

Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity: Matthew 18:21–35

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Marc Kolden said: What you get out of a message depends a lot on what you think of your pastor. You can write people off instantly, before you have even gotten near to them. In the world, the masks of God are all over the place, wanting to give to you. It depends on what you want.

The servant heart, the heart of Christ, goes way beyond our idea of service which is actually puny compared to what it could be if Christ, the Servant, were released in us.

How many of you have ever denied your purpose? You thought it was to glorify you and not God.

Ask somebody: Can you tell me in what sentence or one word what justification means? How many of you thought of the dying thief – forgiveness – washed all my sins away? Justification has to do with the gift of forgiveness. This has so many implications, you couldn't expound fully on it in a whole lifetime.

Forgiveness – what's that?

Luke 7:38-39 (KJV) And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. [39] Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

Simon thought Jesus apparently didn't know that this woman was a sinner?

Have you been washing his feet lately? "I don't have to hear the washing water of the word through 'her' because I know what she is." Go ahead!

Luke 7:40-44 (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. [44] 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.

Who is this woman? Pleased to meet you! "But you haven't been that bad."

What Martin Luther Says, #1576 on Human Forgiveness

When you hear, see, or suffer something that you do not like to hear, see, or suffer, learn to say: Patientia, patience! It is an insignificant sin compared with my sins; God sees far more defects in me than I can see in other people; therefore I shall be glad to be quiet and forgive if only God also forgives me and is quiet.

But this lesson is never learned. In this world one brother is forever rebuking another because of a mote, while he himself has a large beam in the eye.

You never see the beam, the log in your own eye. Some of you have been dying because of offences. It's been so long, you're like Frank, you don't even know you're offended anymore. Frank had an image, and if you didn't bow down to that little shrunken god (we call "Me" or "I") he got offended. "You don't love me." Thank you image. Which voice are you hearing from when you make a judgment on or an evaluation of a brother or sister? "They, see how they are. She never.... She always..." People's lives are so reduced. Effeminate, negative, self-punishing, self-destructive - no longer human. Don't preach dying to that person, there's nothing left of them to die. Preach instead, "Get a life!"

If we're Christians, as soon as we know something, we confess that we know nothing as we ought, Do you have knowledge of some folk? Do you still see someone after the flesh?

For where you have one charge against your neighbor, God has thousands upon thousands against you for never having kept His Commandments as long as you have lived and for having sinned against them in many ways.

A certain man's grandmother told him she would send him to divinity school to become a minister, but only if he didn't go to this church. Our marketing program makes grandmothers mad. At least grandma can see what a losing deal this is. How would she know? Look around! Maybe if there were more people here like you winners, she wouldn't have had a problem. If you don't believe this is a losing deal, go to the hospital I was at yesterday and realize that one day you could be there also.

This you do not see, but want to fall upon your neighbor and destroy him because of a single bad word. Shame on you! Are you so keen-eyed and still cannot see this large beam?

Now, brother, here is a mouthful. It is either true or a lie. I want you to understand what a gigantic sinner you really are. Here is the problem with you not being a gigantic sinner: You take your identity from the world, not from the Word of God. The world knows that you are relatively good.

What's stopping you from sinning right now? Consequences. You're not doing something because you don't want to, you fear the consequences. Your motive should be to glorify God in Christ. You love your neighbor not because you're commanded to, but because you can't. The good news is that you don't even have to love your neighbor regarding justification. If you believe Christ, you won't have to love your neighbor, it will follow.

Therefore a Christian should follow a different practice. When he sees the mote in his brother's eye, he should go look at himself in a mirror before passing judgment. He will then find beams in his eye big enough to make hog troughs. Consequently he will have to say: What is this anyway? My neighbor has done this once in a quarter, a half, a whole year; but I have become so old and have never yet kept the commandments of our Lord God, yet, I transgress them every hour and moment. How can I be such a desperate rascal? My sins are nothing but large oaks, thirty feet tall; and I allow the paltry motes, the specks of dust in my brother's eye, to irritate me more than my large beams! But this should not be. I must first see how to get rid of my own sin. This will keep me so busy that I suppose I shall forget about the mote.

What Martin Luther Says, #1579

St. Gregory: True justice shows mercy, but false justice shows indignation). True holiness is merciful and sympathetic, but all that false holiness can do is to rage and fume. Yet it does so, as they boast, out of zeal for justice; that is, it is done through love and zeal for righteousness.

Have you ever seen anyone judge you? They're doing it out of false zeal for justice. They actually know you are a sinner and they are pointing it out to you all the time. True holiness and mercy is done of zeal for love.

Recently, there have been real sinners discovered in our midst. I'm failing. Well, if I'm failing, God is failing. After all, who was Adam's father? I hope you get it some day!

What Martin Luther Says, #1582

Be forgiving for Your Own No Less Than Your Neighbor's Sake:

You see, then, that here Christ is rebuking those crazy saints who think that everyone is master of the whole world and is entitled to be delivered from all suffering, to roar and bluster and violently defend his property. And He teaches us that whoever wants to rule and possess his property, his possessions, house, and home in peace, must be meek, so that he may overlook things and act reasonably, putting up with just as much as he possibly can. It is inevitable that your neighbor will sometimes do you injury or harm, either accidentally or maliciously. If he did it accidentally, you do not improve the situation by refusing or being unable to endure anything. If He did it maliciously, you only irritate him by your violent scratching and pounding; meanwhile he is laughing at you and enjoying the fact that he is baiting and troubling you, so that you still cannot have any peace or quietly enjoy what is yours.

Simon didn't have any sins. He's like us. Relative goodness is outward. Your children are complimented for be nice, attentive, polite, friendly, etc. You're tricked. Do they only serve when they are paid for it?

Luke 7:44-48 (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. [48] And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

It comes down to how bad you are and how bad you've been. How selfish have you been? Have you ever looked at it? The world says they like you. Whether they are aware of it or not, they

are really saying that you are useful to them. Nobody can use a loser. Most of you still want to be used, but it is all a game where you are consumed by being used. What for? To get more of a worldly identity so the world, so grandma, will tell you you're great?

Those who are forgiven little will love little? How much do you want to love, since love is the fulfillment of the whole law, and when you fulfill the law there is no condemnation and there is now peace in your home and no more wages? How much forgiveness have you received today? It all depends. Simon didn't receive much. He just sat in the judgment seat judging Jesus, the Word of God. If Jesus really knew so much, he would have known that this woman is a sinner.

Who do you associate with? Useful people? You can always confess and act. Life is more than just forgiveness, as you will come to see.

There is such a thing as authority in the Church, in this Church. We have traditions and ways that we do things. If you don't like it, go play over there. We play three strikes and you're out. If you don't like that, you can start your own league. If you go to any other league, they have a tradition. Start a league. Start your own church. Start your own business. On the other hand, we might want to play 2 strikes and you're out.

If you weren't so dull, you might realize who you're not forgiving. When you realize you've committed a thousand times more sins than the person you're judging, you'll be free. The gospel of forgiveness releases us into vocation. Until then you will judge Jesus and his anointed ones. You have the Holy Spirit in you, don't you? Then you're the anointed ones. Look who Jesus is hanging out with.

"Just don't go there. I'll pay your way through divinity school if you just don't go to that church," said his grandmother. In the flesh there are no winners here, not one, starting with me. I'm not saying that you should not learn anything, but let's keep the realms separate. Sometimes the tree of knowledge can lead to death.

The king takes account.

Matthew 18:21-25 (KJV) Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? [22] Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

[23] Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. [24] And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. [25] But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

How many wives and children you know have been sold into prison because of debt?

Matthew 18:26-27 (KJV) The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. [27] Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

The Lord was moved with compassion simply because the man asked. Have you ever asked the Lord for compassion?

The servant knew everyone was like him, including the king.

Matthew 18:28-30 (KJV) But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. [29] And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. [30] And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

Some people want you to bow down to their image, and until you do they hate you. They may even say, "I'm sorry, I was judging you again," or "I want to thank you for what you did for me yesterday," and by this they think you'll bow down to their image.

All of you were in prison, until you paid the debt. Think of all the things you would do or not do because of law in this world. You could be killed for being nothing other than American, black, white, red, or being a Christian. Law, which is held in place by force, prevents things. One day you will say, I love the law. The world is relatively good too. Think of good things people are doing in the world today, with a willing heart, and with worldly compassion. They far out-serve you.

Every thought of man is continually evil. Since Jesus' religion is not one of the outward but of the heart and the heart is desperately wicked. How shall we then live? In forgiveness. What do you think baptism is and how often do you need forgiveness? Daily, hourly, minutely? In vocation, don't you see how you've failed? Some homes have no peace. Why? They are not

forgiven much. Why not? Because they are relatively good. "Thank God, I'm not like some of you. See how I dress, how diligent I am in business, etc." Who are you comparing yourself with?

The king is the bookkeeper and forgives the guy, but the guy throws his fellow-servant into prison. Obviously, the servant has a plan, a ridiculous plan to pay the master back. How are you going to pay God back for his son? He has no notion of grace. Like all sinners, like us, he knows that he is in a tight spot he can't get out of it.

Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 34:1 (KJV) The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying,

Jeremiah 34:8-9 (KJV) This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; [9] That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother.

Let everybody who lives to fill your needs, everyone you've imprisoned, let them go.

Jeremiah 34:10-11 (KJV) Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go. [11] But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids.

The servant was in a tight situation. He owed \$10mil. Look what you did. See Jesus on the cross? You've sinned a thousand times more than whatever sin you could see in me or anyone else. You've broken all of the commandments.

Jeremiah 34:10-18 (KJV) Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them

go. [11] But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids.

[12] Therefore the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, [13] Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, [14] At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. [15] And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name: [16] But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids. [17] Therefore thus saith the Lord; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. [18] And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,

God is serious about his covenant. Let's fear God and believe the Lord. They did not believe him. They didn't hearken. How many ways can you put people in slavery? You have subtle ways of punishing people; withdrawing from people. It's basically an offence. "You' don't' do enough for me. You always... You never..."

The king forgives the man. He wipes the debt out totally and forgets that it even existed. He dies to his old way of accounting and bookkeeping - the law. He forgives us. Now Peter, how often should we forgive? Through Christ you can forgive all the time.

The king gets out of the bookkeeping and collection business all together. There is a real problem, however, which is the same problem with us. Because of the unforgiving servant's failure to perceive the king's death, he goes on and throws his fellow-servant, who owed \$1.00, into prison. Through his deathless logic he throws his fellow-servant into prison.

The unforgiving servant is just like everyone in the world who is unwilling to face the death of bookkeeping. He won't face it. Even if you told him his sins were 1000 times worse than the sins he holds against his brother, he won't stop bookkeeping.

Matthew 18:31-35 (KJV) So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. [32] Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: [33] Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? [34] And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. [35] So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

The king and the servant had credit rights, the rights of a creditor. One man pleads to the king and the king dies to his rights. Then the servant meets a fellow servant who owed him \$1.00 and does not forgive him but throws him into prison.

Matthew 18:35 (KJV) So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

You could say that not forgiving from your heart is unbelief. Maybe the only unpardonable sin is to withhold pardon from others. The only thing that can keep you out of the joy of resurrection is to join with the unforgiving servant in refusing to forgive his brother. Those who are forgiven much love much. Have you been forgiven much?

Definition of justification: God has forgiven us freely and cancelled our debts. Un-forgiveness is the only thing that can prevent that, but I believe not ultimately. That man was thrown in prison, and many of you live in prisons, until the ultimate physical death does to you what daily death would have done to you if you had died to your selfishness, stinginess, and unforgiving ways. God loves a hilarious giver.

I think the ultimate thing that convicts me is forgiveness. Law can just harden my heart more. Those who are forgiven little are stingy. They don't love much, though they are Christians. They have been relatively good, you could say. If you've been relatively good, why would you love much or give much?

Ultimately, you don't have to work, because if you're called, elect and predestined, you can stay in this bookkeeping mentality, unlike the king who died to bookkeeping and sent his Son, and

when you die, physical death will do for you what daily death could have done long ago; brought you into a realm and brought peace into your home. Peace is not absence of conflict. In a home where there is peace, people are at war with something other than each other. Where two people aren't in war with something besides themselves, they are at war with each other.

The servant refused to die to bookkeeping, unlike the king. Finally, I believe because the man was predestined and elect like us, physical death will ultimately bring him to what daily death could have brought him to; to enjoying the kingdom of God and being like the king who died to bookkeeping. Those who are forgiven much don't keep books anymore; they have no need of them.

Galatians 5:1 (KJV) Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Christ came to set men free of their debts. Once that occurs, you now come into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty - spontaneous outflow of life giving words - flow - Jubal. No one has to tell you to love your brother or sister. If they do, it's probably not love.

Glorious liberty - you don't have to love anyone - you can just wait until you die and go to heaven. If you want to live a life of bookkeeping, making sure that you get everything you deserve. Many people are unaware that they do this.

Galatians 5:1 (KJV) Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.

If you have just one little thing in your life that you count for righteousness, it won't profit you.

Galatians 5:2-13 (KJV) Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. [3] For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. [4] Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. [5] For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. [6] For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. [7] Ye did run well; who did hinder you

that ye should not obey the truth? [8] This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. [9] A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. [10] I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. [11] And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. [12] I would they were even cut off which trouble you. [13] For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

We are called to be moral, but not for righteousness - for our neighbor. There is no law for the Christian, yet, the law to love our neighbor fulfills every law.

Galatians 5:13 (KJV) For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Being made righteousness, forgiven, culminates in this very thing - to love one another. You don't have to keep books on anyone ever again.

Where there is a continual forgiven much there is peace in the home; where the words, "I forgive you" become the 70 x 70 every hour.

Galatians 5:14 (KJV) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The thing that used to condemn you when you broke one point of the law, it is all fulfilled. If it's all fulfilled there is no more wages for sin. The wages of sin is death: No peace in the home – just anger, judgment, grudges, offences, confusion, etc.

Galatians 5:15 (KJV) But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Bite: Be offended, judge, keep books, avoid one another, be indifferent to one another, be so busy that you have no time for one another, etc.

Galatians 5:16-18 (KJV) This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. [17] For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. [18] But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

1 John 2: To walk in the Spirit means to walk as He walked. He walked in the vocation of neighbor. Wherever he walked, fruit followed. You are to abide in him and then fruit will follow - the fruit of the Spirit. You are now free to care for your neighbor. You are married to Christ and being married to Christ you bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (Romans 7). You are now free to care for His garden. You are now a creature and have been resorted to creation, which is very good.

For you, stop going around all the time saying you are a worm. That theology can get weird. The Frank spirit is so reduced. People become so puffed up, but you can go another way with false humility.

Marc Kolden:

The other way in which the root sin of unbelief manifests itself, however, involves fleeing from freedom and responsibility, denying the human's unique relationship to God, and sinking into finitude. Here it is not a creature's over-reaching, but an under-valuation of being created by God, in God's image. This has been called "sensuality" (better, sensateness) or despair (or sloth or conformity). It too is a form of saving the self, one might argue, by eliminating the perceived instability of being both free and finite and settling for finitude alone. Low self-esteem (or none at all), addiction, self-destructive behaviors, acquiescing to one's own oppression or abuse-- all of these would be ways that this form of sin is worked out. This is sometimes portrayed as the typical "feminine" form of sin or the sin of any oppressed group.

When the idea of the "death of the sinful self" is applied to this form of sin, however, it only seems to make things worse. The person who has no self or nearly none is seemingly being told to go out of existence or sink more deeply into the sinful situation. As this gets applied to the idea of vocation, it becomes a counsel of despair. The gospel, even to the prideful, is not a command for the hearer to put his or her own sinful self to death. The gospel is good news to the sinner of forgiveness and newness of life. This verdict is complete at the moment it is spoken; it is not conditional or merely the beginning of a process or project. "Not guilty" is the last judgment pronounced ahead of time. This sets us free to be about our creaturely lives but now as faithful creatures who see our duties and roles as callings. In the midst of the activities required by our callings, our old sinful self will be put to death. There will be a cross in our calling, Luther says; an instrument to put the sinful self to death. We do not have to seek it; it will be there.

Where we lack imagination is in failing to see that if sin takes the form of too little self, of not believing oneself to be created in God's image, of fleeing from responsibility, then it is the death of that faithless self that needs to occur. At least as often as Jesus tells people that their sins are forgiven, he also says, "Rise and walk." "Follow me." "Today I would come to your house." Indeed, in at least one place, both forms of good news are spoken to the same person: "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." (John 8:11) When the gospel calls us to faith by pardoning us, Jesus comes with his word. We get both pardon and presence; we receive both eternal life and a new start in this life. And here is where the idea of vocation can speak with particular force.

"The vocation of the church is to sustain many vocations."⁴ The church's message and its practice, must support us in our callings, by interpretation, guidance, inspiration, and forgiveness.

The church should let us know that God works through the structures and activities of daily life

and that God's law helps us to see what needs to be done there. And even though this is an old teaching, central to the Protestant Reformation, it seems that people do not know it. Too many think that God is only related to religion and spiritual life.

Today, I've come to your house and I don't condemn you. Go and sin no more. You are a new creation. Now you have a new name. Don't go around calling yourself rotten. That is just effeminacy. Now you are free to care about one thing. Washed all my sins away, so what? The only thing now left to do, if you'd like, is your neighbor. I'm telling you that your neighbor is whoever is in front of you. If you work for someone, they are your neighbor and you need to be excellent at whatever you do, unto God since you are no longer the servants of men.

Imagine if this were practiced in this, if this were in our heart. True evangelism is about loving my neighbor. Works should follow those that believe.

C.F.W. Walther – God's No and God's Yes: Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, Page 54, Thesis X, In the sixth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher describes faith in a manner as if the mere inert acceptance of truths, even while a person is living in mortal sins, renders that person righteous in the sight of God and saves him; or as if

faith makes a person righteous and saves him for the reason that it produces in him love and reformation of his mode of living.

This never saves you. Christ saves you.

Luther taught that those who would be saved must have a faith that produces love spontaneously and is fruitful in good works.

Jubilee - Freedom - Liberty: The servant was released from debt as he was forgiven. When he didn't forgive, he was thrown back into prison with the tormentors. He never heard that the king went out of the bookkeeping business and sent his Son. He went back to his old bookkeeping ways like we've done. But it only lasts until you die. When you get baptized every day you die. When you physically die, that will all be washed away also. But you could die before you die daily, and enter into the place of vocation.

Jubilee: Release of Hebrew slaves and property every 50 years. Lev 25:10. Proclaim liberty throughout the land. When you let people out of the prison of your judgment you proclaim liberty. People can set people free when they want something, but then they change their mind and take back their slaves - bookkeeping.

Proclaim liberty - be the liberty bell. "Well, it's cracked." It's okay because God still uses it.

Hell, torment on earth if you don't forgive, but only until the day you die. This could be the day that I die.

Without communion, without baptism, you will go back to bookkeeping. You're pretty tough, pretty strong and that is your business. Good news: What you hear isn't my problem.

Isaiah uses the term once: Proclaim liberty to the captives (Isa 61) You ought to tell the person

Isaiah 61:1 (KJV) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Luther taught that those who would be saved must have a faith that produces love spontaneously and is fruitful in good works. That does not mean that faith saves on account of the love which springs from it, but that the faith which the Holy spirit creates and which cannot but do good works justifies because it clings to the gracious promises of Christ and because it lays hold of Christ. The believer need not at all be exhorted to do good works; his

faith does them automatically. The believer engages in good works, not from a sense of duty, in return for the forgiveness of his sins, but chiefly because he cannot help doing them. It is altogether impossible that genuine faith should not break forth from the believer's heart in works of love.

For the believer, his faith does them automatically. If I'm not doing good works automatically, I have to question whether I am a believer.

Gal 5:6 The ineffectiveness of faith that fails to work by love is not due to lack of love, but to the fact that it is not real, honest faith. Love must not be added to faith but grow out of it. A fruitful tree does not produce fruit by somebody's order, but because, while there is vitality in it and it is not dried up, it must produce fruit spontaneously. Faith is such a tree; it proves its vitality by bearing fruit.

A person who claims to have a firm faith which he will never abandon, but who still has an impure heart, must be told that he is in great darkness; for he has no faith at all. You may regard all the doctrines that are preached in the Lutheran church as true, but if your heart is still in its old condition, filled with the love of sin, if you still act contrary to your conscience, your whole faith is mere sham. Yours is not the faith of which the Holy Spirit speaks when He uses the word "faith" in the Scriptures; for that faith – the genuine article – purifies the heart.

The man who didn't forgive his fellow servant never heard the message that the king died and went out of the bookkeeping business for you and for me. "How many talents do you owe me for what you did to my son whom you pierced?" "When did I pierce your son?" Who have you hated?

Look at the laws of God that you've broken that he doesn't even hold you accountable for. Even when physical death does for you what you wouldn't allow daily death to do to you, you will be in heaven.

With all this forgiveness in mind, where should we go with it? To my neighbor, vocation. This is the only thing left. You have a calling. We are free to be concerned for the well-being of others. Your neighbor always needs the gospel of forgiveness.

Liberty: Jesus came to proclaim. Freedom - free to be.

Christ paid our debt. God went out of the bookkeeping business but the servant never received the king's death. Same as any person who has aught against their neighbor.

Remember, freedom is to release, flow, outflow (out of the belly flows life - you bring life to your neighbor).

God's No and God's Yes, page 78: Luther insists that in a regenerate person everything that he does is God's work.

Luther insists that in a regenerate person, everything that he does is God's work. I know you are regenerate because all of your sins are forgiven. Now if you want to add to what Christ has done, or tear yourself down because you're such a worm, this is effeminate. Stop that! Your sins are forgiven. Are your sins just metaphysical, your misjudgments, bad choices you've made? Or are they real and actual? You will not escape the rustling of leaves in your life. The law will accuse you as long as you live. Well, how am I going to die? Come to church. You don't have to leave your house to come to church.

Luther insists that in a regenerate person, every thing he does is God's work. This is one of you and it is increasing as you eat, as you are nurtured and nourished and desire the sincere milk of God's Word. You've got a Bible.

Even when he treats himself to a hearty meal, eats or sleeps, he is doing a good work, not only when he engages in hard labor. A servant of the Lord may slave and slave, but all his activities are a martyrdom that is preparing him for perdition. A Christian has the right mind in all that he does; therefore all his actions are God-pleasing. From a pure fountain nothing but good, sweet water can flow.

Think of all the things people do under the law so they can be forgiven.

I can only tell you that I am pretty enraptured by this message, that there is nothing left to do. We are free now to love our neighbor. In whatever you do daily, there is no righteousness or justification needed in any of it. If I've broken one point of the law there is no argument because I've been guilty of it all. Some are mad about this because they want to use you and if you've broken every point they can't use you.

You are now free to be caught up. All that matters now is evangelism - practically loving your neighbor. Everyone is set free. Don't worry about India - worry about your neighbor right here - about building them up. Don't even try to do it, you don't have to, any more than a peach tree has to produce peaches.

We have a mediated existence or being. Those who have been forgiven much love their neighbor much.

We ended in prayer.

SOURCE

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 11/14/04

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)