

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
www.lutheranlccf.org
Third Sunday after Trinity, June 17, 2018

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 10, 235:2, 412, 398, 398:4.

Lessons: Exodus 20:1-16, 1 John 1:5-2:2, Luke 15:11- 32.

Sermon Text: Hebrews 13:1-6.

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Dear Friends in Christ:

“It is God’s will that you should be holy.” I Thessalonians 4:3 (KJV) This is an exhortation of God’s Word addressed to people who believe in Jesus as their Savior. God wants His dear children in Christ to live a sanctified life. Paul says: ***“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”*** Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

A sanctified life is possible only as a result of faith in Christ. Holiness of living, living to please God, is a fruit of faith in Jesus. Jesus says: ***“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*** John 15:5 (NIV)

Therefore, believers in Christ are exhorted in the Bible to lead a Christian life pleasing to God. Paul told the Thessalonian believers: ***“We instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.”*** I Thessalonians 4:1 (NIV) Paul reminded the Ephesian believers how different their life was to be, now that they had come to faith in Jesus. ***“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.”*** Ephesians 5:8-10 (NIV)

Such a sanctified life is what identifies us as believers in Christ and is a life that glorified God. Jesus says: ***“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*** John 15:8 (NIV) Today we want to hear more about this from our text, as we consider

EXHORTATIONS FOR A SANCTIFIED LIFE ADDRESSED TO BELIEVERS IN CHRIST

These exhortations have to do with:

- 1. Brotherly love and hospitality;**
- 2. The sanctity of marriage; and,**
- 3. A life of contentment in the Lord.**

“See how they love one another!” That’s what the outsiders said about the believers in Christ in the early days of the Christian Church. Our text exhorts: ***“Keep on loving each other as brothers.”*** Brotherly love should be our distinguishing characteristic as believers in Christ. We need this exhortation because the devil does not want us to do this, the world around us is filled with hatred and anger and pays back evil for evil, and our own sinful nature keeps us from loving our fellowman as we love ourselves.

We who are believers in Christ should certainly know all about love, because we have heard the Gospel. We know how Jesus died for our sins, shed His blood for us, and how we have been declared righteous for Jesus’ sake. John writes: ***“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us,”*** Then John adds: ***“And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”*** I John 3:16 (NIV) Love for one another as Christians is emphasized in John’s epistles: ***“This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.”*** I John 3:11 Again he says: ***“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from***

God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” I John 4:7-8 (NIV)

God tells us in the Commandments how we should show love to our fellowman in general. We should honor, respect and obey those over us in the Lord. We should guard against hatred, anger and violence. We should not be immoral, steal from our fellowman, slander him, or covet what he has. We should always have our fellowman’s best interests at heart.

For our brethren in the faith there is need for special love and consideration. We go through much tribulation, and bear the hatred of the unbelieving world. We have to endure the malicious words and ill treatment of those who oppose us when we stand up for God’s Word. Therefore, among ourselves we should show brotherly love and kindness, and be quick to help in every time of need. The Bible says: **“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”** Rom. 12:10.13

Our text also says: **“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”** Both Abraham and Lot unknowingly entertained angels who came to them in the form of men. We are exhorted: **“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.”** In the early Christian Church many people lost their homes and property. Some were put into prison because they confessed Christ. Those times could come again in the church. Whatever our circumstances are, whenever there is need or opportunity, let us be hospitable, let us be ready to help. For all in our day who are suffering for Jesus’ sake, let us be quick to offer our comfort and help, and always remember these people in our prayers. Paul exhorts: **“As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”** Gal. 6:10

One sentence in our text exhorts us regarding the sanctity of marriage.

2.

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.” Marriage is a holy institution of the Lord. God instituted marriage when he brought Adam and Eve together. Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure. That means that we are to have respect for what God has instituted. A man and a woman are not to live together outside of marriage, as many are now doing. There is to be no physical union of a man with a woman who is not his wife. A man is to be faithful to his wife, and a wife to her husband. Only a man and his wife are to be intimate with each other. O how horribly the 6th Commandment is transgressed in our day! Everywhere there is laxity. Immorality, rather than being the exception, has almost become the rule!

But God, our text says, **“will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”** God already has brought a terrible judgment upon fornication, adultery, prostitution, and all immorality, by the diseases that result from these sins. In the Old Testament times the Lord reminded His people of Israel that if they did these detestable things, the land they lived in would be defiled, and He said: **“It will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.”** Lev. 18:28 In those days adulterers and adulteresses were put to death. Also homosexuals were to be punished in that way. **“If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.”** Lev. 20:13 How God will judge the sexually immoral on the Last Day is, above all, to be remembered. Such people, Paul writes, **“will not inherit the kingdom of God.”** Gal. 5:21 Such people as a result of their unbelief will be lost in hell. Let us, therefore, remember this exhortation of Scripture: **“Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”** Rom. 13:14

The last exhortation of our text has to do with the life of contentment we can have in the Lord.

3.

First, is the admonition: **“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have.”** This admonition is needed because we live in such a favored land where so many material possessions are available. The standard of living in our country is extremely high, especially as compared with the dire poverty experienced by millions of people. Some people in other countries, for example, look upon every one of us as being millionaires and think we live in palaces. Just because so many riches and material things are available in our land, there is so much coveting after the things we see others have. Not only do the store

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windows offer many attractions, and not only does our sinful flesh covet what we see our neighbor have, but also there is the coveting involved in gambling in many ways. [Even the United States Supreme Court has recently approved more gambling than now exists – betting on sports in every state!]

No matter what the attraction may be, and no matter how many people make money and material possessions their god, we as believers in Christ are to guard against covetousness and be content with what we have. We are to remember that the Lord gives us what we have, and He gives some more than others. James says: ***“Every good and perfect gift is from above.”*** James 1:17 Working hard to make a living is commendable, but we should not work so that we make the almighty dollar our god! The Bible says: ***“A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.”*** Prov. 28:20.

The Lord would have us be content with what He has supplied for our needs. Paul told Timothy: ***“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”*** I Tim. 6:6-8

The second thought in this part of our text is the reason why we should be content with what we have, ***“because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”*** This is a most comforting promise from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. For those who are poor in this world’s goods, here is sure help. God says that He will never forsake us. He knows perfectly well what we have, for He has given it. He knows also what we need, and He can supply it. Knowing that our blessings come from the Lord, we ought to be happy and satisfied with whatever He gives. We ought to realize that He does for us whatever is for our spiritual good. This is also a most comforting promise that we have in our text when we look to the future. When we are old and can work no more, God promises that He will not leave us or forsake us. If we are disabled and cannot work, He can provide for us. Therefore we need not worry about the future. David’s experience will be ours. He says: ***“I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.”*** Ps. 37:25

Our text concludes with these words: ***“So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my Helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’*** Even if our stand for the truth of God’s Word results in our losing everything we have, we still have the Lord as our Helper. We need not fear. He can richly supply us again with all we need and more. Therefore, we should do as David says: ***“Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him. ... Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.”*** Ps. 37:5 and 4 Thus we can and will be content in the Lord. We know not what the future holds, but we know who controls the future, and in Him we trust.

“May He teach us to fulfill
What is pleasing in His sight,
Perfect us in all His will,
And preserve us day and night.” Amen.

(The Lutheran Hymnal 51:2)

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