

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost  
August 1, 2021

I wonder how often we live in such a way that we believe we have gotten away with things. You know, something you did and you look to your left and right, no one saw you and you move on, wiping your hand against your forehead with a sigh of relief. But the Lord sees.

If the Lord was a God of retribution, none of us would be here. See clearly the Gospel way. We need to be saved. We have a Savior. He has said it plainly. The bread of life which He gives is to do the will of the Father. He gave us the example, "Not my will, but Thine be done." This is not about working our way into heaven, but about learning humility and truly submitting to the One through whom all things have their being.

In this world, it has been this way since the beginning of the rebellion. We live the song, "I did it my way." But is your way the way of the Lord? No, it probably isn't. We have been created in the image of the Lord and we each have within us the good as well as the bad, but we were born in rebellion against the Lord. We each have our own will and that will looks out for number one. The real question before us all is whether or not "I" will be number one or will the Lord be number One? You know the commandment, "You shall have no other gods before Me." This most certainly refers to the One who is our Lord and God. You and I cannot have right action until we have a right relationship with the Lord, else what we do will come from our heart and not from the Lord.

David was in a position of great authority. He was in the place where, speaking in a worldly way, he could get away with what he had done. I suspect there were those around him who saw it, but they looked the other way, or excused it. That is the way of this world. Many do get away with things in this world. But as we hear from this story, no one gets away with it in front of the eyes of the One who sees all things and knows our heart. Will you allow yourself to be confronted by the Lord where you need to be confronted?

It is a matter of the heart. David heard Nathan's story and became indignant. How easily this happens. We all are people with strong opinions. We become indignant at the behavior of others. But do we hold the same contempt for our own behavior which is the same? Do we allow the indignance to pierce our own heart so that we move from being indignant to lament? We may start out without pity – for that is the way of the world – thinking that the other deserves what is coming to them, but we leave out the injustice of our portion. I want, so I will take. I do not think in terms of the Lord watching not only what I am doing, but why I am doing it.

David was given the position of being king. That is a sacred trust. He quickly moved to the place where He was becoming a king like many of the others who have held that position in this world. Whether it is the lead of a committee, a pastor, bishop, or elected official, the temptation is great to see how much one can get away with. The temptation of power. We are humbly reminded by Jesus that all power and authority belongs to Him. I have no power, only the authority of the office which He has entrusted to my care. The prayers of every one of you righteous is just as effective as my prayer. I hold no special power, only an authority; and that belongs to Him. But the temptation is for us to think otherwise, so take care and seek humility.

One of the main points for us in this story is that David did repent and had a heart of lamentation and regret. Some, when confronted, become indignant and push away the opportunity to repent. Whether it is a murder, as in David's case, or some what we might call smaller thing, the mark it can make upon our heart is the same. We can go the way of continuing the rebellion against the Lord, or else we can go the way of the Lord, repent and seek to live the

righteousness that our Lord will give us if we walk the narrow way. This is a very important distinction. In one sense, it is not the act itself, whether it be a small indiscretion or little deceit, or a murder, what it does to our soul is the same. We will either move along the narrow path of the Lord, or take a diversion toward the ongoing rebellion.

In this sense, there are Christians who are slowly abandoning their faith and in the end, will stand before Jesus indignant that they are counted amongst the goats. So also, there are those who are slowly being turned to the way of the Lord such that they will stand before the Lord in surprise that He counts them among the sheep. This is why we are forbidden to make this judgement upon others. But here, I am talking to you. Every little thing you do marks your soul. If you are quick to repent, owning what you have done, this is the path of righteousness. If you will not, the small losses this day can lead to bigger losses down the road. What made David different than all of the tyrants who have ever ruled is that he repented. We hear his repentance in the Psalms.

You see, just like Paul, we can say that we are prisoners of the Lord. I would do something other than what the Lord would have me do. But there is the Holy Spirit within me which convicts me, just as Nathan convicted David, and so I turn from evil and seek the good. And here is what we pray for when we say, "Lead us not into temptation." We are being led, not forced, for any one of us, at any time, may resume the rebellion against the way of truth. We have all the grace we need to make the journey, so do not fear. The Lord is saving you one step at a time and you have His assurance that He will lead you, but you and I must follow.

Our Lord, who came down from heaven, will take all who believe with Him to be where He is. He has promised us this. Therefore, we need not ever fear for our salvation as long as we live with Jesus as our Lord.

Many will come to Jesus asking for things. "Do this Lord and all will be well with my soul." What is good for your soul is to be led by the One who has and is redeeming you each day. Jesus sees through the games of this world. He came to set you and me free from living for ourselves.

Do not play the rat-race game of this world. You seek, but do not find, so the question is, what is it you are seeking and why? Some like the idea of Jesus being all powerful and they want a piece of the power. We can chase after healers and miracle workers. But this is not the way of the Lord. The disciples, while following Jesus seemed to be jockeying for position, but after the resurrection, they all seemed to have one thing in common: they were humble and willing to follow even unto death.

What must we do? Believe! Believe that Jesus is God's only begotten Son and that through Him you may have everlasting life. He is the bread of life. In Him, you have life. Apart from Him is only the continued death of being separated from the God who made and loves you. Live in the love He is. Be nourished in your soul by the provision He gives. "Take, eat, this is my body given for you." Be fed in your soul and understand when you are confronted with temptation that He will lead you in the way of repentance. You need never fear for your salvation when you walk with the Lord. He is the author and finisher of your faith. He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. United with Christ, you shall be resurrected in a resurrection like His. To live is Christ and to die is gain. This is the true life which He offers to all. It seems that it is only a few who will live this life and my prayer always is that you are among them.

Believe on the Lord Jesus and live forever with Him! Amen.