**November 24th 2024 Twenty Sixth Sunday after Trinity**

**Text: John 20:30-31** 0748

**Theme: Faith or Science?**

May the Word of our God ever be a shield to us against those who attempt our downfall through frivolous arguments and deceptions. Amen. Dear redeemed Christians: Ever since the mid 1800’s there has been a prevailing thought that science and religion, specifically the Christian religion, cannot be reconciled together. Many made the claim, and still do, that a person can either believe in the God of the Bible or in the work of science, but not both. Any who would say that they were Christian scientists would be ridiculed, among whom are men like Ken Ham, and said to hold a contradiction within themselves. The proponents of science or religion say that the work of science is based in only facts, while religion or Christianity is based in *faith,* and therefore based on unprovable and unknowable dogmas. In short many hold that a person is either one who is based in fact or one who is based in fiction. This idea has become so prevalent today that even Christians will separate the two things in their own minds. They compartmentalize their belief in scientific facts, and separate that from the doctrine of Scripture as a different type of belief, a different type of faith. This is done because mankind has been duped into believing the mantra that there is fact and there is faith and the two things are not the same. Bertrand Russell summarized this thought of the world, saying: “Religion is something left over from the infancy of our intelligence. It will fade away as we adopt reason and science as our guidelines.” That quote says it all. Religion is thought to be infantile, to be void of reason, to be void of thought, to be void of knowledge. It is like preschool, but those who have graduated to a higher form of thought will abandon the Christian religion.

Yet is this a valid point of view? Are the two things actually opposed to each other? Our purpose today will be to answer those questions. The inquisitive mind might ask: ‘what is the reason that these two things are always at odds with one another?’ The answer lies when we find the rise of antagonistic science in the mid 1800’s which sought not to find the truth about the origin of the universe, but sought to disprove the narration of creation. Darwin’s theory of the origin of all things placed a wall between religion and science and said that you may only have one, not both. Yet the true Christian and the true scientist will always find that their work AGREES together in every case. True science and the true Christian religion are not two ideas going in opposite directions, but rather two systems intersecting together and arriving at the same conclusion. Now to be sure I am not compromising the Christian stand on certain issues, but I am speaking of TRUE science. Not science which discounts anything with the flavor of religion, but science which takes all evidence into account and finds that all knowledge points to the almighty God of heaven and earth and actually lends itself to the truth of Christianity, and does not oppose it. In order to accomplish a true understanding of the agreement between the two, we will look to our text for today, which sheds some light on the truth of the origin of the Lutheran faith, that is, about the Word of God itself and in so doing we will find that modern science is anything but scientific, but rather militant and nothing but pseudo science, a practice whose purpose is not the discovery of truth, but a war on God and on His people. Let us then see these things according to our text for today which is found in the twentieth chapter of the Gospel according to John beginning at verse thirty.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O Lord God, Thou who hast created all things, who set in order the universe and who upholdest all things by the might of Thy hand, we pray that Thou wouldest guard us against the deceptions of Satan. Prevent us from being overcome by his tricks, to make us think that faith is unreasonable, or that Thou art a fiction. Rather increase our faith in Thee, that is, give us confidence in Thee, and show us the truth about our salvation purchased by Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Teach of the clarity, effect, and sufficiency of Thy Word, that we may not doubt, but believe in the glory of His work, and the grace of our own salvation. Grant us knowledge, true knowledge of all that we need to know, and help us to overcome our corrupted reason, and by Thy Word to submit unto Thee. Cause those who attempt to subvert faith by deception to fall into their own traps, and plant a hedge of protection around us at all times, preserving our faith and the salvation of our souls. We ask all these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Guided then by the Spirit of God let us answer the question of faith or reason? We will do so by first seeing the age old:

1. **Argument of fact vs. fiction.** We read verses thirty and thirty one of our text: **read verses here.** The modern idea of science is really not a modern idea at all, but is actually ancient, used from the beginning of time to deceive and cause to fall the whole population of man. Think of the deception that Satan used against Eve in the Garden of Eden. It was one of higher knowledge, knowledge which supersedes the knowledge of God Himself. Satan told Eve: *“Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:4-5)* You see, the argument of Satan is the same as the argument used today by many that the Christian religion is fantasy, while science is rooted in fact and gives higher knowledge. Yet as we know this was the worst of deceptions, for what Satan did not say is that the knowledge Adam and Eve received was not enlightenment, but rather darkening. Through their rebellion they cast aside true knowledge which was in their creation in the image of God, in favor of pseudo knowledge, or lying knowledge. Paul says this: *“O Tinothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.” (1 Tim. 6:20)* Our adversary, the devil, is very adept at deception. He has largely succeeded in our day by convincing many that Christianity is fiction and the pseudo-science Paul speaks of is fact. The apostle John indirectly deals with this issue, doing so by simply stating some facts concerning His own Gospel and the Word of God in general. John makes a perplexing statement concerning other signs that are not written, but what is written is for the purpose of our salvation. The words of John here, given by inspiration of God, show the fallacy of the argument of fact vs. fiction. You see what many fail to understand is that the Christian faith is not faith in something intangible or even unrealistic. Rather our faith is based on something concrete. It is based on the sure promises of God almighty given in the Word of God. The Christian faith is only possible when one is given the knowledge of forgiveness which is an objective fact before believing it. One cannot believe something if it only becomes real by believing. No, the fact is that forgiveness and salvation have been accomplished and that is fact, a person then believes that fact and it becomes personally theirs. The fallacy, or deception, is rooted in what John speaks of first. There are many unanswered questions by God, and those unanswered questions are used by the opponents to say that the Christian faith is fiction. However, just because God does not explain the mystery of the Triune God, or does not elaborate on the miracle of healing the blind, does not mean that what He has spoken on is fiction. Rather it means that God, in His infinite wisdom, knows what things are necessary for our salvation, and that those things are enough to spend our whole lives studying. We do not need certain answers in order to go to heaven, but there are other things necessary, those are given that we might believe in the Son of God, and believing we might have eternal life through His name. This is not opposed to true science, for if true science followed through on the facts of nature it would find God at the end. Mercy and grace, righteousness and truth would be found. Modern, or pseudo-science has many problems. They claim that gender is fluid, that mankind evolved from apes, which are false on their face. Modern science does not deal in facts, but rather in militant hostility to God and His Word, and thereby depriving themselves of all knowledge, all truth. Thus we have answered the question of faith or science, and disproven the argument of fact vs. fiction. Let us now see secondly:
2. **The reality of God’s Word.** We read verses thirty and thirty one of our text: **read verses here.** As we read through Scripture it becomes evident that it is not just some book, nor one of many religious books teaching a way of salvation. Rather, from its own account it is something far superior. The apostle Paul says: *“When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God.” (1 Thess. 2:13)* The Bible has the authority of God Himself, for it is His Word. If it has God’s authority then what is written therein is of divine command. And here we have found the reason for the militancy against it. God condemns sin, and thus any who engage in continuous impenitent sin, cannot abide His Word. Therefore out of necessity, they must do all they can to ease their conscience, and they do so by attempting to silence Him who condemns them. However to the Christian this is obvious, and God’s Word makes clear not just the condemnation of sin through the Law, but also the salvation of the Gospel. And this is what John speaks to. God’s authority does not only extend over the Law, but the Gospel too, and therefore when God declares justification through faith in the remission of sins procured by Christ on the cross, then this is true knowledge, and is not simply the dogma of the church. But an established fact, for God Himself declared it so.

Now further God’s Word is clear. God gave His Word to mankind in such a way that even the smallest infant can understand it. It can be read by anyone, and we not be a scholar to reap salvation therefrom. It was the opinion of the papists that only the priests had enough knowledge to read it and would then explain what they had found. Does this sound familiar? “I trust the science,” is the motto of the day. Trust us when we say that man evolved from the beasts! You ignorant and unlearned masses cannot gather the information and glean from it what is necessary, we must do it for you. No, God gave it in such a way that it is clear as crystal. He said: *“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” (Ps. 119:105)* If His Word is to light our path and direct our steps, then surely it is clear. Now there may be some hard to understand portions, but that is due to our corruption and sin. But we can take those hard to understand portions and compare them with the rest of Scripture to find their true meaning. Now these things are not said to say that we have no need of ministers, for they are given by God for the express purpose of explaining the Bible, of reminding what Scripture says, and it may be helpful to hear from him.

Now since the Bible has God’s authority, and is sufficiently clear, it would follow that it also is given with effect. God would not give His Word, and it go entirely to waste. Isaiah declares that God never give His Word in vain, but it will accomplish His good purpose where it sent. (Is. 55:10-11) So we know for certain that wherever the Word of God is in use there will be people converted and preserved in the true Christian faith. To the Christian this is not fantasy, and in reality it is established and ancient fact which cannot be refuted. Many have tried and many have failed. The Bible has been attacked, questioned, ridiculed, mocked, banned, and burned, and yet it remains, and this because of the light that it brings into the world. Not one enemy can overthrow it.

The Bible is also sufficient for all that we need for our salvation. John speaks to this very point stating that all things that are written are written for our salvation. We need not worry that God left out some vital detail, but we can be sure and certain, that it is there in its entirety. Let us then heed the words of God, who said: *“If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)* Let us hold fast to God’s Word unto us, not injecting our own so called wisdom into it, but let it speak for itself, thereby receiving the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life. Amen.