

Vesper for the Tuesday following the Sixth Sunday after Trinity Sunday

1 Samuel 28:3-25

July 25th, 2017

ELDoNA Summer Youth Camp

Dixon Springs State Park, IL

Pastor Jerald Dulas

Why Then Do You Lay a Snare for My Life?

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

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

Saul gives us an example of what happens when a person turns away from Lord God and tries to handle the trials and tribulations of this life on his own. It is a familiar scene: a person petitions the Lord God for help, and not receiving the answer that the person wants fast enough, or on their timeline, they attempt to solve the situation through their own feeble logic and works. Instead of simply waiting for an answer from the Lord God in patient faith, when things do not progress as fast as we would like in times of trouble, we take matters into our own hands, which does not usually solve the problem.

This is not the first time that Saul was impatient for the Lord's response. Early in his kingship Saul was once again set to do battle with the Philistines, but they were under instructions to wait for the Prophet Samuel to offer sacrifices to the Lord God. However, when the Prophet Samuel did not show up by the time he had told Saul he would show up, Saul took matters into his own hand and made the sacrifice himself, because the people that were gathered to fight the Philistines were starting to leave. It was because of this that Saul is told for the first time that his kingdom would be taken away from him and his family and given to another.

A short time later, Saul is given command to destroy completely the Amalekites, both men, women and children, and all their livestock. He was also to kill the king of the Amalekites, Agag. But what does Saul do, he leaves Agag alive and keeps for himself and the Israelites the best of the livestock. For, he reasoned within himself, contrary to what the Lord God and told him through the Prophet Samuel, that these were too good to be destroyed, and that they should be used for sacrifice to the Lord instead. But, this is not what the Lord commanded Saul, and the Prophet Samuel hands down the punishment from the Lord: I have chosen another person to be king. That person was David, the shepherd.

This transgression of Saul is mentioned in the reading, "Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day." Saul's continuous problem is that he does not listen to the Lord, nor wait for the Lord to respond to his prayers, and does things contrary to what the Lord says and desires. For this, Saul and his sons will perish in the coming battle with the Philistines. Moreover, the army of Israel will suffer defeat at the hands of the Philistines. Things can, and often do, go just as bad for us when we disregard the Lord God's Word and try to solve our tribulations by our own logic and working.

Saul does something even worse, though, on his last days on Earth: not hearing from the Lord God on his timetable, and not from any of the usual means, he seeks to get a response through the use of witchcraft. As we learn from our catechism instruction, this is a breaking of the Second Commandment. The Second Commandment is all about the use of our tongues in speech about the Lord God. We can use our tongues to praise God, and call upon God and pray to God. But, we can also use our tongues to curse God, and swear falsely concerning, use witchcraft and other means to call upon devilish and demonic sources apart from the Lord God. We can also use our tongues to lie about and deceive people regarding Lord God.

Saul has clearly stopped calling upon God, and now seeks to use satanic arts to get the answer he wants. The thing is, I believe Saul already knows what the answer is, but he is ignoring it. His fear and trepidation give him away. The entire army of the Philistines is amassed against Saul and the Israelites. The Philistines no longer fears the Israelite army, because David is currently living in Philistine territory, and not with the Israelites. The Philistines feared David, but they did not fear Saul. And Saul feared the Philistines, especially after seeking and not receiving some word of comfort or hope from God. But no such words were going to come from the Lord God, for Saul had forsaken Him. He did not really want to hear what the Lord God had to say, he wanted to be told what he wanted to hear.

Saul does not even get to hear this after going through all the deception in order to use the witchcraft of the woman from En Dor. The message he receives is the truth of God's prophecy. He will be killed and Israel will be defeated in battle. This is the fate of those who do not obey the voice of the Lord given through His Word.

When we find ourselves in similar situations, it is time for us to stop trying to convince God into handling our situation according to our ideas and desires, and simply wait patiently for Him to give us an answer in His time and according to His will.

We can only do this through faith. Faith is strengthened and renewed through by the Holy Ghost, whenever we participate in the means He uses to create and renew our faith. Through the Word of God, the Holy Ghost retells us the promises of God. He reminds us that we have a loving God, Who wants us to be happy and have all good things. He even won for us by the death of His Son + Jesus forgiveness, life and salvation on the tree of the holy cross. The Holy Ghost baptized us into the death of our Lord + Jesus in our Holy Baptism, and whenever we daily remember our Holy Baptisms, the Holy Ghost is there reminding us that we have been washed clean and free from sin. We are reminded that God loves us so much that He claimed us as His very own child.

Like a loving earthly Father, our heavenly Father does not want anything bad to happen to us. Sometimes He allows us to suffer trial and tribulation, however, to teach us to be patient and learn to trust in Him that He will deliver us in due time. Saul never seemed to learn this lesson. David, however, the next king, learned and used patience throughout the entire time that he was on the run from Saul and his other enemies. He knew that the Lord God would rescue him and bring all the things that the Lord God and prophesied about him to come to pass in God's time and according to His will.

David was a picture of the Son of David, our Lord + Jesus Christ. He would patiently endure in His earthly life and the trials and temptations that His enemies—the devil, the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees—would hurl at Him. Our Lord + Jesus would patiently endure these attacks until He succumbed on the tree of the holy cross. Thereby sealing the atonement of the whole world, and justification for all those who believe on His Name.

When we remember our Holy Baptisms, the Holy Ghost is working through that remembrance to open our ears to hear that we are buried with Christ in our Holy Baptism, so that we are now dead

to sin, and alive in Christ + Jesus. Sin no longer has dominion over us. We now have a loving heavenly Father, Who promises to take care of our every need. He will rescue us from our trials and troubles. He will not leave us in our anguish forever. This is His promise to us. Therefore, we can continue to call upon Him and pray to Him and petition His holy Name, for He will answer us in due time.

But, we must guard against seeking answers from false and pernicious doctrines and words. These false words do not provide real answers, but only serve to drive a wedge between us and God, as they did with Saul. Therefore, turn away from the answers of the world and your flesh, for these answers are really deceptions and lies of the devil.

Instead turn to the Lord God and His Word. Remember and believe what the Lord has taught you, and what He always wants you to hear: He will answer your prayer according to His will and according to His timeframe. For He loves you and wants you to be happy. He proved this when He sent His very own Son—His Only-Begotten Son—to fulfill a Law which we are unable to fulfill, and to suffer and die in our place on the tree of the holy cross, so that we might have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. He further proves this when He sends us His Holy Ghost to implant His Word into our hearts through the means of grace, so that we learn to patiently trust in Him to rescue us from all trial and tribulation.

May the Lord God Almighty open our ears to hear His holy Word, that we might be strengthened in our faith and trust and rely on Him patiently in all trouble and lean on our Lord + Jesus Christ and His works of salvation for us. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.