

We live in a culture of deceit and lies, and it should come as no surprise to anyone. Such behavior is yet more evidence of our fallen nature as a human race ever since sin made its way into the world. Language is manipulated to create a preferred reality. A recent example of this is a powerful Congress Woman got caught being a diva and blames everyone else but herself. The real questions that most of the media will not ask is why was she in a salon closed to the public and why was she not wearing a mask everyone else has to wear? Saying she was set up is an example of manipulating language to achieve a desire end. Which in her case, is a lie. She chose to do this and she is responsible for the outcome. But, shifting the responsibility to someone else is not new to our culture. It's always someone else's fault, never the one who actually did the deed.

Jesus said that certain prophets, meaning false teachers, and even kings will not see or hear what ordinary people have seen and heard, because they are too blind and deaf with ill- conceived power. The collect for today makes clear that the gift of belief comes only to God's faithful. Those who engage in true and laudable service to Him. Those who faithfully serve him will receive his heavenly promises; no one else.

Many people make up their own religion. Making it softer and easier to practice in their own minds. The Gospel today points to the Lawyer who "tempted" Jesus by asking him a trick question. "Who is my neighbor," he asked. He was expecting

our Lord to give the typical Jewish answer – only Jews. But that was not the answer the lawyer received.

Here I have to bring in two theological terms as the means to understand Christ's answer more fully. Hermeneutics is the art of biblical interpretation; exegesis is the art of explaining the interpretation. Bridging hermeneutics – interpretation, and exegesis – explanation, brings about deeper understanding and clarity to the verse.

The Gospel is about spiritual truth. This world, by definition, is not. Christ said, he and the Father would make their presence in anyone who loves them. He was not addressing the person who says he loves God but doesn't need to go to church, that's man-made and false religion. The Commandment is "keep holy the sabbath" or Sunday. Meaning attend church every Sunday. Any attempt to manipulate these words is simply not true.

Let's look then at the spiritual truth the Parable of the Good Samaritan conveys to those who are not afraid to see with their eyes and listen with their ears, in faith.

A Man in lying in the street bleeding to death. He has been robbed and beaten unmercifully. Psalm 17:9 says "Protect me from my wicked enemies who surround me." Its taking about spiritual warfare. The attempt to overcome faithful people by hurting them. What are some of the ways they do this? Mischaracterization, lying about someone, mocking them for being religious, false accusations, jealousy,

envy, hate, phony priests and ministers who practice not what they preach, etc.

These and many others are what Satan uses to do harm to the human soul and spirit. Nothing whisks the spirit out of a person who discovers his priest is a liar.

What two examples of this is in the parable? First Priest sees the man and ignores him by crossing the street. A Deacon does likewise. Both theses men were clergy, God's representatives. One argument in support of these imposters is that they were Jews and Jews are God's people. It's difficult to justify stepping over and passing by a man bleeding to death in the streets. Secondly, in the Book of Genesis 17th chapter, God is calling Abraham. "Abram." He said, "walk with me and be thou perfect." Abraham was not a Jew; he was an Iraqi. Yet, it is he would have his name changed into Abraham and told by God that he would become the Father of many Nations. Even in the Church there is manipulation to Justify man-made religion. False teaching in the church brings about spiritual confusion. Jesus wept in the city of Jerusalem crying out how he wished to comfort its people in the same way a hen gathers her young under the protection of her wings, but they did not know him. And here we arrive at the root of the human predicament: A Nation that turns away from God will produce generations that do not know him.

Who then is the man who comes to the dying man's aid? It is God. He stops down and cleans the man's many wounds. He asks him not one question. God is like that.

He will come to the aid of his faithful and bind up their spiritual wounds, wounds of the heart and of the soul.

He then carries him to the nearest inn. Is this not the essence of the famous poem “Footprints?”

One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
“Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You’d walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don’t understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me.”

He whispered, “My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you.”

We would be well served if we stopped attempting to live in a false reality and embrace the poem above. God’s faithful know and live by these words.

The man is taken to an inn and the Samaritan informs the innkeeper to tend to his needs. He informs the innkeeper that when he returns he will give him more money to help the man heal.

The Inn represents the church of God. The innkeeper is either its Pastor or its congregation, collectively.

The moral of this parable is in a world full of lies, deceit, and spiritual warfare all of which wounds the soul there is the church. The only source of truth, faith and healing.