**July 21st 2024 Eighth Sunday after Trinity**

**Text: Matthew 10:26-31** 0729

**Theme: Truth Revealed.**

May the truth of God’s Word ever continue to be revealed and given free course to be preached in all the world so that the light of the truth may ever shine forth in this sin-darkened world. Amen. Dear friends in Christ: During this past convention one week ago, the LCR Administrator, Pastor Micheal Bowers, made a statement which made me think deeply about the state of our little congregation. He had noted the events found within the July One Accord and how God continues to bless and build His Church in spite of the best efforts of the old evil foe, the devil, who seeks to undermine her by false doctrine, looking to utterly destroy her. Now this comment started me to think about some of the events over the course of the past year. We have indeed lost a good number of members, but in spite of this God is gracious. We might often forget just how good He is, and what things He has done for us, and this is especially true through controversy and separation. Yet just think on what God has done for this congregation over the course of the past year. We have seen three weddings, five adults joining our congregation, two confirmations, an adult Baptism, and just today an infant Baptism of little Zorah. Let us not lose sight of God’s grace and goodness, for it is great, and while events may not seem to be to the benefit of the true visible church, we must remember what God says: *“for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Is.55:8-9)* It is unfortunate that our simplistic minds cannot elevate to the wisdom of God, and that our sinful nature prohibits us from a true understanding of God’s active and passive will. Let us all then humbly admit our ignorance according to the flesh which darkens our understanding, and causes us to be confused at certain events. Yet, let us never be found confused again, but through faith trust in God to provide for His true visible church as He always has.

Now the only remedy to our ignorance, our blindness, our sin-darkened hearts is to have them illuminated. In order to pierce darkness light must be shone, but falsity, ignorance, confusion do not illuminate, but only further darken things. Thus, it must be truth that illumines. Truth, knowledge, wisdom, and surety to enlighten us. This is declared by Paul when He says: *“From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3:15-17)* Paul’s words here shine forth like the sun when it rises each morning. The Word of God is that which illumines the heart of a sinner. This because it is perfect, it is from the infallible God, and therefore contains no error, no darkness, but only light and truth. Now it is obvious that a sinful, dark heart cannot receive these things, for light and darkness cannot co-exist. It is either light or dark, it is either true or false. Thus, it must be that God’s truth, His light must be revealed unto sinful man. For God’s thoughts are higher than ours. Yet this revelation is God’s very Word. And it is the Word itself which opens the understanding of man, as it is declared that the very hearing is produced by God’s Word. Now what did we witness today as we opened the service? We witnessed the very thing we here talk about. The illumination of a heart by the opening of the eyes of this little child. She today received the truth of the Gospel, and faith which trusts such Word of God. Truth is revealed to her, by the visible Word of Baptism. Therefore, let us see the revelation of God’s enlightening truth and its application to the believers, particularly to the true visible church. We will do so according to our text for today which is found in the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew beginning at verse twenty six.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O Lord God almighty, as each day passes we must confess unto Thee our ignorance and blindness according to our flesh, and we ever more aware of it; yet we are eternally grateful for the sending of Thy pure Word in our midst. We thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy grace and blessing. We praise Thy name for the miracle we are privileged to witness this morning. Keep us from indifference and under appreciation of Thy grace and goodness. Help our hearts to be comforted and our eyes to be enlightened by the truth given in Thy Word. Show us that the truth is always revealed and that in every case it favors Thy righteous people. Give us zeal and courage to speak from the rooftops the very truth which has given us enlightenment, so that others may also receive illumination. Keep us from being afraid of truth, or of the speaking of truth, knowing that truth benefits, and error confuses. Rather, help us to have a healthy fear of Thee, for Thou hast the power to damn eternally. Deliver us from that fate, forgive our sin, grant us grace, that we may no longer fear the old evil foe, but defiantly stand in grace and knowledge of Thy Son Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Guided by the Holy Spirit let us learn of truth revealed which always:

1. **Favors the righteous.** We read verses twenty six through thirty one of our text: **read verses here.** The heading to this portion of the sermon needs explanation, for it can be taken and twisted to say something not intended. ‘the righteous’ is a term that needs defined, for there are many who believe different things concerning who the righteous are. Now first it is necessary to establish that all men are sinners as Paul declares: *“There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:10 -12)* It is obvious from Paul’s words that the righteous are not those who have never committed sin, as many would suppose and have even taught throughout history. Each man, woman, and child has committed sin, and is therefore under the wrath of God and the curse of God’s holy Law. The righteous, then are not those with lesser guilt, or lesser sin in comparison with others, nor those who have purchased the pleasure of God for themselves. Rather the righteous are those that have been declared righteous for the sake of the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ through the faith granted them by the Holy Spirit by means of the Word of the Gospel. Therefore, the righteous are those who truly believe in Christ, that is, those who have been brought to a knowledge of their sin, sorrow over it, and believe that God is gracious to them for the sake of Christ, and that they have been forgiven and saved according to the promises of the Gospel. To these then the truth always favors, and this because truth originates from God, and the righteous are God’s people. Think, for a moment, on those that are in unbelief, and commit all manner of horrific sins, and how they attempt to keep things in confusion, darkness, and chaos. This is done to shroud their evil, to cast darkness over everything so that they never be called to repentance by the truth. Jesus makes this known clearly, along with the opposite, He says: *“and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:19-21)* Light clarifies, but darkness clouds. It is necessary then for those righteous that truth be revealed that they may benefit therefrom.

Now many events cause us great distress, for the truth is clouded and seems impossible to discover, for example the truth concerning President Trump’s recent assassination attempt. However, Jesus makes clear here in our text that there is nothing that has been covered that shall not be revealed, and nothing that has been hidden that shall not be made known. As far as the true visible church is concerned the revelation which is above all others is the revelation that all things contained in Scripture are the truth of God and that all promises, and also threats, will be entirely fulfilled. Yet it is also an comfort to know that despite the darkness that shrouds many events in this world, that each one whether the active or passive will of God, serve the benefit of God’s people, and especially of the true visible church, which church we are. The apostle declares unwaveringly that all things work together for good to them that love God. The end of our text makes this truth plain and gives comfort to even the most persecuted souls, even to those who endure some of the hardest of trials and crosses. Jesus makes known that even the small sparrows, which have little value on earth and no eternal value, are all in the hand of our gracious God, and one does not die without the knowledge of God and without His consent. Further He says that He knows us so intimately and cares for us so deeply that each hair is numbered, implying that even one of our hairs doesn’t even fall out without His knowledge and consent! How much more does He care for the true visible church on earth and her welfare? Indeed, He watches her, He guards and protects her, He guides her, He loves her as a groom loves his bride, and He moves all things for her benefit. *“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. 4:15-17)* Here then we see how truth revealed favors the righteous, which knowledge and glorious teaching make known to the Christians that they:

1. **Need not fear the foe.** We read verse twenty eight of our text: **read verse here.** There are many things that we fear in this world, most of them are earthly things like lack of money, the health of our bodies and the health of our loved ones, we fear the faces of other people, we fear the judgment of other people, in short we are fearful creatures, but Jesus here makes clear that if it is true that all things are for the benefit of the true visible church and by extension each individual within it, then there is no need for fear of any enemy or anything in this present world. Fear can control you, fear can make you do wicked things, but the truth is that even the worst enemy, Satan, cannot destroy us entirely, at least without our consent. This is the reason why there is no excuse for sin, no one can say: ‘the devil made me do it,’ because the devil’s work is not one of coercion, but one of deception. Deception is not a forced wickedness, but one which is consented to by those who engage in it, at least consented to by ignorance. Thus, we need not fear, for the worst that can be done to us, the worst absolute evil that can be inflicted is the death of our bodies if God would allow it. However, He who damns is not Satan, but rather the holy God, who being rightly wrathful over sin and impenitence sends those who have not faith into eternal desolation, both soul and body in hell. Thus, Jesus instructs us not fear them who kill the body, but fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. We fear God in a couple different senses. First, according to our flesh we are indeed afraid of God’s wrath and punishment as it should be, for we are wicked and sinful deserving of His wrath and punishment. In a second sense we fear God according to faith, not afraid of Him, but honoring Him, respecting Him, loving Him as our Father in heaven.

Far too often do we fear things which have no true power over us. God’s Word as His revealed truth to us, shows that even sin and death itself holds no true power over us, for the deliverance God has provided has rescued us from these things. Let us then, as God’s children, as His people, as His true visible church, cease fearing any enemy or adversary; let us cease fearing of current or future events, but let us cling to the love of God manifest in Christ Jes our Savior, who gives to us illumination, light and truth. Let us glorify, praise, and worship Him alone, and trust in Him both in the present world and in the promises of eternity. Let us be comforted in hope, patient in tribulation, and glorying in grace. Thank the Lord for all His wondrous work among us, and may He continue to bless and keep us until we shall be brought to our eternal home, there to dwell securely, safely, and in the glorious light of truth forevermore. Amen.