

St. Luke 10:13-16

Dear Friends in Christ,

It's in Psalm 49 where the Sons of Korah remind us: "Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish." (v. 12) It's that "pomp" part that's of interest. People are basically full of themselves; so much so that God's Word is the monster of offense. The reason the world hates Jesus and ridicules the Word of God is set forth in Jesus' words: "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil." (Jn. 7:7) And then comes the world's outrage: "People are basically good!" History says otherwise. We humans love to impress ourselves! We breathe for a while, make a few audible squeaks, and pass. That's it!

I find the most sobering words of Psalm 49 are these: "Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol, death shall be their shepherd...Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell." (v. 14) Can you imagine that? Apart from God, our shepherd is death. Apart from God, death does not mean oblivion. It means unending dying, and who can understand that? No light. No love. No good times with good friends. We've got to move beyond . . .

HEY, WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

I. Simple, Clear Words.

I'm taking us back to those words of Jesus: "The world...hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil." *It's works are evil!* I want to connect that with these words from the Old Testament that the Holy Spirit had Paul write into the New Testament Epistle to the Romans: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God." (3:10-11) Very simple - very clear - words.

And then, these words from the Old Testament that really fire-up the coals of self-righteousness: "All have turned aside; together they have become worthless." (Rom. 3:12a) People here have argued about the use of the word "worthless" to describe our condition before God. Well, if you don't like the word "worthless" you can substitute the word the Old King James Version uses: "unprofitable", which, of course, amounts to "worthless"!

In our text, the Lord Jesus pronounced "woes" against those who rejected His words and works which testified to Who He is; namely, God in the flesh Who entered His creation to address man's fallen condition; to address why we get old and die - why we have accidents and die - why there are diseases and we die - why there are hatred and killing and we die - why there is greed and people starve and die. Why? Sin. Death is the paycheck we earn for our sin.

Christ's teachings and miracles were the works He did in these places He mentions in our text. He pronounced the woes against them because they did not repent. So, here we go . . .

II. Woes!

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. (vv. 13,14)

Concerning Chorazin and Bethsaida, P. E. Kretzmann wrote in his commentary:

Great miracles had been done in their midst, and the people had been willing enough to be entertained, but the words of eternal love out of the mouth of Jesus had made no impression upon them." (P. E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary of The Bible, New Testament, Vol. I., CPH, St. Louis, 1921, p. 322)

Those words of Kretzmann were published in 1921. They are now! “The people had been willing enough to be entertained, but the words of eternal love...made no impression upon them.” That’s where most of the church is today. They want to be entertained, but not too deeply involved in the Word. “I know the Bible says Jesus loves me, but, hey, what’s for lunch?” Do you remember what Jesus said to the skeptics then and the ones now? “The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me...”. (Jn. 10:25) His Word and works are what flow to us through the Scriptures and Sacraments. I want the Word because the Word is Life. Lunch can wait.

And then there was Capernaum: “And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.” (v. 15) I ask you to listen to Kretzmann’s take on Capernaum:

“And Capernaum also, which had been lifted up to heaven by the fact that Jesus made this city His headquarters during His Galilean ministry, would receive the full measure of His wrath on the last day and be forcefully thrust down to hell. Note: there is a word of warning here for all Christians. They have Christ in their midst for years...generations, in the printed and in the spoken Word of the Gospel. But how often is Jesus neglected and overlooked in the Christian homes! (Ibid, Kretzmann, p. 322)

III. Lunch Can Wait.

And then, the final words of Jesus from our text: “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” (v. 16)

While, in the one sense, what Jesus says in our text for this morning is addressed to the first disciples, in fact, it is spoken to the church for all times. When others hear our individual or collective proclamations of God’s Word and if those proclamations are faithful to the Scriptures, the others hear Jesus. If they reject what we’re saying they reject Jesus. And if they reject Jesus they reject the Father Who sent Him. They reject God! And Jesus said it: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (Jn. 14:6) And this: “Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.” (Jn. 5:23b) And this: “Whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” (Jn. 3:18b)

The point of all this? We have been entrusted with much! The point? There is too much of this world - way too much! - that pulls - distracts us. The further point? For the Christian, life is not about the guarantee of worldly satisfaction. It’s about serving, living and dying in Christ.

Our post sermon hymn is “Jesus, Refuge of the Weary.” While it is traditionally one of our Lenten hymns, it is appropriate most any time. Its three stanzas say everything.

From the first stanza: “Jesus...Fountain in life’s desert dreary.” We sing it. Do we see it? This world: “Life’s - desert - dreary.” Most, including a whole bunch of church folks, don’t see it that way; at least not until the day of *everything falling apart*.

And then, those words of great comfort: “Often have Your eyes, offended, Gazed upon the sinners fall;/ Yet upon the cross extended, You have born the pain of all.” And He has. The pain of what should be our suffering and hell for our sin.

From the second stanza: “Do we pass that cross unheeding, Breathing no repentant vow,/ Though we see you wounded, bleeding, See Your thorn encircled brow?” Does it happen to us? That, suddenly, we join with the citizens of Chorazin and Bethsaida wanting mostly entertainment? Looking forward, mostly, to the next round of...? Is it mostly, “What’s for lunch?”

Or, are there those moments when we run to Capernaum? We have the presence of the Lord in the Word and Sacraments - but it's too easy to walk away. Everything fades.

And from the third stanza: "Jesus, may our hearts be burning With more fervent love for You;/ May our eyes be every turning to behold Your cross anew/ Till in Glory, parted never From the blessed Savior's side,/ Graven in our hearts forever, Dwell the cross, the Crucified." That's it, isn't it? That's the issue; the cross of Christ that has won forgiveness and eternal life for us.

I was thinking of the words of Peter: "...God shows no partiality... To him (Jesus) all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts. 10:34b & 43) And Paul declares to the elders at Ephesus: "...I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable...testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:20-21) This is what threads it way through all Scripture: forgiveness of sin - eternal life! Not a few years of sweating to keep ourselves fed and sheltered only to be dumped into a grave. But Life forever because of Jesus!

Lunch can wait - if you know what I mean. Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott

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St. Luke 10:13-16:

“Hey, What’s for Lunch”

- I. Simple, Clear Words.*
- II. Woes!*
- III. Lunch Can Wait!.*

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