

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 6:24-34
September 24th, 2017
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church
Greenville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

All These Things Shall Be Added to You

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.

There are many people who are not aware of this, but there are only two kinds of religion in the world. Let me repeat that so that it sinks in, "There are only two kinds of religion in the world." Now these two kinds of religion manifest themselves in many and various ways, but there are still only two kinds of religion in the world: the religion of man and the religion of God. The religion of man seeks salvation from the world, placing its trust in its works, in its reputation, and in its place among men. The religion of God places its trust solely in the Lord God and what He has done for us, namely, that the Son of God has come down from Heaven to fulfill the Law of God for us, and to take on our punishment on the tree of the holy cross.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ in the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Matthew talks to His disciples about these two religions in His Sermon on the Mount. The religion of the world worships mammon. What is mammon? Some translations of the Bible translate the word to mean, "money." Surely "money" is included in the definition of mammon. But, mammon is more than just money. Mammon is all your worldly possessions: your house; your clothing; what you eat and drink; your friends and family—all those from whom you seek comfort in this world. Every earthly thing that you possess in this world is mammon.

Those who place their trust in their worldly possessions, have a false god. They are worshiping mammon. You see, this is a First Commandment issue. The First Commandment forbids us to have any other gods than the One, True Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But, the First Commandment also requires us to fear, love and trust only the Triune God. When we worry and fret over our earthly possessions—or more precisely, over our lack of earthly possessions compared to our neighbor—we have set up a false god. If we worry about things, it is a good indicator that we are breaking the First Commandment, for we are not simply trusting the Lord God for all that we have.

What this means is that we have allowed mammon to rule over us. We have allowed our earthly possessions to be our master and lord. Unfortunately, there will be no salvation through the harsh, task master of mammon. This is why we need to make mammon our servant. Mammon needs to serve us, not the other way around. Our earthly possessions should only be to us benefits that make our life easier, and help us to serve and show love for our neighbor. In other words, we need to switch our religion from the religion of man, to the religion of God.

The religion of God worships the One, True, Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost and serves only Him. As I said before, the defining characteristic of the religion of man is worry. Well, the defining characteristic of the religion of God is faith. Faith in God cures all our worries. For in faith we know that God will provide us whatever we ask, in His own way and according to His timeline. We may have to wait, but the Lord God will grant us what we ask in diligent faith. And, I say diligent faith, because we should not think that since we prayed for it once, then we have actually prayed for it in faith. No, faith keeps on asking; keeps on begging the Lord for what we desire until we either realize we do not need it, or the Lord grants it to us. Faith knows that all these things will be added to us.

Why? Because faith trusts in greater things than the earthly things of this world. Faith trusts in all the spiritual gifts that our Lord provides over and above all our earthly possessions. This is what it means to make mammon your servant. Understanding that we have a greater Lord and Master Who gives us all that we need to support this body and life, but more so, He provides us with His great spiritual gifts: forgiveness for our sins, rescue and guarding from the assaults of the devil, the world and our sinful flesh, and He promises us an eternal home in Heaven with all the saints who have gone before us. These spiritual gifts cannot be destroyed. We can certainly forsake them, which is what we do whenever we place our trust in our earthly possessions, but they cannot be destroyed.

Your home can be destroyed in a hurricane, or by flooding. You can lose all your clothes but what you are wearing. All your food can become rotten because you lost power and no way to keep it cool. You can even lose potable water, because the water system has become contaminated. You can lose your income, because you lost your employment. The flowers on the altar will wither and die, and be thrown in the trash, even though they look good today. All these things can, and probably will be, taken from you, for they will not last.

The question is, when this happens, are you going to be the person, who worships according to the religion of man, who says, “I’ve lost everything”? Or, are you going to be the person, who worships according to the religion of God, who standing next to all your destroyed belongings, says, “I have lost nothing. For I possess all the spiritual gifts of God on account of my Holy Baptism, wherein He called me His child, and adopted me into His heavenly Kingdom. My Holy Baptism cannot be destroyed, and all the good gifts granted to me in my Holy Baptism cannot be destroyed, either. No, I have not lost a thing, for I still have my Holy Baptism, and therefore still have all that I need for this life: forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation.”

This is what faith will do for you. It will make you a servant of God, but it will also make you a lord over your mammon. Do not let your mammon rule over you. Take charge! Be the ruler of mammon, and do not worry, for through your faith, you learn to trust that the Lord God will provide you all that you need. He has already provided you will all that you need to inherit an eternal home in Heaven. Trust Him that He will provide you what earthly needs you may have.

But, you may say, “How does one obtain such faith?” The answer is simple, “Through the hearing of the Word.” That is what St. Paul wrote to the Roman Church, “Faith comes by hearing.” This is why it is important for you to be here today—why it is important for everyone to be here—because through the constant reminders of our Holy Baptism in the Liturgy, and through the preaching and absolution by the Pastor through the Word of God, and through the placing of the Lord’s Body and Blood upon your lips in bread and wine, the Holy Ghost is working to create and sustain faith in you. You are hearing the Word of the Lord, right now. That means that the Holy Ghost is working on you, right now. He is here, using His hammer to destroy your heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh, which trusts in the Lord God for all His good gifts.

The Holy Ghost is here to open your eyes to see your Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. He is showing us our sin, how great it is; He is showing us that we are indeed poor, miserable sinners, who

continually place our trust in our earthly possessions. But, He is also showing us how to repent; to turn away from those things which perish, to those heavenly things which cannot be destroyed. He is turning our eyes to the cross of our Lord + Jesus Christ, Who humbled Himself by taking on our flesh, and living our lives, and experiencing all the things that we experience in this life, even death. But, His death was a ransom for our lives. He bought us, and all the world, from the power of sin, death and the devil, so that we no longer need to worship according to the religion of the world.

And through His death, He won for us the opportunity to participate in the means of grace through faith. He even gives us this faith by the work of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, so that we can rejoice in the good gifts which He daily and richly provides for us.

The religion of the world teaches us to worry. The religion of God teaches us to not doubt, but believe that our heavenly Father knows that we have need of all these things, and gives them to us richly. He has made you His child, and as your loving Father, He will supply you with all that you need. He will supply you with things that cannot be destroyed. He has already given you these things: forgiveness of your sins, eternal life in Heaven, and salvation from the power of sin, death and the devil. The Lord + Jesus always grant you faith through His Word to see how much He cares for you and loves you and supplies all your needs. 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.