

## The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 262, 377, 311, 48

The INTROIT

(from Ps.74:1,20-23)

*P: Have respect, O Lord, unto Thy covenant;*

**C: oh, let not the oppressed return ashamed!**

*P: Arise, O God, plead Thine own cause;*

**C: and forget not the voice of Thine enemies.**

*P: O God, why hast Thou cast us off forever?*

**C: Why doth Thine anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture?**

The COLLECT

Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which Thou does promise, make us to love that which Thou does command; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Leviticus 18:1-5

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I *am* the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I *am* the LORD.

THE GRADUAL

(from Ps.74:20-23; 88:1)

*P: Have respect, O Lord, unto Thy covenant:*

**C: Oh, let not the oppressed return ashamed!**

*P: Arise, O God, plead Thine own cause:*

**C: and forget not the voice of Thine enemies. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

*P: O Lord God of my salvation:*

**C: I have cried day and night before Thee. Hallelujah!**

The EPISTLE

Galatians 3:15-22

Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one.

*Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given

which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Ps. 119:124)

*P: Hallelujah! O Lord, deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy and teach me Thy statutes. I am Thy servant, give me understanding:*

**C: that I may know Thy testimonies. Hallelujah!**

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Luke 10:23-37

And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

And he said, He that shewed mercy on him.

Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

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Luke 10:23-37 — “Behold, a Certain Lawyer Stood up”

INTRODUCTION: BLESSED

- I. BEHOLD, A CERTAIN LAWYER STOOD UP
- II. THOU HAST ANSWERED RIGHT
- III. HE THAT SHEWED MERCY

CONCLUSION

## The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 262, 377, 311, 48

Luke 10:23-37 — “Behold, a Certain Lawyer Stood up”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The Gospel reading appointed for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity is Luke 10:23-37:

**And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.**

**And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**

**He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?**

**And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.**

**And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.**

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**And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.**

**And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.**

**But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.**

**Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?**

**And he said, He that shewed mercy on him.**

**Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's Gospel reading we observe the typical reaction of our fallen nature to the preaching of the Gospel. The seventy whom the Lord Jesus had sent out preaching the Gospel have returned from their preaching assignment. They returned rejoicing in the authority that Jesus had entrusted to them that they had even authority over the demons. But Jesus told them

not to rejoice in this, but rather to rejoice that their names are written in heaven. Jesus further explained that such knowledge is the gift of “the Father to the Son, and that no one knows who the Son is if not the Father and no one knows who the Father is if not the Son and the one to whomever should purpose the Son to reveal.” This knowledge of salvation is made known only through the Son. The Father reveals the Son. The Son reveals the Father. This perfect unity of substance and authority and power and glory and knowledge is beyond our ability to grasp. What is even farther beyond the grasp of our sinful human reason is the fact that this knowledge is purely by grace through faith, and not of ourselves. The faith, as is proclaimed in today’s Epistle, is the faith of Jesus Christ and is given to us by God so that we may be empowered to believe. The fact that our salvation is by grace through the gift of faith, and that believing is not something that we choose for ourselves nor something that we enact for ourselves, is absolutely beyond our comprehension except that it is worked in us through the faith of Jesus Christ. This is what we observe through the lawyer in today’s Gospel reading.

#### I. BEHOLD, A CERTAIN LAWYER STOOD UP

**And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.**

**And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**

The Lord Jesus turned to the disciples and spoke to them alone. However, Luke tells us that there were at least seventy disciples who had returned from preaching the Gospel and casting out demons and performing other miracles. Therefore Jesus was not whispering or speaking softly. In order for so many disciples to hear the words concerning their blessedness in perceiving that their names are written in heaven, Jesus had to speak quite loudly. This means that this lawyer very likely heard what Jesus said. This lawyer almost certainly perceived the intended meaning that the Gospel is very narrowly defined and that only a few people truly enter into the kingdom of heaven through the faith that this Gospel produces.

So the lawyer stands up and challenges Jesus. Jesus had excluded this man from being pronounced as one of the blessed ones. Jesus had excluded this very scholarly man and had treated him as one who did not perceive the truth. Regarding this man Jesus had said,

**I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.**

Therefore, perceiving how he had been excluded by Jesus, this wise and prudent man stands up and presents a test to Jesus. He says, “**Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**”

This verbal and spiritual intercourse is filled with irony. The very words used by this lawyer and by Jesus exemplify what is missing in this lawyer’s understanding. According to our sinful nature and our faulty human reason we miss the point as well.

What is it that is missing? What is missing is the Gospel, the pure and literal Gospel by which true faith and the life of faith in which the faithful walk are produced.

This man is a *nomikos*, one belonging to the law, or a lawyer. He addresses Jesus as “Teacher,” and then presumes to give a test to the teacher. His question is this:

### **What doing life eternal shall I inherit?**

The word for inherit is *kleronomeso*. It is from two words, the first meaning “portion” and the second meaning “law.” So then, the lawyer reveals and proves with his question the very point that he is challenging. Jesus very gently redirects the matter. The lawyer is seeking to inherit life everlasting by what he does. This is a contradiction. Anything that is inherited is given without anything being done by the heir. The work has already been done by the one giving the inheritance. But our sinful nature will not believe it. Our human reason argues against the promise of the Gospel, arguing that we must do something to receive the inheritance that God has ordained for us. Thus this Lawyer challenges Jesus regarding what he must be doing to get his legal portion of Life everlasting.

#### II. THOU HAST ANSWERED RIGHT

Jesus responds to the lawyer according to the manner of his challenge, saying, **“What is written in the law? how readest thou?”**

Truly Jesus is the Teacher. Now the lawyer is put to the test. But this is not a petty reversal of the matter. Jesus responds not to condemn this lawyer, but to lead him gently to recognize the falseness of the presuppositions that blind the lawyer to the Gospel. He directs the lawyer to the Law. He directs the lawyer to demonstrate what he already knows as one who has spent a lifetime studying the law.

**And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.**

**And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.**

The lawyer answered rightly. He was completely and absolutely right. What is the answer to the requirements of the Law? Love is the answer. Love God and neighbor.

Jesus commends the lawyer for his right answer. He says, **“Rightly you answered. This do and you shall live.”**

This lawyer still does not understand, for he still imagined that he needed to justify himself. Thus the lawyer asks, **“And who is my neighbor?”**

This is the way that we all react according to our own reason and strength. This is not the way of the knowledge that the faith of Jesus Christ teaches. We hear **“Rightly you answered. This do and you shall live.”** and we imagine that this is a conditional statement of cause and effect. But “you shall live” is not the subjunctive mood but the indicative mood. It is future indicative. Jesus is not saying that if we love God and our neighbor that we will live as a result of what we do. Rather, Jesus is saying that what we do is the result of knowing that we will live. Jesus is preaching the Gospel but our faithless hearts hear the condemnation of the Law. Jesus says that we will live and we hear that we may live if we do the right things. Thus, like this lawyer, we imagine that we love God according to our own choice and decision and

commitment. We imagine this because we do not realize that loving God is manifested in loving neighbor. But we don't truly love neighbor and so we try to justify ourselves with the lame excuse of "**And who really is my neighbor that I should love him?**" If we truly heard the literal Gospel, the pure Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, we would understand who the neighbor really is. Then we would understand why Jesus says that if we have done it unto the least of His brethren that we have done it unto Him.

### III. HE THAT SHEWED MERCY

**And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.**

**And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.**

**But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.**

**Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?**

**And he said, He that shewed mercy on him.**

This parable shows the magnanimous nature of the LORD our God. The lawyer, still thinking that he must justify himself asks, "**And who is my neighbor?**" The root of the question is, "**To whom must I act in love?**" But in this parable Jesus pulls a complete reversal. In this parable Jesus demonstrates that the neighbor is the one who acts in love. The question that Jesus asks emphasizes this very powerfully. He asks, "**Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?**"

We think in terms of challenging whether or not the man who fell among the thieves is our neighbor, challenging how far love must reach. But love does not operate with such limitations. Love knows no limits. Love does not seek to be limited in any way whatsoever. Jesus asks us, which of the three was neighbor to the man who needed help. Again the lawyer answered correctly. He said, "**He that showed mercy on him.**"

But the text is even more precise. The lawyer actually answered, "**The one having done the mercy upon him!**"

What does this mean? What does this really mean?

Who were the three? First was a priest who saw the desperate man and kept himself ceremonially clean by avoiding the man. The priest distanced himself from the man whose life had taken a bad turn. The priest kept clear of the man who seemed to have made bad choices and fell into bad circumstances.

Next was the Levite, the priestly assistant, a family member of the priest. The Levite likewise stayed clear of the man and his problems. Like the priest, the Levite saw the man and moved to the other side. This man, a regular worshiper and church worker, made sure to stay clear of the mess that this man had stumbled into.

But who is this Samaritan? Who is this man from the region of Samaria? Who is this man who did not hesitate to put his important business aside to stop and help this man in his need? Who is this man of means who put himself at risk to help his enemy? Who is this man who had compassion and went to him and bound up his wounds and applied medicine and carried the man to a safe place and took care of him? Who is this man who ordained means by which the man would be cared for in the safe house and then went away, promising to come back again to fulfill all the needs of the helpless man? Who is this true neighbor who comes from afar to help those who cannot help themselves, to heal them and to rescue them from their fallen condition? Who is this true neighbor who worked mercy upon the fallen man, who sacrificed his own riches for the sake of the man who had gone the way of devastation and death?

Truly, we should ask the lawyer's question and hear the answer for ourselves, "**And who is my neighbor?**" The lawyer gave the right answer: "**The one having worked mercy unto him!**"

#### CONCLUSION

Yes, mercy has been worked unto us. Yes, the safe house has been established for us and has been filled with the means of our neighbor's mercy. Now we need to hear what our merciful neighbor says of all this: **Go, and do thou likewise.**

How? What does the Lord Jesus mean? Before we answer this, we need to remember that this is not a statement of the Law. We need to remember that we are the heirs who receive the inheritance of life everlasting as a gift. So what does Jesus mean to go and do likewise?

What does it mean to do mercy unto someone? What is mercy? Mercy is to acknowledge our fellow fallen members of the human race and to judge them as those who have the same needs as we have. Mercy is to see the brokenness and the pain and the suffering of others and to share with them the mercy that our merciful neighbor has provided without limit in His house of safety. To do mercy unto others is to proclaim the Gospel of God's grace in Christ to those who will hear it. To do mercy is to love others and to look upon others as the Lord Jesus loves and looks upon us. To do mercy is to receive God's mercy for ourselves and to proclaim His mercy openly and freely in our daily journey. To go and do likewise is to live in the freedom and joy of the pure Gospel and to gather regularly to receive this Gospel through the preaching and through the Sacraments, and to make known God's desire that all who have fallen and are hurting and helpless should be washed and brought into God's house to be healed and kept safe unto life everlasting. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.