another shorthand way of telling us something. How many of you heard that 20 years ago. Did you take it to heart? You could right now.

Jesus loving this man, tells him a story. You may not wake up in the story until next month; this is the thing about Hebrew stories. You may not wake up until 10 years from now, but it goes in. Stories - you are defined by the story in the Bible, who you think you are today. Have you been listening to another story?

Luke 10:30-32 (KJV)

And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. [31] And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. [32] And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

Levites were priests and lawyers, practiced in the law. They knew every dot and tittle and wore the law on their foreheads.

Luke 10:33 (KJV)

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

This always has to play in our hearts today. Who do you think a Samaritan is today? Samaritan - mixture.

Luke 10:34-37 (KJV)

And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [35] And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. [36] Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? [37] And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Luke 10:36 (KJV)

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

Are you the man who fell among thieves? We all fell among thieves. Satan is a thief, a liar and a murderer. Jesus fell among them too. Aren't you glad that he became a Samaritan for you? He can become any one of the characters, and so can you. On any given day, it changes. You can become the Levite who just knows a lot. That will only tend to pride. We've heard the Word. Humility is a passive work. God resists the proud. That means one of me he resists. When that one is ascending, God is resisting that. Even you resist it when you see someone who is blatantly proud. You may not even have a story to tell them, except, "Okay, do it your way."

Imagine this proud lawyer and where he is at now. Since you're so proud, why don't you just go and do likewise?

Luke 10:37 (KJV)

And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

This is what he does with me when I'm messing around like this lawyer.

Law - emptied of any aspirations I thought I could attain to; loving God and my neighbor.

But we have a hope. I want to go back again to

The law says, love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Actually, love your neighbor and you'll fulfill the whole law.

Page 62 OBATHOTC. You should love me. it's right, holy true and good, but you can't bring about what it demands. Love is patient, have you ever been impatient? Kind, above all, it doesn't seek its own. Stop and think of your life. Who is important to you? Thesis 28 - the love of God.

THESIS 28 - loves sinners, evil person, fools and weaklings, in order to make them.

Luther says your neighbor is the most beautiful thing there is.

Steven Hein: It's a heresy that one must behave in certain ways in order to ... the law is put forth as the final word to sinners under that heresy. The heresy first continually arises in the

human heart...in every age and in every person. Why? The Christian's heart and mind lose track of the scriptural paradox. righteousness, and is utterly incapable of producing righteousness. God's intention...not to provide a means to pursue righteousness, but rather to provide a means...drive the sinner to a holy cross. At the cross you find true righteousness...upon your own unrighteousness...pursuit of righteousness. unrighteousness is covered by the blood of Christ. The cross, you believe what Christ has accomplished for you...great exchange which God worked.. describes and commands righteousness. Christ produces it. Luther rightly calls you tonight not to do much, but to believe much which gives all righteousness to you.

This is a description of how law works. It can't do what it is commanding. "Well, I knew that."

Couple of more quotes from his comments on this Thesis.

The law says, Do this and it is never done. grace says believe and everything is already done. Nagging realization of what we ought...Here's the problem, that we are not the people we ought to be, living as we ought to live.

The more I have that nagging realization, it absolutely drives me to Jesus. It continually drives me to Christ. The more I'm tormented by that nagging realization... My confession: He's the last place I want to go. Where do you go? Anywhere but there. I go inward. I go outward. The nagging realization that I'm not what I ought to be drives me. This is law.

And we hear from none other than God himself about how people are to we aren't we don't and we can't. We aren't living that way, we don't live that way, and we can't live that way (THESIS 26) Alarmingly we note that as time passes, the realization...nor do we get any sense that we are improving. As a matter of fact, it seems like..

You're just more aware of it. Don't think you're weird.

Have you not improved in the last year..

Alarmingly the realization of this does not go away... Nor do we get any sense that we are improving. Nor do we get any sense that we are ...continue to talk the talk. As would-be citizens of the Kingdom of God. What are we to make of this?

What's your mind going to be on from Tuesday to Thursday.

We seem stuck and powerless to walk the walk, although we continue to talk the talk...the devil thinks this is just wonderful, that you keep thinking about it. He continually uses this realization to destroy our sense of confidence and security of our being okay with God and he wants us to deal with our insecurity in two ways, 1) whether we are really so bad off in our doings (I do some good things, but I'm like any other Christian), or he wants to question whether God has really included us in his solution in Christ. "It doesn't seem that way. I haven't improved in 20 years." Whether we need only the righteousness of Christ, or...Our instruction take us on a journey in and to the cross.

We're really on a path in, not just to the cross. In the cross we partake of Christ's sufferings.

Luther was convinced. The only way we are to have our peace...savior Jesus Christ. When all is said and done, there is always more to do under the law. In our previous meditations we have explored...discovering what the law has revealed about us...when both are seen apart.. the law does not help us but hinders us in our righteousness.

The better we are, the worse it is. We are sanctified in Christ. The more successful you are at outward righteousness, the more you defend yourself against the gift. God refuses to relate to us as anything other than the giver of the gift. If you're the delivery system, I don't like the postal service, the system he delivers his message in, earthen vessels, sinners. Perhaps if you were more pious I could receive from you. It does sound illogical, doesn't it.

The law reveals that our works, especially our dead works...we have also seen that we may learn in the law what righteous works are...to do what is in us is to sin. The news is certainly bad enough...neither Luther nor God's law stops here...paradox this evening whiches to illuminate. The law presents demands...any kind of the works that are required. Say you did a certain thing and you actually achieved it, the law demands that you do it again, and again, and again., forever. The law demands and it is never done, even if you do it perfectly, which you haven't and you know it, the law demands more and more. When all is said and done there is always more to do.. We get it, though. The law doesn't simply demand that we achieve...but that we continue to maintain it through works...forever. Therefore one thing is perfectly clear, anytime before forever we are not yet righteousness, according to law.

Now, put it this way, if these are the demands If that's the case, then it's impossible. This is just what the depth of the law intends to reveal. it is simply an impossible task.

No one here is saying they'll go to India to do a work.

Our works are not good enough. our will and our resolve is not good enough. When all is said and done..fresh set of demands forever.

When all is said and done there is always more to do...this death is seen and experienced in the realization and the impact..demand to do it forever. This cause of impossibility has been planned by God through the law, right from the start. dimension of the cross where we discover a gracious God who freely gives...another paradox of the gospel.

Now, Christ comes to the cross as our champion. he has fulfilled all the demands of the law..suffered and died...in the cross, Jesus says this, "now, believe this, I have perfectly fulfilled all the demands of the law for you, and I give you all my forever works, forever. All that I have fulfilled, I give my forever works to you. I have also atoned for your guilt and sins...righteous. believe this and everything is already done. There is nothing left that you must do. Here is the life of the cross that comes out of death. This life of righteousness now possessed and lived through faith, just think about the things you can now do. You can now rest. take the obligations of the law with their forever demands and trash them. There is nothing left God demands you to do. All that is needed for you to secure total happiness forever. There is one thing left to do. that which you simply want to do.

What if you had parents who loved you and raised you and laid down their life for you, and then you said you'd go and rob banks. If you want to do that, there is a place in this life. I don't think that is what you'd want to do.

Until we see ourselves as the 460 lb. wife, with balding hair, green teeth, haven't taken a bath in a month, and we think he's pursuing us and we're playing hard to get. You men need to know that that's what you look like in the flesh, before God You have ravished my heart. It's your balding head and unbrushed teeth and the fact that you have not, taken a bath in a month. This is what Adam has fallen to, and it's a bad attempt at describing it.

Christ died for the ungodly, while we were enemies. When he died and purchased us he zapped us. He will bring it to pass. This is the truth

Now, what would you like to do, now that you don't have to do anything.

do this and it is never done; believe this and it is already done.

Thesis 27 is about the works of Christ that you don't have to do and you cannot do, and you don't do, because when he takes you, he takes you into baptism into his death, and there is

nothing left of you to do anything.

What can we say to this? He becomes the operative power in all that we do.

Thesis 27 - we are aroused to work through living faith in Christ's work, not our own works. When we see his work, we are moved to imitate them.

We are moved. It is not our own sweaty thing. Deeds of mercy are aroused in us. What does this mean?

Some people get a terrible idea that good works are bad and God doesn't like them. They are lovely, and they are the works of Christ. All our work is as filthy rags. This is true because our works always have a self-motive, a hidden agenda in them. But the works of Christ are altogether beautiful, and when he marries you, you are one. If you saw someone purchased like that, and made beautiful, given everything, no need to strive anymore, or be impatient anymore. Your life is hid with Christ. You aren't. It is no longer you. Your life is now hid. Outwardly you appear to the world as sinners. Not that they're wrong; they just don't know how right they are because they don't know who killed Jesus. They mess with petty sins, because they're afraid of going to the root because they might be implicated in the crucifixion.

He shows us that we are really an undeserving bride, playing hard to get.

The exceedingly attractive works of Christ are given to us, the undeserving, (the bride with green teeth). So his first work through the law is to make us undeserving. (we still think we're deserving of something, and that is pride. I have this because I earned it. The fact that I'm not a miserable wretch today is from what I did) He makes us poor by his unmerited favor.

This is why the catechism starts with the 10 commandments.

We think naturally...relate to us as though you owe us something today. But God refuses to relate to anyone in that way. He insists on relating to us as the giver.

Two men - not one man. Aren't you glad you're beginning to view all of scripture through law and gospel. I can't, he has. Don't worry about actually seeing it come about. I can't even look at anyone in this building today and judge them by their fruits. The results aren't ours either. We do not know. Look at all the people God has blessed, that you think he shouldn't have.

How many of my prayers have been to me, God. He can't answer my prayers because I don't have the ability to give me what I want. Not only that, they're crazy prayers. Imagine if your

prayers had been answered.

Luke 18:10-11 (KJV)

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. [11] The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Prayer, communion with God, sacrament of communion. What is on your mind and heart all the time? What you're not doing? What you've never done enough of; the demands of the law? Where do you go? Flee to Jesus. The law demands and it is never finished because it is forever, forever and forever, even if you've had some luck to do it once.

Luke 18:11 (KJV)

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Extortioners start demanding that you give them their way, or they will leave. Like I was telling certain people in business, if you don't like doing what you're doing, why are you here? I like to entitle a sermon, What are you doing here? Did you come to inspect today or be a bird-watcher or fruit inspector? How am I doing? What a joke. It's a very small thing, and it should be to each of us, what men think of us. Woe if men think well of you. How did you trick them? Were you crafty and smooth? Who is going to think well of anyone who repeats this gospel. No one in the world can. They might think you're a good guy and don't cheat them. But if it really got down to law and gospel, they are filled with blame.

In the United States, people are provoking rejection, doing wild things so you'll reject them and then they can blame you and prove that you really don't love them. "You're not expected to eat rancid meat," like C.S. Lewis said. There are some people's worlds, minds, that are so small they only think of themselves. The crack is so small you can't fit in it. They have insight that other people don't have and they do. They have a lot of insight that you don't want to have because their insight will torment them. Remember, it's still the tree of knowledge.

Before you go up to the temple to pray and say that you're not like them, remember your teeth. You were his enemy when he died for you.

Who here has not been an extortioner? Wives, husbands, children, have you extorted to get something?

Luke 18:11-13 (KJV)

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. [12] I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. [13] And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Or, he could have been saying, "Oh, almighty God, merciful Father, ...justly deserve temporal and eternal but i am heartily sorry for them."

Because of Christ I can repent. It's nothing i can work up.

and I pray for they boundless mercy and the holy, bitter sufferings and death of they bloved son...a poor miserable being.

DO you relate to God this way, or seek to bring before him some reputation you might have?

Merciful Father, because of what I've done you owe me and I should be in charhge of teh way you think and you should really bow down to what I request.

To answer the question, was a death

Maybe who you love has problems. Where do you go? Some parents have been brought to their knees? Maybe one of your chidlren is an extortioners. I can say, "Don't do that," and that is a continual law, forever, forever, and ever.

If you were to believe Jesus today, it is finished.

Psalm 54:1 Sing Oh Barren. You feel like you've been in January for 10 years, sing. You who are desolate will have more fruit. Who would sing? Those who are not trusing in themselves; those God has brought to trust Him.

Inconceivable

Stand fast in the liberty. You've been called to a Jubilee for the rest of your life. No one can make any charge stick, because tomorrow's debts are forgiven. Like our true brethren know, they'r enot saying, I've really gotten a lot better and hav eimproved, they believe it's not 50/50. Simul iustus et peccator is 100 totally depraved - the flesh ther eis nothing good in me,

But then we look to Jeuss. It's far greater than what we didn't do.

Hallelujah, Sing to Jesus! Flee to him from day to day. If you'r elike me, you might not be able to go a whole day. It is good to hear the Wor don a Sunday.

Christ has fulfilled the law and imputed, accredited every dot and tittle of every law tha the kept, to you, deposited it into your account.

Page 62 oBATHOTC. Once he humbles us, and the utlimate humbling is to love someone, not you made a big fool of yourself in front of everyone, but when you love someone it breaks your heart, so don't give up on anyone. You need that brokenness because that is wehre Jesus shows up, it's your cross to bear

This love brings you to improverishment. Isn't it rediculous to say that you have to love the chidlren God's given you? Try not to love them?

Thesis 28 - the love of God that lives in man, loves sinners, evil persons, fools and weakings.

The love of God that lives in man loves me, and me, and me, and me, to make me righteous, good, wise and strong. The love of God lves - the chosen. If we can't admit it about us now, not that we used to be that way,

God really loves people who are kind, courteous, wise, etc. He really does love all of that.

Thsi is love born of the ross that turns int he direction where it does not find good, and confers good on bad and needy people. No longer imputing our sins to us, throws them into a sea of forgetfulness, and says, not only do I forgive you.

I forgive you of all your sins, you who hear this today, all of your sins have been forgiven for Christ's sake, and not only that, the unspeakable gift that he has accredited to you all the works of Christ that he did that fulfilled every law forever, is now in your account. If I sow to the flesh, I reap in this world, and it is a good thing. To some little degree, in this life, we do grow to where we want to love our neighbor, in business or in family, because there are consequences down here on earth. I don't think this is a wrong way to think.

If I seem repetitious, I am. God has accredited to your account, now all the righteousness of Christ. You are the righteousness of God. NO amoutn of reasoning helps. But what will help is people who are judging you, at one point, might love someone and that wuld be a good thing. When you love someone all bets are off. You will come to the end of your own

sufficiency. Whoever you love, they will be a sinner. You will want to bring them, lead them, to the love of Christ that dwells in man, that is, in you. The more you meditate on the truth that all that Christ has done, every dot and tittle of every law has been fulfilled in Him, and he's given you this gift. He calls you, by faith, Children of God, inheritors, no longer slaves but heirs and joint heirs of every promise, which includes all the righteous deeds and laws Christ has kept, and has accredited that to you.

AMEN

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 11/19/06

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)

Hebrews 3:12 (KJV) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

What would a hard heart look like? It would look like mine, before the Lord; my heart entrenched in my thing - turned inward. "Everything is here for me to judge today." Perhaps you're here to judge me today. Perhaps you'll approve of what I say, or perhaps you'll be indifferent towards it. What would a hard heart look like? It's an evil heart of unbelief. We're in a war. This is just a fact. Winter has hardly begun and how many of you are looking forward to Spring? You're deceived. Dec. 21 is my happiest day. Because, as the poem says, "If this is winter, can Spring be far away?" When there's still some fruit on the trees, we start hoping. The birdies in the trees praise him, and the angels sing along. So, why shouldn't we praise him? Birds don't sing so loud when it's raining. Have you heard them in Spring? You could have Jesus in your heart. And though there are seasons, you'll always have the resurrection in your heart. Jesus is the resurrection. We become hard and cynical. Honest doubt can be a very good thing. "Wait a minute, Lord. What about this?" Job had some honest doubts, and he was still a sinner.

Hebrews 3:13 (KJV) But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Without a continual exhortation, proclamation, common grace, or mutual conversation going on, where you are being fed? Where is there left to go but inside your own brain.

"I don't have any need to hear you - to receive from you - to partake of the sacraments. I'm doing alright." If you look at the earthly realm, there are millions of people doing alright, but it

doesn't mean they have the fruit of the Spirit. It just means that they are doing alright by earthly standards. But it is all vanity. They think getting a cheeseburger or watching the Seahawks win will help, but no it won't. You'll still be empty.

Be aware of how quickly that can sneak up on you. Before you know it, you no longer relate as brothers or sisters. Now, they're just people you judge, people who are weird, and you are separated from them. This is sin. And if it's not being taken care of by the blood of Jesus we'll just have to do it ourselves; be a little wiser, or smarter, or get a name the world can give us, or a name the worldliness of the church can give us. Jesus told us to condescend to men of low esteem. "I'd rather condescend to men of high esteem, those who can help me out."

Philip. 2:5-8 (KJV) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: [6] Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: [7] But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: [8] And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Reputation - thing we strive for our entire life. Pharisees are those who love the praise of men more than the praise of God. "Who me, I don't want the approval of men." Yes you do, if you don't believe you have the approval of God, which is not based on merit or anything you or I could do, but on what He has chosen to do.

Parents love their small infants. What did they do to deserve that love? Nothing. If anything, they are a problem and they cause their parents suffering. When our children are suffering, it causes us to suffer. They are loved. "Well, I'll love you as long as you don't get the flu, or cry at night."

The first thing we empty ourselves of is reputation - the glory that comes from men, even men in this church. We don't fellowship on that basis; we fellowship as sinners. Seeking the glory that comes from men can come from a hard heart. God has to let us know there are still consequences for sin. Not in the heavenly realm, where we are eschatologically seated with Christ Jesus and are perfect, but in this earthly realm. How did you do with loving your neighbor last week? Will you try a little harder? The root of sin is, "I will try. I can do this."

Here comes a very bad man, though he is successful according to the world. He doesn't know it, though.

Luke 10:25 (KJV) And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He's a "certain lawyer", a certain debater, a certain theologian. We all are theologians of one thing or another. This is just a shorthand way of saying something about us. This guy reminds me of Don. He tempted the Master. There's something to see there. Why would they use the word tempted. Jesus is already onto his question. He knows what's in man. He's already been tempted by the devil; prove it, make bread out of rocks, throw yourself off the pinnacle. You become ashamed of God's Word, or ashamed of one another. We have actual sinners in this church. "You've got nothing on me, sinner." I'm saying this because it is true. Look at your heart outside of Christ, but don't stay there too long, flee to Jesus. Look what Jesus does. When people start tempting you and asking you certain questions, there might be some other things you'd like to say, but you're Christians,

Knowing Jesus loves this young man:

Luke 10:26-27 (KJV) He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? [27] And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

ALL - means all. You want to get to heaven; you can get to heaven by keeping the law. Yes you can. Imagine loving the Lord with all of your mind. What would that mean to you? Look how stubbornly you refuse to even hear this question. Pride - it's just pride. All that is in the world is pride, pride that comes before destruction and causes contentions and separations in your lives every day. I've got my robe on. It's has saved my life many times. You can't shoot through it; it's bullet-proof. If I take it off, I'm just one of the boys. Let the robe speak, through the grace of God.

See this question? Have you ever loved the Lord with all of your mind? Here is the law for you. Have you ever approached God on that basis? If you want to approach God on the basis of law, when was the last time you judged someone for not measuring up to something or someone? You are right. How many of you have valued being right more than having peace? Peace is of a higher commodity than being right. It was only that I thought I was right. If you could get everybody in the church to agree on just one thing, what would that be? The answer to who killed Jesus. The deniers are still judging. They still think they're not as bad as the woman caught in adultery or Peter denying the Lord. Even though Keith Greene was into a

little legal stuff with Finney, I still like the line, "I bet I could deny you too." With all he knew, he had to come to the conclusion that there is nothing good in the flesh. If you don't have a flesh, disregard that - pay it no mind.

But, speaking of mind. Contrast that mind; loving the Lord with all your mind, your thoughts continually before the lord, unto the Lord, with "Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, he emptied his mind and he emptied his reputation. What's the highest attainment you had for your reputation, before you got here? It's a game, a facade. What do you mean by here? Well, look around. How could you have been so bad as to end up here? It had to be the Lord who brought you here. If you had a brain in your head you'd be 1000 miles from here. Look who is here? The only ones that are here have nowhere to go.

You may have another law in your members that allows you a legion of places you can run to when suffering and the cross come into your life.

Paul said the mind of Christ is the mind that empties itself of reputation. This attorney is messing with the Master.

Luke 10:26-27 (KJV) He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? [27] And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Just to bring it down to earth: Love your neighbor the same way you love yourself. Okay, anything else? Now the hilarity of the Gospel is that you can't and he has. If you want to give the law a shot, go head. But bear in mind, if you don't love your neighbor, according to this, considering the two realms - in heaven perfect, but down on earth where we live daily - there are consequences for not loving our neighbors, our wives, our children, our parents. Our vocations are where we get to do that. In a family you get to do that; love your neighbor as yourself. You have a boss or clients? You get to love them as you love yourself. If you fall short in that, there are consequences. Maybe you have your scene together where you can just hide. There are still consequences.

Here is the root of his theological questioning.

Luke 10:28-29 (KJV)

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. [29] But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

"I'm going to take the rabbi on. After all, I'm a lawyer. "Bless God; I'm not like that guy." Oswald Chambers said there are only two men in the Bible, Adam and Jesus, which is another shorthand way of telling us something. How many of you heard that same thing 20 years ago. Did you take it to heart? You could right now.

Jesus, loving this man, tells him a story. You may not wake up in the story until next month. This is the thing about Hebrew stories - you may not wake up until 10 years from now, but it goes in. Stories - you are defined by the story in the Bible. Have you been listening to another story?

Luke 10:30-32 (KJV) And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. [31] And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. [32] And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

Levites were priests and lawyers, practiced in the law. They knew every dot and tittle and wore the law on their foreheads.

Luke 10:33 (KJV) But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

This always has to play in our hearts today. Who do you think a Samaritan is today? Samaritan - mixture.

Luke 10:34-37 (KJV) And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [35] And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. [36] Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? [37] And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Luke 10:36 (KJV) Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

Are you the man who fell among thieves? We all fell among thieves. Satan is a thief, a liar and a murderer. Jesus fell among them too. Aren't you glad that he became a Samaritan for you? He can become any one of the characters, and so can you. On any given day, it changes. You can become the Levite who just knows a lot. That will only tend to pride. We've heard the Word. Humility is a passive work. God resists the proud. That means one of me he resists. When that one is ascending, God is resisting that. Even you resist it when you see someone who is blatantly proud. You may not even have a story to tell them, except, "Okay, do it your way."

Imagine this proud lawyer and where he is at now. Since you're so proud, why don't you just go and do likewise?

Luke 10:37 (KJV) And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

This is what he does with me when I'm messing around like this lawyer.

Law - emptied of any aspirations I thought I could attain to; loving God and my neighbor. But we have a hope.

The law says, love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Actually, love your neighbor and you'll fulfill the whole law.

Page 62 OBATHOTC. You should love me. It's right, holy true and good, but you can't bring about what it demands. Love is patient, have you ever been impatient? Love is kind. Above all, it doesn't seek its own. Stop and think of your life. Who is important to you? Thesis 28 - the love of God.

THESIS 28 – the love of God in man loves sinners, evil person, fools and weaklings, in order to make them. Luther says your neighbor is the most beautiful thing there is.

STEVEN HEIN: Here is the sign that the heresy that one must behave in certain ways in order to pursue and attain righteousness before God: the Gospel is not allowed to be God's final word to sinners, but instead the Law is put forth, after the preaching of the Gospel, as a method to pursue and attain righteousness before God.

This heresy first and continually arises in the human heart and mind, in every age, and in every person. Dr. Luther called it the "opinio legis," "the understanding shaped by the Law." The Christian's heart and mind lose track of the Scriptural paradox that the Law that describes righteousness and commands righteousness is utterly incapable of producing righteousness.

Here is life from the cross that comes out of the death — Christ's and ours. In this life of righteousness now possessed and lived with through faith, just think about all the things you can now do. You can stop working to please God. You can rest. You can take the obligations of the Law with all of their forever demands and tear them up, give them the deep six. Trash them! Its over for the Law...there is nothing left that God demands you to do. You are free from this curse. And in the Gospel where faith receives from Christ all that is needed to secure total righteousness, favor with God and the happy forever — there is only one thing left to do....that which you simply want to do.

What if you had parents who loved you and raised you and laid down their life for you, and then you said you'd go and rob banks. I don't think that is what you'd want to do.

We can see ourselves as the 460 lb. wife, with balding hair, green teeth, and who hasn't taken a bath in a month, and we think he's pursuing us and we're playing hard to get. You men need to know that that's what you look like in the flesh, before God. You have ravished my heart and it's because of your balding head and un-brushed teeth and the fact that you haven't taken a bath in a month. This is what Adam has fallen to, and it's a bad attempt at describing it. Christ died for the ungodly, while we were enemies. When he died and purchased us he zapped us. He will bring it to pass. This is the truth

Now, what would you like to do, now that you don't have to do anything?

Thesis 26: The law says, “do this,” and it is never done. Grace says, “believe in this,” and everything is already done.

Thesis 27 is about the works of Christ that you don't have to do and you cannot do, and you don't do, because when he takes you, he takes you into baptism into his death, and there is nothing left of you to do anything.

What can we say to this? He becomes the operative power in all that we do.

OBATHOTC, Thesis 27, Pg. III: “ The believer is “aroused” to work through living faith in Christ's work (not our own work), to be “imitators” of God. When we see his works, we are moved to imitate them.

We are moved. It is not our own sweaty thing. Deeds of mercy are aroused in us. What does this mean?

Some people get a terrible idea that good works are bad and God doesn't like them. They are lovely, and they are the works of Christ. All our works are as filthy rags. This is true because our works always have a self-motive, a hidden agenda in them. But the works of Christ are altogether beautiful, and when he marries you, you are one. You have been purchased, made beautiful, and given everything. There's no need to strive anymore, or be impatient anymore. Your life is hid with Christ. You aren't. It is no longer you. Your life is now hid. Outwardly you appear to the world as sinners. Not that they're wrong; they just don't know how right they are because they don't know who killed Jesus. They mess with petty sins because they're afraid of going to the root - they might be implicated.

He shows us that we are really an undeserving bride, playing hard to get.

The impetus to good works comes entirely from being moved, aroused, and motivated by the completed work of the Christ, who dwells in the believer through faith. Christ's work is the complete fulfillment of the commands of God and as such moves the faithful to works.

The exceedingly attractive works of Christ are given to us, the undeserving - the bride with green teeth. So his first work through the law is to make us undeserving. We still think we're deserving of something, and that is pride. I have this because I earned it. The fact that I'm not a miserable wretch today is from what I did. He makes us poor by his unmerited favor. This is why the catechism starts with the 10 commandments.

God insists on relating to us as the giver.

Two men - not one man. Aren't you glad you're beginning to view all of Scripture through law and gospel? I can't, he has. Don't worry about actually seeing it come about. I can't even look at anyone in this building today and judge them by their fruits. The results aren't ours either. We do not know. Look at all the people God has blessed and you think he shouldn't have.

How many of my prayers have been to me - God. I can't answer my prayers because I don't have the ability to give me what I want. Not only that, they're crazy prayers. Imagine what would have happened if your prayers had been answered.

Luke 18:10-11 (KJV) Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. [11] The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

What is on your mind and heart all the time? What you're not doing? What you've never done enough of – kept the demands of the law? Where do you go? Flee to Jesus. The law demands and it is never finished because it is forever, forever and forever, even if you've had some luck to do it once.

Luke 18:11 (KJV) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Extortioners start demanding that you give them their way, or they will leave. Like I was telling certain people in business, if you don't like doing what you're doing why are you here? I like to entitle a sermon, “What are you doing here?” Did you come to be a bird-watcher or fruit inspector? How am I doing? What a joke. It's a very small thing, and it should be to each of us, what men think of me. Woe if men think well of you. How did you trick them? Were you crafty and smooth? Who is going to think well of anyone who repeats this gospel. No one in the world can. They might think you're a good guy and won't cheat them. But if it really got down to law and gospel, they are filled with blame.

In the United States, people are provoking rejection, doing wild things so you'll reject them and then they can blame you and prove that you really don't love them. "You're not expected to eat rancid meat," like C.S. Lewis said. There are some people whose worlds, minds, are so small they only think of themselves. Their world, the crack, is so small you can't fit into it. They have insight that other people don't have. They have a lot of insight that you don't want to have because their insight will torment them. Remember, it's still the tree of knowledge.

Before you go up to the temple to pray and say that you're not like them, remember your teeth. You were his enemy when he died for you.

EXTORTIONER: One who practices extorting, especially money or other property.

Who here has not been an extortioner? Wives, husbands, children, have you extorted to get something?

Luke 18:11-13 (KJV) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. [12] I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. [13] And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Or, he could have been saying, Oh, almighty God, merciful Father...I justly deserve thy temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them. Because of Christ I can repent. It's nothing I can work up. And I pray thee of thy boundless mercy and the holy, bitter, innocent sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, thy beloved son, to be merciful to me, a poor miserable being. Do you relate to God this way, or do you seek to bring before him some reputation you might have, and pray, "Merciful Father, because of what I've done you owe me and I should be in charge of the way you think and you should really bow down to what I request?" To answer the question, was a death

Maybe those you love have problems. Where do you go? Some parents here have been brought to their knees? Maybe one of your children is an extortioner. I can say, "Don't do that," and that is a continual law, forever, forever, and ever.

If you were to believe Jesus today - it is finished.

Isa 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

You who feel like you've been in January for 10 years, sing. You who are desolate will have more fruit. Who would sing? Those who are not trusting in themselves; those God has brought to trust in Him.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Stand fast in the liberty. You've been called to a Jubilee for the rest of your life. No one can make any charge stick, because tomorrow's debts are forgiven. Like our true brethren know, they're not saying, "I've really gotten a lot better and have improved." They believe it's not 50/50. Simul iustus et peccator is 100% totally depraved - the flesh there is nothing good in me. But then we look to Jesus. It's far greater than what we didn't do.

Hallelujah, Sing to Jesus! Flee to him from day to day. If you're like me, you might not be able to go a whole day. It is good to hear the Word on a Sunday.

Christ has fulfilled the law and imputed, accredited every dot and tittle of every law that he kept, to you, deposited it into your account.

Page 62 OBATHOTC. Once he humbles us, (the ultimate humbling is to love someone, not you made a big fool of yourself in front of everyone) when you love someone it breaks your heart, so don't give up on anyone. You need that brokenness because that is where Jesus shows up; it's your cross to bear. This love brings you to impoverishment. Isn't it ridiculous to say that you have to love the children God's given you? Try not to love them?

Thesis 28 - the love of God that lives in man, loves sinners, evil persons, fools and weaklings.

The love of God that lives in man loves me, and me, and me, and me, to make me righteous, good, wise and strong. The love of God loves the chosen. If we can't admit it about us now, not that we used to be that way,

God really loves people who are kind, courteous, wise, etc. He really does love all of that.

This is love born of the cross that turns in the direction where it does not find good, and confers good on bad and needy people. No longer imputing our sins to us, he throws them into a sea of forgetfulness, and says I forgive you. I forgive you of all your sins, You who hear this today, all of your sins have been forgiven for Christ's sake, and not only that, I tell you of the unspeakable gift, that he has accredited to you all the works of Christ, that he fulfilled every law forever, and it's now in your account.

If I sow to the flesh, I reap in this world, and it is a good thing. To some little degree, in this life, we do grow to where we want to love our neighbor, in business or in family, because there are consequences down here on earth if we don't. I don't think this is a wrong way to think.

If I seem repetitious, I am. God has accredited to your account, now, all the righteousness of Christ. You are the righteousness of God. NO amount of reasoning helps. But what will help is people who are judging you, at one point, might love someone and that would be a good thing. When you love someone all bets are off. You will come to the end of your own sufficiency. Whoever you love, they will be a sinner. You will want to bring them, lead them, to the love of Christ that dwells in man, that is, in you. The more you meditate on the truth that all that Christ has done, every dot and tittle of every law has been fulfilled in Him, and he's given you this gift. He calls you, by faith, Children of God, inheritors, no longer slaves but heirs and joint heirs of every promise, which includes all the righteous deeds and laws Christ has kept, and has accredited all that to you.

AMEN

The Devil thinks that this is just wonderful. He continually uses this realization to destroy our sense of confidence and security in really being OK with God. And he wants us to deal with this insecurity in two ways: He wants us either to question whether we really are so bad off in our doing, or he wants us to question whether God has really included us in his solution in Christ. That is he wants us to question either whether we need only the righteousness of Christ or whether God really wants to give it to us. Our instruction in the Path of Righteousness has been designed to take us on a journey in and to the Cross.

We're really on a path in, not just to the cross. In the cross we partake of Christ's sufferings.

Luther was convinced that this is only way to acquire — and to keep — this confident security in the righteousness and free gift of salvation in Christ. It is the only way of having our hope and peace with God firmly anchored where it ought to be — in the gracious saving work and gifts of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I. When all is said and done, there is always more to do

In our previous meditations we have explored God's word of Law under Luther and St. Paul's able direction — discovering what that Law has revealed about us, and what it has revealed about God - when both are seen apart from the saving work of Christ. It has been emphasized that the Law does not help but hinders our righteousness.

The better we are, the worse it is. We are sanctified in Christ. The more successful you are at outward righteousness, the more you defend yourself against the gift. God refuses to relate to us as anything other than the giver of the gift. "If you're the delivery system, I don't like the postal service, the system he delivers his message in, earthen vessels, sinners. Perhaps if you were more pious I could receive from you." It does sound illogical, doesn't it?

It reveals that our works, and especially our best works are nothing but deadly sins, when offered to God for his approval of us. We have also seen that we may learn in the Law what righteous works are, but because of a bondage and corruption of the will, we cannot pull them off. To do what is in us to do, is to sin. This news is certainly bad enough to crucify us under the curse of the Law. But neither Luther, nor God's Law stop here. There is one further curse of the Law that our paradox this evening wishes to illuminate.

Now, put it this way, if these are the demands, if that's the case, then it's impossible. This is just what the depth of the law intends to reveal. It is simply an impossible task.

Now if it is put this way, if these are the demands — then we think - now if to be righteous by the Law requires a life of righteous works that have been performed forever — and we realize that forever never comes to an end — then we can see that finally obtaining the required works in order that we might become righteousness never comes to an end either. Well, if that is the case, then it is impossible. YES! And that is just what the depths of the Law intend to reveal. Righteousness, any way you want to look at it, according to the demands of the Law is simply an impossible task. Our works are not good enough, our will and resolve are not good enough.....and forever never arrives. When all is said and done — we never are! There will always be a tomorrow with its fresh set of demands in forever. The curse of the law is our sin — coupled with forever. With this final paradox in the Law — When all is said and done, there is always more to do — all who would be righteous (even we in the Church) are crucified and die to sin. And the death is both seen and experienced in the realization and impact of the magnitude of the impossibility of the demand do it forever! And this cross of impossibility has been planned by the God of the Law right from the start. It is this realized impossibility that He uses to take us to the other dimension of the Cross, where we discover the Gracious God who freely gives all that has been demanded in the Law in another paradox of the Gospel...

II. When all is believed, all is already done and there is nothing left to do.

SOURCE

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 11/19/06

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)