

Rev. Seth D. Bode † Sermon 335, 08-18-2019 † Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

"Lord God, You have appointed me as a bishop and pastor in Your Church, but You see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked Your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon Your Word. Use me as Your instrument -- but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all."

"Sir, we would see Jesus."

Luke 11

²⁷While he was saying these things, a woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that carried you, and the breasts at which you nursed!"

²⁸But he said, "Even more blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it."

²⁹As the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation. It is seeking a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. ³¹The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. But look, one greater than Solomon is here. ³²The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. But look, one greater than Jonah is here.

³³"No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place or under a basket, but on a stand so that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴Your eye is the lamp of the body. When your eye is good, your whole body is full of light. But when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵Therefore, see to it that the light that is in you is not darkness. ³⁶So if your whole body is full of light, without any dark part, it will be completely full of light, as when a lamp shines on you with bright light."



Intro / Children's Message: *a safe with a Bible inside*

The truest treasure of the Church is the Word of God. Jesus explained that one day when He was teaching the people. Suddenly a woman shouted a blessing on Mary, the mother of Jesus, who gave him birth and nursed him. Was his mother perhaps a goddess? wonders the woman. No. All nations would call Mary blessed, because she did the important work of giving birth to God Himself. But Mary is also a sinner, and in the Bible she made one or two mistakes. Jesus had earlier identified his mother and brothers as those who "hear God's word and put it into practice" (8:21). He repeats the same thought now, expressing himself in the form of a beatitude: "Even more blessed are those who hear God's Word and keep it." They are fortified against the evil one. The word for "keeping" God's Word means to "observe" or "practice." But it also means to "guard," "defend," and "keep," like a safe holds and guards and keeps something treasured and valuable. Paul tells us today, "Let the Word of God dwell in you richly," like a safe. So our hearts are like a safe where we hold this treasure. How? by looking in your Bible, reading Bible books, listening to your Sunday school teacher and pastor, and by memorizing Bible passages. Nothing can take away what you know in your head and trust with all your heart. The truest treasure of the Church is the Word of God.

JESUS' BLESSINGS GO A LONG WAY

I. TO BELIEVERS BEFORE HIS TIME

A. In Jesus' time, there were continued demands for a sign. They hoped for a real magic show.

Jesus had just cast out a demon. Still they wanted a different kind of miracle. Unfortunately, the miracles Jesus did amounted to unconvincing proof for them.

So Jesus called them wicked. His own generation—the people who walked and talked with the Son of God Himself—rejected the blessedness of hearing and obeying His Word. They failed to follow the example of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba.

Sin is always the cause for this kind of wickedness. Our first problems are our worst problems, the sins of closing our ears and hearts to the message of faith.

Jesus pointed out that considerably wicked people of the past listened to the Word and received blessing. Solomon preached to the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1–10, 13) and told her about the Messiah and all His wisdom. Jonah preached to the cruel Ninevites of ancient Assyria and held out a greater hope for those who would repent. Those Gentiles did. They believed in the promises of the Old Testament, they trusted in the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, and they repented.

Jesus is greater than both Solomon and Jonah. His work of salvation counts eternally. He is not bound to space or time. SO the promises of the Messiah in the Old Testament would comfort and strengthen believers of old. Abraham's faith was credited as righteousness. Jeremiah called God by the name, "The Lord our Righteousness." King David said he trusted God, and God delivered him. Habakkuk said that "the righteous will live by faith."

Will you hear the Word? Will you keep it? It's important to hear God's Word. It is all the more important to guard it and keep it and dial your life according to it.

II. TO SINNERS WHO KEEP HIS WORD

A. No sign was needed ... because they had Jesus there. One way Jesus decided to point that out is by explaining how He Himself is like the light of a lamp.

One only has to look to see that a lamp is burning. One only has to look at Jesus, His preaching and His works to see that He is of God. Jesus is for all to see.

Yet some do not see. The problem is not the lighted lamp. The problem is bad eyes. Jesus speaks of the eye as being the lamp of the body. The eye lets light into the body, and we would be in total darkness without eyes. If we don't see well, then there is something wrong with our eyes.

This is no physiology lesson, but a lesson for our souls. Those who don't see Jesus, the burning lamp, continue in darkness. But when the eye of faith sees Jesus, the true Light, this seeing will make a Christian into a light burning in this dark world.

God enlightens the sinner, but what exactly will enlighten our hearts? Isn't it the message of forgiveness? Isn't it the wonder of wonders that Jesus took our place? Isn't it the beauty of beauties that He listened to His Father when we refused to pay any attention? Isn't it a marvel that God shines on our dark hearts?

Some of us may still say, but God, why didn't you urge me to listen better? Why didn't you assist me more when I needed you, so that I could hear the Word? Why must it be my fault if things you have to say aren't so interesting or applicable? The way we sinners see it, God may seem bland, irrelevant, and out of touch.

But I'm telling you, God's Word is already relevant to your life. We don't have to make it relevant, it truly is about seeing its relevance. Look more closely! Upon further inspection, you will see that looking closer brings great blessings.

If you hide in a dark basement, it doesn't mean the sun forgot to rise. And if you've spent some time in the sun, but you decide to go hide in cold darkness for the rest of the day, it's no fault of the sun. Further, if you step into a walk-in freezer and die on a sunny day, you don't get to question the intensity, warmth, or brightness of the sun. There's a paradox -- freezing to death on a sunny day! That is just as paradoxical as denying the justification and forgiveness of the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Author and Finisher of salvation.

This blessing goes such a long way that it brings us to heaven forever. Keeping and guarding the blessing that is won on the cross is like dwelling in the Light. Trust in Jesus, God's Son, and you bask in the sun of salvation.

In Jesus' name, Amen.
