

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity: Luke 10:23–37

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Lord open our eyes and ears so that we may see and hear today. The servant of the Lord is blind - always knowing nothing as he or she ought.

Genesis 1:1-4 (KJV) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. [2] And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. [3] And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. [4] And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

God divides light from darkness. God says let there be something. God speaks.

Genesis 1:5-6 (KJV) And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. [6] And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

God speaks and things happen. He is speaking to us and things happen. His Word is alive. His story is alive. When the Word is spoken, God speaks it. When the story is told, proclaimed, and announced that is part of the creative debar of the Word of God. We always make it static until our ears are opened, and he does that for us. If He didn't open our ears, where would we be?

Meanings of the Word: It creates. It is a living word. It proclaims, announces and declares. It does something.

Many of you will hear a word today, but you'll hear nothing and I'll tell you why. You think the words are for you to understand, to interpret. You think the Word is for you to co-opt; to use to prop up your God-project to make you feel better. That is not what it is for. The Word is to separate the light from the darkness. It comes in two forms; Law and Gospel. If you're secure today and take sin lightly you will hear law. If you're wretched (mature) you'll say, "Feed me. I thirst and hunger."

So God separates. He divides darkness and light. Anyone who is in the church who is in darkness, they will either repent or leave. They will use Scripture to justify their leaving. It is a story.

Martha had a story. She preferred her story to hearing the Word of God, this morning.

You want to be happy? Go by a book by Robert Schuler on the Be-Happy-Attitudes, but you'll have to forget the Bible. "Blessed you are when men persecute you..." You've never persecuted anyone, and that's the problem. The problem is deafness.

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

What is a lawyer? How did he tempt Jesus? It is Satan's job to tempt Jesus. The lawyer had a high, exalted place. There were many Levites - lawyers. They loved the upper most seats.

Anytime you hear a question, be suspect. One of the things Satan or his cohorts do is to try to put God on the defensive. This man wants some glory, as we'll see. He wants to be recognized by everyone as being equal with the master. He wants to play a little chess game with Jesus. Who is the chess master? God. He plays the game because Jesus is want to play games with lawyers - he loves them. Jesus puts a question back at him: What is written in the Law? How readest thou?

I can see that I'm going to labor today. Everyone of you should be pregnant with the seed of the Word of God; ready to bring forth birth. She who is barren has more children, thousands of millions of children. The Messiah will come through her seed. All of the Messiah's seed, the grains of sand and the number of the stars will be Hannah's. Peninah's children won't even be mentioned, but Hannah's will. We don't even know half yet because we don't understand Hebrew, let alone Greek. I rejoice that you've hidden these things from the wise. Any wise here? These things are already hidden from you. How wise are you? How do you measure wisdom? How do you measure prosperity? Compared to Bill Gates, or Paul Allen, how wise are you? God has chosen the foolish things. Aren't you glad?

The lawyer knows some things: Luke 10:27-28 (KJV) 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. [28] And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Jesus congratulates him: Good move! Here is the definition of what a lawyer is. Luke 10:29 (KJV) But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

Have you known a lawyer between your ears? What are they willing to do? Justify themselves. How many times can you justify yourself - in one hour? People change the words. They deal in a metaphysical, mind story that ends in nothing. It's a Babylonian circle and their life is reduced to the ruts in the circle. I win, I win, I win, I win - you lose.

Luke 10:29 (KJV) But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? (Putting Jesus on the stand, in the Dock - on the defensive.) The Satanic principle is to put God on the defensive. Why would this be such an evil question?

Jesus, being the Rabi he is, launches into a story. He gives him no answer. Jesus can be talking to a lot of people when he's speaking to one person in the crowd, the disciples included, who are not much different than the Pharisees - I should know.

Luke 10:30 (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.

Jesus turns the whole story around in the last line: Luke 10:36-37 (KJV) 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.

Was the Samaritan someone who was not even on your radar screen - someone you've hated your whole life? The Samaritan is the one that showed mercy. It is simple, go and do likewise. There is not one word of Gospel in this story. It is all law. To those who are legal, lawyers, this is all they will ever get from Jesus. Those who try to get more knowledge to justify themselves, to get glory from what they know, to avoid the cross, all they get is law. The mercy of God is shown in his law. This man is comfortable. He doesn't know he has any sin and doesn't want to know.

Martha and the lawyer are the same. They are always wrapped up in some doing. The older brother is doing things, and where does all his doing end up? Anger and hate. He knows a lot. He knows what he's been doing that nobody sees or gives him any credit for. The younger brother gets the Joseph coat. Anyone you know got a Joseph coat this week? What if Peter came up and gave glory to God for making a sale, making \$20,000 this week, what would

people think? We are inveterate theologians of glory. The only thing that can show us this is law. The law increases sin. If the law increases sin, what conclusion can you draw from this?

We could have a reader board out front that says, "Come - have your sin increased." You see how crazy it is? "Come hate God so you can receive the gospel." We are wacko. We are the foolishness - of God. Myself, I'm a nice guy. I don't want to bother anyone ever.

God has to hide things from the wise man. He throws the question back, "What is written." He was willing to justify himself, which means to regard yourself as innocent. He wants to regard himself as innocent. You can go the other way and start boasting in your sin. That's worse. This guy loves works and knowledge - anything but the cross. So he keeps Jesus at a distance and thinks he can keep the law at a distance, but you can't. The law is given. The law is hated. The Word is hated. Jesus is the story. When you love his name, you love his name in Scripture, which is the Word of God. The cross starts in Genesis and goes through to Revelation. The Old Testament is Cruciform.

Martha - I'll stay busy and then I can accuse him who is standing right in front of me. Some people get sick so they don't have to hear the truth. People like to think about their body a lot. "God's punishing you. You're reaping where you sow." Thank you, Job's friends. A lot of suffering does come this way. Jesus goes around making people whole - healing lepers. He healed 10 of them and 9 weren't thankful. Maybe they just thought Vitamin C did it. Jesus is a friend that washes. The Word is quick and powerful, and it gets at your poison, my poison; the pus within the wound. The wound has to be lanced. The Word cuts to the point where we crucified him. He heals us. He heals demoniacs. He casts out devils. He is accused all the time. "This man eats with publicans and sinners."

For Jane and Chris' wedding, I've been asked to preach on having friends. Some of you don't have many friends because you're righteous. You sit in judgment on other people. Sinners in this church have a lot of friends and they are laughing all the time. I heard someone in another church said of us, "They never laugh over there." That's pretty funny. The guy is abominably serious and thinks everyone is like him. The accuser works. He has been cast down. What a bummer your life must be, dying all the time when you could just be dead - dead to the fear of man, dead to the fear of death (the only people who are fearing death aren't dead).

This man heard everything as something to justify himself. "I'm saved. I'm a Son of God. I'm under the Blood. I'm free to do what I want." The wrath of God is revealed against all sin.

What a man sows in this life he will reap.

Romans 3:21-28 (KJV) But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; [22] Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: [23] For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [24] Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: [25] Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; [26] To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. [27] Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. [28] Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Romans 3:31 (KJV) Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

If grace abounds, why don't we sin all the more? This is a wicked question, but you are free. I don't think you have to do any outward things to sin. Some children in this church think that because they don't do some outward things people in this world do, that they are righteous. You're free to go stick your nose in a meat slicer if you want. You're free to sin. But there is no such thing as sinning without reaping. The wages of sin is death, even for the hidden sins men do that they don't confess.

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.

We become the slaves of sin. He prayed to himself and he thanked his own god that he was not like other men. How many here pray this prayer? The main reason for broken fellowship is righteousness - righteousness of the law, the things we don't do. "I don't smoke. I don't go to all night parties." We think these distinguish us from other sinners.

Every story is a world. The Pharisees have a story: What is good is doing what we say. The only problem was, they perverted the Word of God. They would tell people to keep the Sabbath, and when a man was healed on the Sabbath they accused Jesus of breaking the law. You close up the Kingdom of God to man and won't go in yourselves. One of the best way to distinguish yourself from other sinners is thanking God you don't distinguish yourself from other sinners. You, unlike others, look on the cares of the poor and needy. You preach the

gospel to anyone, and not the law, and you justify the ungodly. How easy it is to get into a place where you think: Thank you God I'm not judgmental like other men. You're judging all other men in this very thought.

Who proved to be the neighbor? Checkmate! Wishing to justify himself

Romans 1:22-23 (KJV) Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, [23] And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

You have some knowledge, some wisdom. You've got a congregation of one. Who do you praise for knowing so much? This is a work.

America is debased - down to some outward bodily show. You judge it. Look at your Bible. They are selling out.

Romans 1:24 (KJV) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Did he tell them, "Adam was your father and your environment is so messed up that obviously you'd become perverted in your thought life?" No.

Romans 1:24-26 (KJV) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: [25] Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. [26] For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

Have you seen it? The lust for images. They just want to see images. God gave them up.

Isaiah 52:11 (KJV) Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.

Have no more abominations in the imagery of your mind. Christ will give you his min, He'll exchange your mind for His.

Isaiah 52:12-15 (KJV) For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.

[13] Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

[14] As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: [15] So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

The law is given to shut every mouth, that the defensiveness of men, the self-justification of men, the blame of men, would be stopped.

This is a story - a poem. It is a true epic. It is what C.S. Lewis might call a true myth. When the Jews read this, what did they hear? What is God's Word about, ultimately? There is an event happening here, part of the Christ event happening here. It is a literary language - a language becomes an event by creating an alternative world. You can objectify the Word of God, but you get nothing. If you're looking find evil in me, or to look for something you can trap me in, you are not hearing. You are in Matthew 13 again, the parable of the sower. The seed falls on rocks, cares of the world, weeds that choke, and the deceitfulness of riches (none of you have to worry about this yet, unless you're judging the people down on 4th street, and then this is you).

Hearing, they hear not because their hearts are waxed gross (Mt. 13:13-15), covered over with cares. Their hearts are rocky and hard because of what they think they know that is worthless and doesn't bring peace to their life. It brings more separation and less friends. The ironic thing - when you meet people that judge you, they don't know they're judging you because they're totally depraved. You have to play along with it. If you don't believe me, read Romans 1. The reason you don't hear it, is because you have the pronouns all mixed up. It is a story - a language event that creates an alternative world and defying your conventional way of thinking you've fallen into, if it penetrates. When you begin to exalt your sins above God's gift, the Word will be choked.

C. S. Lewis speaks about crossing the frontiers in the language event. The parables are all of an event that is taking place inside the reader. Your life has been boxed in. You're never going to get out of this. You're a Williams. You're a Keen. You're a Scamman. What story have you bought into? Other stories enslave, according to Hebrew.

The language brings in new horizons. It doesn't happen over night that you abandon your world. It takes a little time to get the story in you. After 20 years, I've seen people with the

same old rotten story of how it is someone else's fault that they don't have something. Only God can break through that. This kind of story needs law. They think they're righteous. If you don't have peace, joy, or friends, it is someone else's fault. Who here would actually admit that you've been blaming? If you confess your sins he immediately forgives you and brings you into a new story. You don't have to crawl on nails or anything. With the mouth confession is made. A real confession may not be eloquent, it may be tears. "Oh, I am sorry, Lord." It is the goodness of God that leads me to repentance.

Some of you here are defending your story right now against what is being said. Demons, the things that enslave people, start smelling death so they close their ears.

I am the Alpha and the Omega.

Page 60, Theology is for Proclamation: He comes to bring an end to our case.

If you're an animal, you are what you eat and all your physical functions. C.S. Lewis. The world is not comprised of atoms, but stories. Which stories you've been listening to have been shaping not just what you think but what moves and motivates you? We've got a story you've never, ever, ever, heard. Thank God! But He's willing to open our ears and our eyes as never before and give us new horizons.

What's the trick here? Something has got to change. It isn't going to be God's word. What has to change is this: Instead of you doing what you've always done, trying to use Scripture to justify yourself and putting a spin on it, you die to that and the Word, the Story interprets you.

What would you say about this Scripture? What are the pronouns? There is an "I", a "He" and a "They." How have you always interpreted this? Can you trust what you believe right now since that can be an interpretation? What's defining you and re-defining you - giving you a new horizon and enlarging the borders of your heart?

Deut 6 - Hear O' Israel. Deut 28 - These laws are for your good always. I don't think you want to sow to the flesh. I think you want to be led of the Spirit.

What world does this text create? It depends on what you hear. When you hear any story, it can make your story obsolete. If I watch "The Yearling" there is a language event. How is this shaping the way I think that I'm not even aware of?

Isaiah 53:1-2 (KJV) Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? [2] For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

We don't like a Messiah who isn't comely. We don't even like friends who aren't comely. Hosea - he takes the bride, a harlot, the church, and has children with her and gives them some weird names like Without Grace. I'm going to lure her into the wilderness so that she hungers and thirsts. At one point, the husks of our stories don't satisfy. They run out. You may have joined yourself to citizens of this world and their stories, but they bring no life. Idols have mouths but they can't talk, and ears but they can't hear. What have you been making your whole life? What is defining you? When you read the Word, what are you getting from it?

Who is HE and who is WE? Some people change the word WE into THEY. The Word separates darkness from light, even in me. DEBAR - arranges speech, subdues enemies, answers them, commands, declares, and destroys. It is mighty for the pulling down of vain imaginations (in Greek it is reasonings) vain image nations, images in the mind, and abominations in the mind. Most of the abominations in our mind are religious abominations of argument. "What do you think I should do?" You already know that, why tempt God? Basically, Martha is saying that God isn't doing enough for her. How many of you came here with a sagging god-project? How many of you were born here? When did you get indignant? When your need wasn't met.

Mary is a big sinner - she has to sit at Jesus feet. Martha is like the lawyer, justifying herself through her busy-ness, keeping her husband out of her life. He's useful from time to time, but that is about it. When he doesn't do what she wants indignation reaches its highest pitch. "You don't care." Look at the rest of the church just sitting there. There are churches in the land, where if you're expected to be involved every single day in some kind of activity, climbing the ladder. If you ever become somebody that God didn't make you, watch out. God made you fathers, and he's given you everything you need to care for your family. He's given you his Son, who is corporate. If you become a father in Israel, which is far greater than a pastor, your children are everyone's children. Then you will say, "I need help." Jesus always hears that cry of the heart.

My sheep hear my voice and you can hear the voice of the Lord. You may have been away in a far land for a while, but those things don't fill the heart, those justifications. The Word, when it is spoken, fills our heart. His sheep don't hear the word through their spin. The Word of God is many faceted. It isn't only allegorical; it is absolute on one level. It tears down strongholds.

Ebling: We do not get at the nature of words by asking what they contain, but by asking what the affect they have, what they set in motion. When you do the deed, the Word is the active one. The Word does exactly what God sets it forth to do. It will not return void. When you hear this, you usually hear, "I don't know about that. I've been in this church for 15 years and I haven't seen it done." It all depends on what you want the Word to do. Martha wanted the Word to accuse Mary, and it turned right around and accused her. Jesus loved Martha and the lawyer, and where does she live today? There are two in you. The Lord loves to heal us and he sends his Word, his stories to heal us.

What must I do? Do that. Who is my neighbor? My sheep hear my voice. Even if you hear the law, you're hearing his voice. The man who goes away sad hasn't heard. The law is too heavy. You just demand too much. What do you hear in the story of Isa 53?

The language of the story creates an alternative world for you to move into out of your old world of confining, fear, condemnation, and self-justification. The attorney was locked into the world of justifying himself which is futile. We want to be found not having a righteousness of our own. Isaiah was among the captives. The greatest freedom is to admit that you're a captive.

The debar, the story, creates worlds, forms worlds, and destroys worlds (perceptions) you have. This is where you exist as an historical person. When you hear the Scripture, the Story, another set of principles, values, relationships, perceptions confront you every time, unless your world is hard. You get to move out of the worlds of wrath into grace and the gospel. You are not defining the Scripture, the Scripture defines you.

Isaiah 53:3 (KJV) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Who rejects Jesus and why? Those who have god-projects and Jesus is not useful to their god-project. Martha -

Come, come, heal Lazarus.” Jesus waits around a couple of days. He was not enlisted in her god-project. Look at this story. Willamon - when you get this story forming you, you'll appear mad. Even Jesus' own family said he was beside himself - crazy. Familiarity: You think you've got me figured out and that is why you don't hear. Whether or not you can admit this is another story. You can't figure out anyone led of the Spirit. Jesus doesn't play all of his cards. He hides the rest of his cards from the wise. Surely thou art a god that hidest thyself.

Is your world obsolete then? If so, you can no longer say this is a parable or poem, but the Living Word. What matters is how it is active in you, what it does in you.

The text has primacy over the interpreter. The text, the story, gets its rightful place. He is Lord. Who is Lord? The Word of God.

Rev. 21: His name is the Word of God. Have you been trying to pierce the veil, trying to define and interpret Jesus Christ? Wrong basis. He interprets you. You're not deaf anymore? We generally filter everything through our lust, even our good lust, our desire, and we're blinded by what we want. God wants to put an end to us so that he can bring a beginning. He wants to bring an end to the shrunken, postage stamp size world we've lived in most of our life. You were born in it, but you're responsible.

The world destroying event takes precedence over us interpreters. What would happen to Scripture if you say, "All we like sheep," instead of "All they like sheep." When did you go astray? Every day. The one gives me trouble. The other is home free. Now I have go get on in this world and my relationships with you. I don't want to control you anymore. I was ignorant. How was I to know anymore than Paul? How were you to know?

Our problem is the good things we do. I don't know why that registered the way it did with me. It was so revolutionary in my life. It has been nine years and I've been re-evaluating everything in my life since then. We live in a Palagean, religious world. We are the people who it should be said of, "They talk funny," according to Willimon, who just got appointed as a Bishop. He's not puffed up about it. He'd say he's a mainline liberal Methodist Christian. He's standing in that liberal, mainline, Methodist tradition because God has him there. When he was on the Whitehorse Inn, they asked him if he was a Lutheran because he talked like one.

Isaiah 53:4-6 (KJV) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [5] But he was wounded for our

transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

We are to be interpreted by the Scripture. Any good literature will make a demand of you. Even good art and music will demand something of you if it's good. It demands a surrender in order to get the gift. To receive it you have to move out of the way.

Some people will come to critique Joe's Band. Some will come to say, "How come I'm not playing." It's simple - you didn't want to.

Phillips's interpretation was right for the Ethiopian. He had to apply the text that had a variety of meanings to it. If we allow the poem, the story, the Word of God, the parable to do its work freely in us, we receive the gift. This is being open. We used to be closed. What happens then? You would hear the Shepherd's voice. The Shepherd always wants to lead the sheep to still waters and green pastures. He wants to do that today.

How do you hear? Do you defend yourself against the text - the Word of God? A sin against the Holy Spirit could be despising the gift God has put in the Church. I have no need. They don't want to be found debtors to all men, but free. We are bond-slaves. Familiarity to someone deafens you to the Word that might come through them, and breeds contempt.

Luke 22:64-65 (KJV) And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? [65] And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

Who is the "they" in this story? He preaches the gospel to them. "If you were Abraham's seed, you wouldn't seek to kill me." Have you ever wanted to kill someone who was speaking to you? One man said to his pastor, "I'm going to take you out." I knew this was the Devil in the little bully.

This is an example of how happy they were when they heard the story:

Luke 4:17-19 (KJV) And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, [18] The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, [19] To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Unless someone opens up the scroll and the Holy Spirit expounds on it through a person, you don't know you're any of these things. Luther - outside word.

Luke 4:20-22 (KJV) And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. [21] And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. [22] And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

They were so dull, that church, they couldn't let the Word of Isa 61 just be. This culture has dumbed-down things so much. He had to expound on it and make the application, and they wanted to kill them.

Then he had to remind them of who the Scripture was talking about. It was them. They had no understanding of Law and Gospel. You're without excuse because you have an understanding of Law and Gospel and you can see that everything negative is about you and everything positive is about you. When you begin to see yourself in it you can see that you've been captive, you've been the attorney, you've been Martha - all the characters. There is a difference between looking at something and objectifying it, and becoming experientially what the Word says- the declaration, the creative debar. No longer are you a passive critic.

John 8:31 You seek to kill me because my Word has no place. Let every heart prepare a place for the Word. Let every heart prepare. He exposes the intents of their hearts because he loves them. He becomes a threat to my righteousness all the time. When the law comes, it is so that I would lose hope in my idol, myself. The law doesn't only come through me. It's everywhere, every day. If a man doesn't hear, the law becomes anfechtung, suffering, some of which is a result of our being at odds with God.

The law, according to Romans 5:

Romans 5:6 (KJV) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Who did Christ die for?

Romans 5:7-9 (KJV) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. [8] But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

We were justified by the blood, the cross. The theologian of glory doesn't want this. He wants to ask some questions. You mean I'm reduced to receiving a gift?

Romans 5:10 (KJV) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

The law increases sin, so that we can see our real state, our real story, so that the Word defines us. What you trust in, generally, is your own story, and you can keep on trusting in this another 10, 20 years. If you allow the Word, the Story to interpret you, define you, you will be surprised. Grace will be poured into your lips. The Word will be sent to heal. Hearing you will hear. Your heart will burn.

What do you trust in? What was the lawyer trusting in? What was Martha trusting in? What was Peter trusting in? What was I trusting in? This is the real issue. He is the Omega - the end - to all the strife and my attempts to control the future or anything or anyone. It is pointless.

Movie: People were trying to control this daughter. Her mother said to them, "What does it matter to you what she does? It's her business." You don't have to worry, they will reap. We're always fearful that we're going to look bad if someone does something wrong or stupid, particularly our children. Are you here? Are you among the captives?

What can stop your world from shrinking and enlarge the borders? A word that comes from your sinner friends. How many friends do you have in this church? Stop judging everyone like you usually do. Become the friend of sinners. You're not a friend of sinners if you're thinking evil of them. Mary sat at his feet. She needed forgiveness all the time.

The first work of God is law. 24 of the 28 theses are about law, your good works and my good works.

Who are you in the story, every story, since the world is made up not of atoms but of stories? From now on, you can read the story and it defines you, not your neighbor. It is about me, and it's about you, and if it's not, you're without hope and you have to go back to relying on what you think.

The revelation you got that I want to hear is how it is YOU the story is talking about.

Do you want to be proven right? This is what the lawyer wanted. How many people spend their whole life, like him, trying to prove they were right all along? Frank - he has something

on a chain jerking him. He's like the demoniac. Jesus binds the strong man in me.

All the Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, is given for our learning and admonition. So ask yourself, who is the man? How do I do that? The lawyer's heart was hard. It is hard for some people who are exalted to receive. God has chosen the foolish things. The wise and prudent go away empty. The full go away empty. What are they filled up with? Their own little story. Frank's story was a filling story; it filled his whole brain. This is a classic story C.S. Lewis is bringing to us. Frank was suspicious of everything Sarah said. When you've been up in the attic your whole life, no one can even fit into the little crack you call reality. It is reality, for you. It is a sad reality, though. There is a whole universe that is made up of all kinds of worlds. As many of those worlds you allow into your story; with their pains, sorrows, quirks, sins, and all, everything becomes open to you. You can't get it by study. We don't define any narrative, it has to define us.

Frank's story and any story like it ends up in anger and accusations against even Jesus.

Who is the "I", who is the "They", who is the "We", who is the "Us, and who is the "Me" in the story?

Luke 4 - they were happy. They heard the graciousness of his words but they didn't make the application that they were the ones in captivity, whose hearts were divided. They were the ones the scripture was talking about

Isaiah 52:1 (KJV) Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

This is you. You've been circumcised in his blood. Who is the Messiah? Jesus, the servant.

Isaiah 52:2-3 (KJV) Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. [3] For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

Isaiah 52:6 (KJV) Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

What is his name? The Word of God. Do you know his name? Not if you only have an abstraction. The word can impact you, if you allow it, but not in your own strength. The law comes to make me poor again. Hosea - I will take Jerusalem out into the wilderness. Some of

us don't believe that God can take us into a wilderness, dryness in our life. He'd rather you be cold than lukewarm. A person who is cold knows their need real quick. A lukewarm person just goes along with the program, outwardly.

Isaiah 52:6 (KJV) Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

The prophet is saying that they will know the Lord is speaking through him. The anointing will speak through him. You don't want to despise the anointing - Christ. It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me. I have been crucified. You have been crucified. On one hand, I don't have to die anymore because of how I fall short; I have been baptized into his death, into his body. Death has no more dominion. It is appointed to man to die once.

Isaiah 52:6-7 (KJV) Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

[7] How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Are you publishing? Is the debar in your mouth? The Gospel?

Isaiah 52:7 (KJV) How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Sometimes you look around you and wonder where God is. If God's in charge, why is all this happening? "Thy God Reigneth!"

Has your heart has been troubled, choked with cares? Have you been doing your own interpretations with your own spins? How many spins have you heard? How many excuses have you heard?

There is none good, no not one. None seeketh after me. That one of you has been crucified. Don't worry about your flesh; just let him do what He does. God loves the ungodly - He loves us.

They said of Jesus that he ate with sinners. Do you eat with sinners? Do they eat with you? We are to come as sinners and partake of the body and blood of Christ, and not unworthily not

properly discerning the Body of Christ.

Upon this your confession... How many of you have been like Martha and the lawyer? Just stop at the first commandment: Thou shalt love the Lord. Have no other gods before him, including ourselves.

Based on your confession, then I forgive you all of your sins. Are you in agreement?

Search our hearts, Lord. Search us and see if there is some hidden sin we're not aware of that is plaguing us, and wash us with the blood and with the Word. We confess to you our sins.

AMEN

SOURCE

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 3/26/06

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)