

Second Sunday in Lent: Matthew 15:21–28

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Capon's Book On Parables, The Parables of Judgment, Starting at Page 368

Verse 20: "For everyone who does evil (phaula, bad things, vile things) hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds be exposed." Out in the darkness of our unbelief, we fear God and we hate God. Because we will look only at our own ugliness and not at Jesus' gracious, transforming beauty, we keep ourselves from the one thing that can save us – that has in fact saved us, even though we will not trust it. But...

Verse 21: "...but he who does [____] comes to the light that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been done in God." As you can see, I have left out two words on purpose. What do you suppose they were? What is it that we all, sitting in the darkness with our phaula, our vile deeds, our evil, our ugliness, naturally assume Jesus to have said? Do not you, do not we all, bizarrely expect him to return, at the end of this rhapsody of gracious non-judgment, to the old bait-and switch offer of which we always suspected him? Are we not, in our guilt, fully prepared to hear him take back grace and reinstate law by saying, "but he who does the good comes to the light.."? But what does Jesus actually say? He says, "He who does the truth (ten altheian) comes to the light.."

Do you see what that means? It means that we can come to the light no matter what our deeds have been. We are not required to clean up our act beforehand, and we are certainly not required to submit proof that the act will stay clean henceforth and forever. We are only required to do the truth, to bring our ugliness out of the dark into the light and to let the absolving acceptance of Jesus shine upon it. And we are to do that precisely in order that it may be clearly seen – by us, please note, because it was we, not God, who were in the dark – that all our deeds, good and bad, were done in God. Even our sins were committed in the Light who lightens everyone. Even in the moment of their commission, they were absolved by that Light. And except for our fearful, groundless hatred of the Light, we could have seen that all along.

To which fact, every Christian worship service bears witness. Sunday after Sunday we come into church with the same list of tiresome sins: our lust, our laziness, our anger, our jealousy, our pride. And Sunday after Sunday we begin our worship by confessing them. Why? What is the real purpose of Christian confession? Is it to present them to a God who doesn't know about them, or to haggle over them with a God who might possibly be talked into forgiving them? No. It is only to bring them to the light of Jesus and to see clearly that they were forgiven all along. It is only (to put it in the startling terms of the Exultet, the old Latin proclamation sung on Easter Eve) to force ourselves to rejoice over our sin because it has become the occasion of his grace – to see it as a *felix culpa*, a happy fault – and to wash away the whole sorry history of the world's transgressions in the absolving blood of the Lamb. “O certe necessarium Adae peccatum,” the Exultet sings, “O certainly necessary sin of Adam,” “*quae talem et tantum meruit habere redemptorem*”: “which deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer.” We have always been home free, lightened even in the house of our sins by the Light of Light in whom they were all wrought. The only thing we do in confession is drag ourselves back in out of the dark that never was.

Let me end this chapter by delivering the third item I invoiced at the beginning, namely, verse 20 of chapter 3 of the Book of Revelation: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him; and I will have supper (*deipneso*) with him, and he with me.”

We have always been home free.

No man opens the door; he brings us.

Sunday after Sunday we confess what He already knows.

To be a Christian, truly a Christian is to live in forgiveness, much, much forgiveness. But if we hide our sins, we're not hiding them from Him, the Lamb who gave us his body and his blood. How ridiculously foolish it is to think that another body and blood could absolve us.

We receive not just bread, but the Word of God which is added to the bread and transforms it into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

You're not agitated are you? Why? It's all been made pointless. Look to the Lamb.

God which knows the hearts - purifying their hearts by faith.

Our hearts are purified by faith, not by acting pure.

Galatians 2:16 (KJV) Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

It is the faith of Jesus that purifies our hearts. He is our heavenly bridegroom and all that is his, has been given to us, including the wedding band of faith. You may not see it some days. That's what faith is.

Galatians 2:20 (KJV) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Faith is always the gift of God. Who shall we live then, those that live justified? They shall live by faith - trust.

Who trusts in a God who appears in opposites? Can he really be trusted? Can you trust a God like that? Is there anything else to trust?

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:3 (KJV) Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

On it goes - the whole chapter.

Hebrews 11:8 (KJV) By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Abraham obeyed, but the obedience didn't come first; faith did. Where did he go out from? (Gen 12) God called Abraham, and Abraham responded.

Genesis 12:1-2 (KJV) Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: [2] And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

God said he would make Abraham's name great. What does that mean today? His father was an idol worshipper. Confusion was there, a certain, Babylonian way of thinking - self-image, America, the worldly way of thinking. He was called to leave that. Abraham departed.

Hebrews 11:8 (KJV) By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

What would it mean that faith is the substance? What stands under a person, inside their heart, a supporting foundation upon which we build our life? Carnal man - sinners - have the substance of their life in the visible objects they can see, touch, catalogue, buy, exploit, cherish, destroy, or sell.

The Godly (faith) have their substance in the things that cannot be seen = wind - Holy Spirit, the breath of God we cannot see, but we know has been there - they build their life on promises, unsupported by empirical evidence - things that are seen - reasonable - logical.

Is that where your life is when you look at the situation you're in? How can I reason my way out of this situation or into another situation, or think my way, use my wits to get out. That is not faith, or trust. Perhaps we have to continually be brought to places - places where we would not know how to get to. If any man thinks he knows anything, he trusts in his knowledge - knowledge of good or knowledge are both the same - natural knowledge.

Believers build their life on promises, unsupported by empirical evidence (things seen) and probably contradicted by it.

We're like Abraham and can lose faith and try to work things out on our own, such as listening to Sarah and bringing forth an Ishmael. You think sin is outward, but all sin can be traced back to Genesis 3 - not trusting in God, and trusting in yourself. All other evils come out of that. "Hath God said?" Adam and Eve were very good. How did they get from very good, to being sinners? Oh happy fault of Adam's sin. It's a rough word - an explosive word. How much a person needs; I don't know. God shut the whole world and every human being under sin, that every mouth, every boasting mouth, every comparing mouth would be stopped.

How many of you have read Life by Drowning, by Bo Gertz? Luther, when he began to expound scripture, he was interested in you finding yourself in the story. We have got to find ourselves here.

Oswald Chambers - when I read him today through law and Gospel, it expounds.

Not Knowing Whither. When we hear the call of God, it's not for us to dispute with God. As long as we insist on having things expounded, the call, we will never answer. If we insist on explanations before... Jesus Christ says to follow him, but he never says where. He's calling today. Some of you he may have been calling for 30 years. I'm not here to be critical. I pray to God that you would get something today.

The consequences must be entirely his. We have nothing to do with what would happen if we obey. Faith means resignation to an unknown force.

We don't know who we're following. He's mysterious. You can't figure him out. He hides - in opposites. He appears first of all as a devil. He appears like an accuser, or the one who is making life miserable, and messing with you. Some days I want to say, "Lord, that wasn't very nice," just like Reb Tivia. Footnote - page 90-91 - Grace First appears to be wrath.

You're following. Do you think the disciples knew where Jesus was leading them? They would have gone the other way immediately. Where did they go? Wherever God took them. He took them to Good Friday. They all denied him and perjured themselves (Peter). You can be called by the name Peter, if you'd like to. "Rock" solid foundation - trust. Upon this rock I will build my church. "Wait a minute! Do you know what you're saying, Jesus? This guy will deny you." Peter denied Him and wept bitterly. He knew what was in his heart. He thought it was all over for him.

John 21 - Jesus restores Peter's ministry. Who is Peter? He's a corporate man. When Jesus walks through the upper room where all the deniers are hiding, what does he say? Peace. Peace. All your fears and worries are over. I'm here. I am the resurrection. What does he want to walk through today? My reasoning.

As we live in contact with God, his order comes to us in the most haphazard ways. Every detail is engineered by our Heavenly Father.

How many of you have details you're wondering about? How about Job?

The apparent contradictions. Forde: If God is a God of Love and he loves me, why is my life so screwed up?

One of the hardest lessons to learn... Abraham went out of all his own way of looking at things, because he was a fool in the eyes of the world.

If you lay out your little story to some sympathetic friends, what would your story be?

The carnal man, sinners, un-confessed - have their substance in the visible things - things they can touch, see, feel, etc.

2 Cor. 5:12 (KJV) For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

It is easy to glory in appearances - the good things you've done.

2 Cor. 5:13-14 (KJV) For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. [14] For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

We were all dead in sin - all of us. What was our sin? Not the manifestations of it. The sin was that we would not trust in God. God calls us every day, out of something we're thinking.

2 Cor. 5:16 (KJV) Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

2 Cor. 4:18 (KJV) While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

That's a bit of craziness, foolishness. How can you look at things not seen? Through your eyes and ears. Faith, the gift of God, the work of God in you and me, comes by hearing. We don't walk by sight - reasonings. We walk by trusting the one who leads us and guides us, and sometimes drives us.

It is what stands under you, inside your heart that you receive every day, grace poured into your lips every day that is your foundation. The law is God's Word and He's serious about anyone who breaks his law. The wages are death. How many of you have had a little death and

don't think it felt so good. Death - separation - from God and from others. We don't know that word yet, God. It's just an abstraction now. But it will become real.

Psalm 119:11 (KJV) Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

To be filled with - the treasury of your heart - the substance in the center, not the outward show, what trust you have, that Jesus has won your trust that you trust in his promises. What you're doing is sin, and there are wages. He makes all life in the flesh pointless.

Don't rob God of his glory, through your gifts. What gifts you have you are to be continually thanking God for, and not using them for your own glory. It is proud to rob glory from God. It is sin. And I fear that even in my preaching or teaching, I would not take glory from Him. To God be the glory. You cook good spaghetti? Thank God. Give him glory. Did he give you a pot and a stove? Are you proud of your house and your garden? Boast in God who gave them to you. He always gives his gifts through people. If he gives you a loaf of bread, it comes through people.

Children, get out of music, if you want the glory. I don't care what you do. 'You're really beautiful. Have I told you that? You ought to get more attention from men and/or women.

Read Doug Wilson on dating. It is a recent phenomenon. It doesn't mean you can't be together. "Well, we want to be alone." Why? I believe in courtship - getting to know one another, sometimes playing Bridge. You really get to know them and a lot of other people too. People spiking the ball on someone's head - you get to know them too. Are you tacking with me?

Sinners have their substance in the visible objects of this life. But God is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Image what would happen if you were the finisher? A good way faith comes is through mutual conversation - the Word of God being lifted up above circumstances. Joseph released the storehouse of grain. You're to be as Joseph. God has given you a storehouse, substance, and people are starving - there's a famine for the Word of God. The Word of God is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was called the Rock of Offence, because when he comes... Have you ever had God visit you? He might first appear as the opposite of what you expected. He is despised. But, he's also the same God who bears all of our burdens and ours sins. He's the one who is despised - the Word of God - Jesus Christ - the Savior - and he bears all of our sins. When he comes, will he find faith, a response to the call? He creates that too, you'd be happy to know.

He puts in the inmost being a storehouse, substance. Is it gospel? That is all we're about. I'm not about any other thing. I hope you can agree with me.

The just shall live by the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of that which isn't seen. Our treasury is Christ. For me, faith means Christ. We live by his Faith - the gift of himself - the Author and Finisher of our trust. The faith is the foundation, the inner being, what is really in there. How does it get in there? Daily it gets in there. We're daily filled with the fullness of God. That we would be filled with all of Christ, the fullness of him who fills all and all, through the Body, so that in our hearts there would be a surplus.

Luke 7:44-47 (KJV) And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. [45] Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. [46] My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. [47] Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

There is no one here who is not a Pharisee in the flesh, their religious flesh which is the worst kind. "I'm a little distinguished. I've distinguished myself." "Thank God, I'm not as bad as her."

Who do you love? THESIS 28: The love of God does not first discover but creates what is pleasing to it. The love of man comes into being through attraction to what pleases it.

Frank, there is really only one message and that is the cross of Jesus, that while we were yet sinners, haters of God, enemies of Christ, He died. He's crucified, and in the very act of crucifixion, he said, "Forgive them, Father." Who was that man who was crucified with Jesus? Every hand in this room should be up. One day, I hope, you'll see your evil deeds, your evil thoughts. Go ahead; live your lonely life, your small, sequestered world. You don't think I'd judge you, do you? But, what a bad deal.

Thesis 28 – OBATHOTC: Luther: The first part [of the thesis] is clear because the love of God that lives in man loves sinners, evil persons, fools, and weaklings in order to make them righteous, good, wise, and strong. Rather than seeking its own good, the love of God flows forth and bestows good. Therefore sinners are attractive because they are loved; they are not loved because they are attractive. For this reason the love of man avoids sinners and evil persons. Thus Christ says: "For I came not to call the righteous but sinners" [Matt. 9:13].

When you were in the world, who did you love? Whoever was attractive to you?

Luke 7:40-43 (KJV) And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. [41] There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. [42] And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? [43] Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

Luke 7:44-47 (KJV) And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. [45] Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. [46] My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. [47] Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

Are you finding a little problem loving people - sinners, evil person, weaklings, and pastors? One reason only for that. You haven't been forgiven much. You have been forgiven much. Luther is very high on works, but not for righteousness. He's into the works of Christ. Along with the Lutheran pastor we can say, "I know I'm going to heaven, because I've never done one good work." They love much. Why? Is there anything left that you're not forgiven for today? Are you sure there is not some little sin, or some big sin, Satan can continually bring up to you? You can't always judge by outward things.

I was visiting someone in the hospital the other day, and I came out of their room to go to the elevator. There were two men; one with hands like he was ready to fight at any second. I lowered my gaze and walked to the side around them. The other was a biker, with a bandana on his head, and he was heavied out. Have you seen people who are not just guilty or shameful, but really heavied out? The elevator comes, and I get in. Guess who walks in with me and me alone in the elevator with them? Both of these guys. I looked at the floor. Not only were they out in the hallway, now they were in this little space with me and there was not much I could do. The man says to me, looks me right in the eye, and says, "My father just died." The HG sprung up in me and broke whatever preconceived, judgmental thoughts that I might ever have had of either of them, and I just broke and ministered Christ to them. His dad was a World Federation wrestler. He said he was so glad he was with the Lord. He had lung

cancer for many years. "I'm so glad the Lord took him." He asked me if I was a Pastor and where I sent to church. "My church is Gospel Outreach of Olympia, on South Bay Road." I was as proud as I could be about it.

My story is about appearances. The last thing I ever thought that guy would say to me is, "My father just died." God gave me grace to minister to him, and pray for his family, that the Holy Ghost would comfort them. I had no planned message. When you're under that pressure, that good pressure of God, he will pour grace into your lips.

Who loves much, which is the fulfillment of the whole law? You simply love your neighbor, which is your vocation every day. You start where you're at. The devil wants to distract you from your vocation - to get you to do some grandiose thing. You just want to do great things for Jesus. If you don't read the article on baptism, you're missing out.

There will come a time when you young people will see that sin in your life is so destructive, and you will cry out, and you will remember what you heard when you were a child. There will be nowhere else to go.

The just live by faith. Christ is not just the object, but he is the subject. What is in you, the storehouse, the substance is faith. Out of the abundance of that substance your mouth will speak. Not Babylonian, for you've left that place. I didn't say you couldn't talk about Spaghetti, for that is a good thing.

What's in your heart then, and how does it get there? Are you making melody in your heart?

Hebrews 4:10 (KJV) For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

That's why the pastor said he was going to heaven, because he never did a good work. Good works follow Christ, wherever he is at. Loving your neighbor takes care of it all. The heart of man is desperately wicked. Out of it flow adulteries, murders, blasphemies. You've seen some of those thoughts that put the thorns on his head. There is one great sinner for all time. His name is Jesus Christ, and he bore all of the sins, of all the people, in all of the world, for all times. He descends into hell. How many of you know that there are people living in the hell of their mind, daily? How many of you were in those suburbs of hell? He descends. and says, "Here is my body." He swallows death, for you. It is Christ in you doing the swallowing. Glory

to God! Who did you lead to Jesus in this life, Don? No one, ever. How could I? It is no longer I who live, but Christ. Glory to God!

It is God who works in you both to will and do of his good pleasure.

1 John 3 - no we are sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

Even though it is now done and finished; you are called, you're here, and you're the elect of God.

Every day we are called to go out.

God's Word - There are two kingdoms according to Luther's theory that is, two governments, two overlapping spheres of ... refer to the two ways God governs the world.

In the church there is no coercion, not even the law. You tell people, there are wages for breaking the law. God then governs the world through law and coercion. Through the persuasive preaching of love. Even though they intersect in every Christian believer. The relationship to God is fundamental. Righteousness and freedom...by the Word of God which confers this proper relationship on the sinner is the good news of Jesus Christ. Luther draws the distinction between two kinds of words in order to make clear what the Bible means by the Word of God. That is, ...naming of things, giving labels, but not creating. The second kind is the deed - names and affects what it signifies. Example: Jesus said, "Now you are clean through the words I have spoken." The presupposition - they were not clean. God looks around and says, "Let there be light." And there is light. God's word is a deed word that creates new. We are born of that word. The Word of God is the word that enriches the poor, releases the captives, sets at liberty those that are blind - a word that meets men and women at the point of their deepest need and sets them free.

There are churches that are speaking other things, not the gospel, to be relevant.

Preeminently for Luther, it is Jesus Christ - the deed Word of God, and he has none else. Christ in his church has no other ministry than the ministry of the Word. Overcome the alienation from God, which is the universal predicament of mankind. There are commandments and promises. Commandments show men and women what they ought to do, and that they cannot do it. Teach them what it means to trust in his promises...proper work - restoring life through the gospel.

In Christ, all the law commands you, through your husband, your heavenly bridegroom, have been fulfilled.

If you receive that today in your hearing, you will be freed from all oppression.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. God always acts in a way contrary to natural human expectation. Hence we must do nothing but listen to the word, keep our eyes closed....to the word. A soul united to God by the word has all...when they ascribe to him the honor do him.

The final analogy that Luther draws about all this is a marriage relationship which relies on the distinction made in Roman law between property - ownership and possession - which implies right of usage. In marriage, two people have their own property in the eyes of the law....this same phenomenon. By the wedding ring of faith he shares in the sins, death, and pains of hell which are his bride's. As a matter of fact, he makes them his own and acts as if they were his own and as if he himself had sinned; he suffered, died, and descended into hell that he might overcome them all.

Faith - trust - is the gift of God - the substance of things hoped for. What do you hope for? What is in your heart? How does it get there? What fills your reservoir every day? Out of the heart, the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. It tells about what Jesus has done. It is caught up in the proclamation of what the Lord did. It affects both spheres of our lives.

What you hear depends on what kind of reservoir's you're around.

Christ is a reproach. If you're despised, count it all joy. If you've got a Jesus who isn't a reproach, you've got the wrong Jesus. Jesus is a reproach to false religions. All religions talk about what you do for God, what you sacrifice for God. True Christianity is all about what God has done for you in his Son.

Time will not permit me to tell you today of the story of Jacob and his experience with God's No! Like the Syrophoenician woman, all she could hear from God is what you hear, "No!" According to Luther, deeply hidden in his No, is his Yes. She loves her vexed daughter. My friend, the world is a vexed daughter. God so loved his vexed daughter... He loved you, didn't he?

When you stand before God, and look into his face, that is when you could say, "I'm here with a garment I've been given, washed in blood. My filthy garments have been taken away by the

proclamation of what he has done for me on the cross - and his blood is sufficient for all of it."

Jacob wrestled with a man all night who was saying, "No." Jacob wants the blessing to the point where his leg is put out of the socket. The blessing always comes in a name. He asked Jacob what his name was, and he's asking you the same thing today.

Jacob - Supplant - 8034 - to trip up, to cause to stumble, supercede another especially by force or treachery. NAME [8034] - conspicuous position; honor, authority, character

Jacob's brother Esau vowed to get even with Jacob. Jacob has reason to wrestle. He loves his children. He wrestled until God asked him what his name was. As soon as he confesses, "Sinner - totally depraved sinner, Jacob,"...

Isaiah 41:8 (KJV) But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

Isaiah 41:10 (KJV) Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Fear not!

Isaiah 41:14 (KJV) Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Jacob gets into jackpots through his trickery. His using his wits gets him into jackpots, but God is greater. "Fear not, thou worm, Jacob."

Hebrews 11:26 (KJV) Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

When God walks through the walls and pronounces peace, there is peace - shalom.

My self esteem is getting lower.

Ephes. 2:1 (KJV) And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Spiritually dead - cut off from the fine - the thing that has life.

Ephes. 2:1-2 (KJV) And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; [2]

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince

of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

If you're obedient, it is Christ. He is the fulfillment of the law, for you. That does not excuse me, not should I take advantage of it. Romans 7 - I want to do

What you're going to realize in the end is this; you'll realize you always wanted to do god's commandments, that you were tricked, and that you didn't realize that they were given for your good always. Paul wanted to do what was right, but he found something else living within himself. That is no excuse - license. If you do that, I know you really don't want to do God's commandments. You're not really ignorant that God loves you, even though that is tried.

Ephes. 2:3 (KJV) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Ephes. 2:4-6 (KJV) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, [5] Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) [6] And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Christ did that for you, even while you were yet sinners, haters of God, despisers of God, disobedient to God. There's a whole list.

There are two words - law and gospel.

Matthew 15:22 (KJV) And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

And he said, "No, of course not. You're not even qualified to hear." I'm translating.

Matthew 15:23 (KJV) But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

She's causing a big scene. We need her in every church, in ourselves, all the time. Christ died for sinners, among whom I am chief, Paul said. Imagine who god has chosen. Here is a man out killing Christians, persecuting Jesus. God had a call on Paul, even while in his mother's

womb, before he was born. It is non-sense-ical. Saul - chief among sinners, and now chief apostle.

Matthew 15:24 (KJV) But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

There are some people I'm not sent to, who look like they're about to punch me in the face - really evil. Didn't you ever judge someone like that? When you see people walking around, your first thoughts of them are of peace and joy? The natural man is an evil thinker; we should know.

Are you hearing no today? Take to heart what Luther said. His yes is deeply under pelts, like the Ark of the Covenant. His words become badger skins to her, maybe, but not necessarily. What happens when every day all you hear is no, no, no? I'm tempted to say, "If that's the way you feel about it, I'm out of here." Sometimes I do go away, but not for long. I'm ruined, like you. Don't some days you wish you could find a highway, not see anyone and you try it for a little bit. You don't think I'd judge you, do you?

No way.

This woman represents the gentile world, and Jesus is telling his disciples something; you put your hope in what you think is righteousness, outward washing and sacrifices, but he's drawing this woman out. He's always drawing you out. If you, or someone else, go down the wrong road, you're on your way to God. What is the cross - Forgive them. Who? You who crucified Christ with Saul of Tarsus, in as much as you thought evil of the brethren this week, etc.

Matthew 15:25 (KJV) Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

That's what this is all about. Who are you worshipping? You worship a Hebrew God. Satan, even if he's operative in you, wants God to be visible, even wants him to do things to prove that he is God; turn rocks into bread, jump off the pinnacle, bow down and worship me, come down from the cross and we'll believe you. Prove how powerful you are and we'll worship you. Jesus becomes ultimate weakness and we don't like it. That is the natural man. All he does is get crucified, mocked, scorned, and spat upon. Not much of a god, is he? Not too powerful. He did away with the miracles. That is what the church world wants. Demonstrate your power. We want signs and wonders. We want success. When people see the signs and wonders, they

are drawn to them. We want to draw men unto us, but we'll use your name. "In the name of Jesus-a." What is behind that? He did no more miracles, and set his face towards Jerusalem. He told his disciples in John 6 - wanting bread is satanic. You don't want me, you want bread. Man shall not live by bread alone. You'll hunger again. But when your reservoir is filled with God's word every day, out of your bellies, and it is indicative, you will love much because you've been forgiven much. There is more that you've been forgiven for than you are aware of.

Matthew 15:24-25 (KJV) But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. [25] Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

What a prayer.

Matthew 15:26 (KJV) But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. (worms, jacks, canaanites, syrophenicians, roman centurions - and the list is endless).

Matthew 15:27-28 (KJV) And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. [28] Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Your faith is great - whatever it is you want is yours. This could take many years before we're brought to the admission of our name. I don't like being called a dog now. But, fear not Jacob. This woman was brought to desperation. Have you been brought there for someone else? She was willing to go down, to descend for her daughter's sake. The daughter is the church, the whole world. As soon as we get over our distinctions, we will then love people, fools, sinners, evil persons, and weaklings. Have you noticed how offensive that sounds? I could be talking about you.

It is the love of Christ shed abroad in your heart. How should we then live? What is our life in Christ? For me to live is nothing but Christ - that's what Paul said. For you to live is Christ. If you heard, "All you ever talk about is Scripture." Thank you! Forgive him. Forgive her. They don't know what they're saying.

No is never the last word. Christ is the last word. The word from the Cross is always the last word.

Every Christian worship service bears witness we come to church Sunday after Sunday with the same tiresome list of sins. That is so in this life, but in heaven it is finished. You have that to look forward to. I'm wrestling with God's Word now. I hope you are. There is a reason we wrestle; we want a blessing, not only for ourselves, but others. Before God he doesn't see our sins, but in this world you reap for that. The life of a Christian is nothing more than daily drowning in baptismal waters - baptismal speech. We live among the baptized. They may have forgotten it or they may not know what it means. Then we confess.

Let this mind be in you....this is my commandment that you love one another in order that your joy would be full. He could have said in order that you're driven out of your self-centered mind of lust and worry, and be caught up in your neighbor. We live in our neighbor. Once you believe God, he gives you everything and you need nothing. What's left to do when there's nothing left to do? Would you like to have a neighbor or two? Do I have to? No, not to be justified. Belief is a gift, and that gift comes daily to us, if we receive it.

But do we present our sins to God, who doesn't know about them, or haggle with God, or talk him into forgiving us? No, it's only to bring them to the light.

It is only to bring them to the light of Jesus (It's me. I'm the person who is self-centered, lusty, jealous, offended) and to see clearly that they were forgiven all along. It is only (to put it in the startling terms of the Exultet, the old Latin proclamation sung on Easter Eve) to force ourselves to rejoice over our sin because it has become the occasion of his grace – to see it as a *felix culpa*, a happy fault – and to wash away the whole sorry history of the world's transgressions in the absolving blood of the Lamb. “O certe necessarium Adae peccatum,” the Exultet sings, “O certainly necessary sin of Adam,” “quae talem et tantum meruit habere redemptorem”: “which deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer.” We have always been home free, lightened even in the house of our sins by the Light of Light in whom they were all wrought. The only thing we do in confession is drag ourselves back in out of the dark that never was.

Bring your darkness to the light - that's all you have to do. Bring them to the light of Jesus to see clearly they were forgiven long ago. The Exultet - to force ourselves to rejoice over our sins. Because our sin has become the occasion of God's grace. Oh Happy Fault. And to wash away this whole sorry history of the whole world's transgression, in the exalting of the blood of the Lamb. Oh necessary sin of Adam, which deserved to have so great a Redeemer. The only thing we do in confession is drag ourselves back out of the dark that never was.

I don't know what I can do about my sin, but I have a Savior. We're always beset by offences, cares, worries - sin. When Jesus saw Martha O'Connor, you're troubled about many things, but only one thing is needful and that is what Mary has received - hearing. The dumbest thing you can ever do is hear that call and go out not knowing where you're going. He calls everyone, but he makes us non-sense-ical.

Name - create in me a clean heart, a clean innermost being, where the center is you, and all of you, all that you've given.

SOURCE

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 5/24/09

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)