

A Day of Humiliation and Prayer
St. Matthew 6:16-21
May 3rd, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Do Not Lay Up for Yourselves Treasures on Earth

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.

Today is the National Day of Prayer. Unfortunately, this day passes with very little announcement. After all, May the Fourth Be with You and Cinco de Mayo are much more important festivals in the life of our society. Nobody cares to stop and take time to pray. The Apostles once asked the Lord + Jesus to teach them to pray. They wanted to know how to pray. In our society today, people not only do not know how to pray, they do not even have the desire to pray. Prayer has already been removed from schools. And, even in the public places where pray is still observed, if you pray to the One, True, Triune God and ask for the repentance of our nation, you will probably not be asked back. In fact, you will probably end up in some meme about how hateful and exclusive you are.

This is why it is important for we as Christians to gather together on this day and pray for our society. We must humble ourselves and recognize that every good thing comes from our Lord God, even a just and religious society. If we are to hope for a return of our society to one that has less animosity towards us as Christians, it is going to come from the work and will of our Lord God. He is the one that orders all things. He is the one that allows us to endure this society that hates us.

Why? Well, one reason is that He desires that we live in humility. He desires us to know that not only do we live in a corrupt society, but that we ourselves are corrupt with sin. We add to the troubles of society through our sinfulness, just as much as our neighbor does. Therefore, when we see the sad state of our society, it should remind us that sin is in the world; that sin is in us, and that we should ask our Lord God for forgiveness. As the psalmist said in the psalm, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven." If we are not aware of our sin, we are also not aware of our need for forgiveness. And so, the Lord allows us to live in a corrupt society so that we might ever cling to Him in faith for His rescue.

Another reason our Lord God allows us to live in this corrupt society, is so that we might be a beacon of salvation to all those lost souls who live in darkness, so that they might be led by the Holy Ghost to come into the Church—to come into the Light of Christ—and have their blind eyes open to see their salvation.

Finally, our Lord God allows us to live as citizens in this corrupt land, so that we might never lose sight of the fact that we are only sojourners and foreigners in this land. Our citizenship is in Heaven. Our home is in Heaven. It is the place to which we should always be longing to go home. This life in

this society is only temporary. It will not last. Our home in Heaven is eternal. It will last for all eternity. So then, our Lord + Jesus tells us in the Gospel reading that we should not lay up treasures for ourselves on Earth. The things that we have in this life will not be brought with us to the next.

Everything we have been given in this life—our families, our homes, our cars, our money, our jobs, our health, even this society and government—have all been given to us by our Lord God. He has given them to us not so that we may think of them as our possessions, but that we might always remember that everything we have belongs to the Lord God, and we are only stewards—managers and caretakers—of the things that we possess.

Therefore, we should order our whole life and all of our possessions to glorify God and to serve our neighbor, just as we learn from the Ten Commandments. How does this play out in our daily lives? Our families have been given to us, therefore we have an obligation to teach them the Word of God, and raise them as Christians, so that they may in turn do the same. Our possessions should serve to benefit our neighbors, and not just ourselves. This society thinks the opposite thing. Everybody gets to do with their possessions whatever they want to do with them. They get to be, or identify as, anybody they want to be.

But, this is not why the Lord God has given us these gifts. He has given them to us to serve our neighbor. In so doing we show our love for our neighbor. For, what is love? Love is sacrificing your will for the benefit of another. When we use our possessions for the benefit of our neighbor, we are showing our love for him, because we are taking what is of our own and using it for their benefit. We are sacrificing our possessions for our neighbor. We are also showing that we truly do believe that this life is only temporary and that we will not keep the things which we now possess. We are doing what our Lord + Jesus told us to do in the Gospel, not lay up treasures for yourself on Earth.

We are to instead keep before us the treasures of Heaven. These treasures our Lord + Jesus won for us, by showing His love for us. In that, while we were still sinners—while we were still foreigners and strangers in the Kingdom of Heaven—our Lord + Jesus Christ came down from Heaven and took upon Himself our flesh, so that He might fulfill the whole Law and will of God and suffer and die for us. He emptied Himself of His heavenly treasures, so that we might have all the treasures of Heaven—forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

Therefore, let us pray on this National Day of Prayer a prayer of thanksgiving for all that our Lord + Jesus has done for us. Let us also pray for our government, that it may use the sword that has been given to it for the punishment of evil doers, and for the establishment of righteousness. Let us pray for our society that it might humble itself and turn away from its sinfulness, so that they might no longer live in darkness, but be shown the Light of Christ, and the salvation that is found in Him alone. Let us pray for our fellow man—our neighbors—that they might cease their enmity toward us and be inclined to walk with us in meekness and in peace. And finally, let us pray for ourselves, that the Lord God might not only show us our sin, but lead us into repentance, so that in faith we may cling to the cross of our Lord + Jesus Christ, and the salvation that He won for us there, and that finally on our last day on this earth, He may take us from this valley of tears, to our home in Heaven. 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.

Soli Deo gloria!