

Trinity 17  
 October 4, 2009  
 Prov. 25:6-14; Eph. 4:1-6; Luke 14:1-11

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*Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

**One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. 2 And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" 4 But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. 5 And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?" 6 And they could not reply to these things. (ESV)**

It was the Sabbath Day. Jesus was dining at a ruler of the Pharisees house. It was a full event with many lawyers and Pharisees present sitting in places of honor. They were watching Jesus carefully. They didn't like that Jesus was teaching with authority and rocking their boat. They were the church leaders. And they were threatened by the Truth that Jesus is and spoke. They were content and comfortable with their lies and their feelings of peace in their religious world. They thought that they had successfully silenced the Truth of God's Law, but now Jesus is on the scene and rightfully accusing them of their sin, their pride, their lies.

**And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" But they remained silent.** The lawyers and Pharisees were always looking to trap Jesus. "Jesus, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" The Pharisees knew that the Day of Rest was not created for God, but for men. They knew deep down that they were hypocrites when it came to observing the Sabbath. **But they remained silent.** They were playing games with God's Law and didn't speak the Truth. Anything, but the Truth. The Truth would have made them uncomfortable and exposed the darkness of their hearts. They would rather remain silent than confess their sin. They would rather go to hell than to repent. And how do we compare to this brood of vipers?

It is easy to speak the Truth in love to someone when it won't cause any waves. It is easy to preach to the choir about an issue, but what about when it is awkward and disturbs the peace? What about confessing the sin of false doctrine when it is our family member's church? What about confessing against the errors in our own synod, like congregations that practice open communion, embrace heterodox worship, and misplace the *office of the keys*? And why must we always preach against the same old pet sins of today? Why must we always confess against unscriptural divorce, cohabitating before marriage, and despising the preaching of God's Word? Because, if we remain silent, we share in, and confirm people in their sin and that is a dangerous game to play.

Have we tried to silence God's Law when it suites our felt needs? Have we convinced ourselves that it is OK to not reconcile with an old friend, enemy, spouse, or parent due to some nonsensical view of honor? When Suzie Q. brings home her live-in boyfriend for Thanksgiving, are we silent, not wanting to cause a scene? Have we convinced ourselves that there is some greater good by not speaking the Truth in love, right now? Like the Pharisees, do we remain silent? Are we more concerned for the moment than with the future? Cowards, we are - concerned more for our status in the world. Cowards - more concerned with receiving honor

from men than loving God. Cowards - more concerned with keeping the peace than speaking the Truth. We deceive ourselves and walk around comatose, in step with the world and our sinful nature. Yet, the Truth is obvious isn't it?

It is obvious that Jesus can heal on the Sabbath without sinning. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. **5 And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?"** **6 And they could not reply to these things.** Again, the Truth has a way of stopping our mouths. The Truth is crystal clear. It is sinful to not reconcile. It is sinful to live together before marriage. It is, in every situation, sinful to silence the Truth.

Look at God's Law? Do we have any response that will silence It's accusations? When God demands that we fear, love, and trust in Him above all things - or hell is our home - what can we say? Can we say that we do deserve to be seated in a place of honor in His heavenly banquet? What about loving our neighbor as ourselves? Have we mistaken loving our neighbor with making him feel good, rather than speaking the Truth in love? Are we too proud to admit that we fail miserably at loving our neighbor? Do we think too highly of ourselves and refuse to admit that we have hurt our neighbor with our words and actions?

**A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprove to a listening ear. Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the soul of his masters. Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of a gift he does not give. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.** Repent. There is no rest in trying to silence the accusations of the Law apart from Christ. No matter how hard we sweat and bleed trying to keep the Law and please God, we can't. There is a better way than trying to achieve the impossibility of creating loopholes in God's Law.

The Way is Christ. The Old Testament shadow of the Sabbath shines brightly in Jesus. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. He is our Sabbath rest. Rest, you who are beat down and heavy laden. Be healed, you who are suffering with the dropsy of sin. Christ has silenced the accusations of the Law. He has kept the Law for you. He picked up the yoke of the Law and carried it in your place. He spoke the Truth boldly. He was never the sinful coward that we are. He never broke any of the 10 Commandments. Jesus didn't abolish the Law, but silenced Its accusations. He silenced the Law by doing It for us and by suffering the penalty for our breaking It. He humbled Himself in order to exalt us.

Remember the Baptism of Jesus, which began His 3 year public ministry? Christ was baptized in the Jordan not for the forgiveness of His sins, since He is sinless, but to fulfill all righteousness. He was covered with all of our unrighteousness. He was robed with the sin of the world. He was made to be sin - the sin of despising preaching, the sin of hypocrisy, and sins against the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. Christ carried the heavy load to the cross where He received God's wrath that we deserve. Christ suffered hell on the cross, so that we can rest in His righteous blood and sweat. It is finished. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was good enough and acceptable to the Father. Christ is alive. Sin, death, and the devil have nothing that they can say to accuse you. They have lost. Jesus has won. You are healed.

Christ, the victor, comes to you today proclaiming and giving you His victory. He comes to you in Baptism and covers you with His perfect life. He washes away your sins, places you in His heavenly kingdom, and will exalt you on the Last Day. On the Last Day you will see the place of honor that Christ gives you now by faith. So, rest in the waters of your Baptism that declare you worthy of a seat of honor in heaven for Jesus' sake. Bask in the One Lord, One

Faith, and One Baptism, where sin, the devil, and even death itself can harm you none. Come, sit at the Lord's Table where He serves you Himself for the forgiveness of your sins unto life everlasting. Come, even though you are unworthy to come as a sinner. Come, because Christ invites you to come and says you are worthy in Him. Come, because He says to you, **“Friend, move up higher”** for the sake of My life, death, and resurrection. Come, because Jesus, in Absolution, has sent your sins away. He has sent your sins as far as the east is from the west. He sees them no more. You no longer have a bad conscience, but a good one. We will never find worthiness inside of ourselves or in our actions, but only and always in the wounds and actions of Jesus.

Resting in and feasting on Christ in this world means that on the Judgment day He will confess you and not deny your name. Though the Truth silencing world seems exalted today – they will be humbled and confess Jesus on the Last Day. **For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.** Christ humbled Himself for you and is now exalted. In Him, you are and will be exalted too. Rest in The Truth. Amen.