

November 14, 2010  
 The Twenty-fifth Sunday After Pentecost  
 St Peter Lutheran Church  
 Bowie, TX  
 Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13, Matthew 5:14-16, John 8:12-18

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. <sup>1</sup>

John 8:12-18 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” <sup>13</sup> So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.” <sup>14</sup> Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup> Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. <sup>18</sup> I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, <sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. <sup>9</sup> It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. <sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. <sup>11</sup> For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. <sup>13</sup> As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Most of you know that I took last Sunday off; but maybe you haven't heard what I was doing. I spent the weekend, from Friday through Sunday, at camp Lone Star in La Grange with Joshua at their annual Father Child weekend.

It was time well spent and Josh and I spent time doing things together in God's creation. Within that time we learned things about each other but also more about God, His creation and His Word. The weekend culminated with a worship service lead by the fathers and children that were on the weekend. Each child or parent chose a part of the service and I'll give you three guesses as to the part Josh and I chose. (The first 2 don't count) We chose a sermon, or message.

It was based on Matthew 5:14-16. You are the light of the World. Joshua read the Text and I shined a flashlight into his eyes; which prompted him to say: get the light out of my eyes, which led into the sermon.

Starting with the first night's campfire and singing, everyone had flashlights and were shining them around and usually ended up hitting someone in the face and the phrase "get the light out of my eyes" was said more than once.

How many times have we uttered that statement...either out loud or to ourselves? Maybe not in those words or maybe not even in the same context. I am leaning towards the context of Jesus being the Light of the world. From John, Jesus tells us: *"I am the light of the world."* He also tells us that *"You are the light of the world"* as we reflect His glory to the world. As we share the Gospel with the world!

We are called to do just that. Not to remain idle as Paul tells us in our Epistle.

In fact Paul says: *“that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.”* Not only to keep moving (2 Thess. 3:7) but to keep away from the ones who are walking in idleness.

How are you doing in that? Today and next Sunday we will be looking at the end times, which could be years from now...or today could be the day. We are called to live each day as if it is the last day. What about the person that you didn't quite get around to inviting to church. The one that you were planning on comforting with the Gospel next week? If Jesus came this afternoon...would you have any regrets?

Ashamed as I am to admit it; I would.

What about when God moves you to serve Him? To serve Christ's church? To sign up for Sunday School or VBS? To seriously look at evangelism to our community or to our own members that have absented themselves from our fellowship?

Has God called you to serve or to contact another that needs the Gospel? Everyone needs His Word; everyone needs Jesus...and how can we refuse? Jonah did. How did that work out for him? If you remember our Lenten sermon series last year you know that it didn't work very well. As Jonah ran from God, he faced a storm that threatened to sink the ship he was on. After everything else had been tried, the men prayed to their god's and cast lots to see who was responsible. When they fell on Job, his solution was to be thrown in the sea. After hitting the water, God calmed the seas and provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, saving him from the sea.

One of the insights that I learned while going over this with Josh was where the first mighty act of God happened. Was it the calming of the sea? The arrival of the fish? No. It was the storm.

God sent Jonah to Nineveh to carry His Word. Jonah didn't like the assignment and didn't like the people. He didn't deserve God's grace nor even a warning of His wrath, so he beat feet the other direction. He tried to go as far away as he could.

And as he ran from Nineveh...he ran from God. Yet God pursued him; and he got Jonah's attention with a storm! And the storm indeed got Jonah's attention as he turned his eyes towards God. But God also used this storm to reach the sailors who saw nothing from their false gods. Yet because of Jonah's disobedience, they learned of the one true God. The Creator of the all things who even commands the wind and the rain. God used Jonah's disobedience to reach out to lost souls. It still took Jonah three days in the belly of a fish to learn his lesson, to put him back on track.

But what does this have to do with us? Well are you running from God? Are you hiding the Light of the world under a bowl rather than allowing Him, your Savior, to shine through you? Or back to our Epistle, do you find yourself idle...and enjoying it? Hanging out with the thought that others are idle, so I can be to.

Think back to the verse from 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians I referred to earlier as Paul said: *"Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us."*

If you are holding back from doing something, from volunteering, from helping out in the church because someone else or no one else is doing anything, then not only are you hiding behind a false excuse, but you are running from God. You are going against the command of Christ that I just read. Paul is telling us that we should avoid those that are walking in idleness...

...and in that idleness in sharing the Gospel, we are not in the accord of Christ.

Wow; that's deep and scary.

Are you running from Christ's commands like Jonah ran from God? Jesus said *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."* So why are you trying to hide? As we approach the closing of the church year, it is time to begin planning on and not just planning but doing what our Lord has told us to do.

It's not too late. As God pursued Jonah; He has and will pursue you. Has it taken a storm to get your attention? God will do what is needed. Will it take a few days in the putrid, stinking belly of a fish? It has been done before; God will pull out the stops to keep you from running away; and it's all for your good. Romans 8:28 tells us that: *"...we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."*

God love you and He is longing for you to stop being idle; to follow His command to spread the Gospel (Mt. 28:19) and He will do whatever needs to be done to bring His prodigal , disobedient child back home. You see, even though we might hide our Gospel light under a bowl, or bushel like we sang it as children, God sent His only Son to die for you. You have been bought with a price. (1 Cor 7:23) That price was the blood of Jesus Christ your Savior.

While you were still a sinner, while you are still sinning, Jesus died for you. Paul tells us in Romans 8: <sup>8</sup> *"... God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

He goes on to tell us...to tell you that: <sup>9</sup> *Since, you have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by Jesus from the wrath of God.*

Whatever failings of things you have done or left undone...you are forgiven! You have been reconciled to God through the sacrifice of Christ. He gave Himself for you! Therefore we can indeed rejoice. As you repent of your sins you are forgiven and in that forgiveness, may we all “go and sin no more” (Romans 5:8-11, John 8:11, ESV)

In that wonderful forgiveness found only through faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior, may you indeed find the peace of God which passes all understanding. And May it keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

And the Peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

*S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria*