**From The Mouth Of The Lord**

**Matt. 7:15-23 & Jere. 23:16-29**

Trinity VIII – August 2, 2020

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

There are statements made by Christian teachers and preachers today which sound nice. For example, “God loves you as you are. He is happy with you as long as you follow your heart and love others.” Oh, really?

What did God say after the flood waters subsided? “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though **every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood.** And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.” (Gen. 8:21)

Jesus declares that one does not even need to sleep with someone who is not your spouse to commit adultery but declares that even **lust in the heart** is adultery. (Matt. 5:28)

As I pointed out a couple weeks ago Jesus spoke about what goes into a man in this way, Jesus said, “Are you still lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For **out of the heart come** evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man.” (Matt. 15:16-20)

I know it sounds nice to be advised to follow your heart, but should we? Especially if it is in violation of God’s Word? Should we follow our heart just because some preacher, someone who claims too speak in God’s behalf tells us to?

What does God advise? Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.' "

“If you do your best, God will love you and forgive you. As long as you are trying hard He doesn’t care what else you do.” Oh, really?

Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.' "

I know how hard life is in the world, and to seriously think that we are better than others. It is truly tempting to look around and see the absolutely vile evil that is rampant in the world, and to think that we are better than that. In regard to the degree, or level of evil, that maybe true.

This does not however mean that our hearts, and indeed we ourselves, are not sinful? That is why we confess of ourselves, “I, a poor, miserable, sinner…”

Dear friends in Christ, how bad is your sinfulness? Is it a serious thing? Or is it just a little thing? Living in farm country, how many of you, if a minuscule piece or manure got into a pitcher of lemonade would drink it? You can even see the little speck and get it out with a spoon. Would you get that speck out drink the rest? Or would you consider the whole thing ruined? Just that speck of manure taints it and makes the whole batch fit for the toilet bowl.

So is your sinfulness. One tiny little speck, one minuscule little sin, gives evidence of the sinfulness that is in our hearts. You and I are sinners through and through – poor, miserable, sinners. We can each declare of ourselves, as did the Apostle Paul, and then Luther, “I am a worm and no man.”

You and I are fit for nothing more than the wrath of God, flushing us away.

There are many in sheep’s clothing, many claiming to be under-shepherds in Christ’s church, who are liars, and false prophets, those dreaming dreams from the imagination of their own hearts. They would excuse you in your sinfulness and not call you to repentance. They say that certain sins are not so bad. They would have people believe that God does not condemn sinners.

God is not far off. He is not a distant God. He is near. He knows all and sees all. He has given His word, but more and more pastors, modern day prophets, prophecy or speak the deception of their own heart. They try to make people happy in order to build a name for themselves by being the “nice, loving pastor.” They do not speak God’s law in its fulness so that they can build up their church membership. These charlatans masquerade compromise and label is comfort.

God speaks through Jeremiah saying. “How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord. Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”

Hear the word of the Lord. Repent for the forgiveness of sins. Did not Christ come to give His life as the ransom for many? Did not John proclaim, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?” Just before His ascension, Jesus gives the disciples their preaching task. “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:44 48 NASB)

Where there is no repentance, there is no forgiveness. Where God’s Word is not proclaimed in such a way that people are driven to know of their need for repentance, people will not repent. It is those who do not understand their sinfulness that despise the very work of Christ upon the cross of Calvary.

Yes, on the last day all will stand before Christ in judgement. On that day, some will explain that they called upon the name of Christ; preached in His name, did miracles in His name; and cast out demons in His name. Unfortunately, there will be those who make that claim of knowing Christ, and on that day, Christ will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me you workers of lawlessness.” Yes, today they speak in the name of Christ, on that last day Jesus will declare that He never knew them. They are those who today preach in Christ’s name, but tell people what people want to hear. It sounds comforting to people, but it is a violation of God’s command to them. These teachers compromise God’s Word so that they can be people pleasers.

There is something that God called His faithful prophets, apostles, and pastors to proclaim. Those who are faithful, proclaim His Word faithfully, a Word from His mouth. The faithful Word from His mouth strips you of your pride and drives you to your knees. It is boldly plain, and sometimes even painful at first. You and I are sinners. No, your sin may not have earned you jail time, but you are a sinner nonetheless. It may, in the grand scheme of things, seem to be an insignificant thing, hardly worth considering – to our worldly eyes.

Consider the pitcher of lemonade. Yeah, the one with that minuscule speck of manure. Want some? Just as the whole pitcher is ruined, so we are fit for nothing more than the toilet.

That dear friends is the Word that comes from the mouth of the Lord, it is like fire. It is like a hammer that breaks the rock into pieces. It exposes you in your sinfulness and calls it exactly what it is, the vile evil that would separate you from God.

But that is not the last Word from the mouth of the Lord.

It is also not the most important Word from God.

That Word of breaking though, has prepared you to hear the most important and final Word from God.

Christ is the very mouth of the Lord, the very final Word from God. He is the glorious Word from God. He is the Word of God which took on human flesh, your flesh and mine in the womb of Mary.

Christ, incarnate Word, came forth from God. He entered the waters of the Jordan. John baptized Him, Christ took into Himself your sin - large, small, minuscule. Upon the cross, He destroyed them, swallowing them up into His death, depositing them in His tomb, winning the victory over sin. Yes, it is finished.

Upon the cross the gifts which come from Christ, the mouth of the Lord, flow from His riven side – water and blood.

In your baptism, the water from the mouth of the Lord cleansed you of your sin and proclaimed, “this is my beloved son, in whom I am well-pleased.” By the mouth of the Lord, you are forgiven all sins and made His dear child.

The mouth of the Lord proclaimed that sins are forgiven. It is done at His command, that by the mouth of His faithful servants, they speak a Word from His mouth – just as the Father sent Him, so He sends His servant. When His called ministers proclaim sins forgiven, it is a Word from the mouth of the Lord which forgives sins also before God in heaven.

From the mouth of the Lord flows the Word of life. Christ is the Word to feed and nourish you. Christ is the Word which takes simple bread and wine and gives to us who eat it, the very body and blood of Christ. This is a Word of strength wherein sins are forgiven, eternal life granted, salvation bestowed, and faith strengthened.

From the mouth of the Lord comes life for you. The Word became flesh and gives life to the world – He gives His life to you now, and forevermore. Amen.