

Trinity VIII

August 2, 2020

We continue our meditation on “Christian Duty” which we also call “the service of God”. Last Sunday, our relation to God was described as that of slaves to a master. Today, our relation is described as nearer and dearer than that of slaves. We are called “sons of God”. We learn specifically that those who are “led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God”.

Meaning of the verse

What Paul is doing here is telling us Christians about ourselves and who we are and who God is in relation to us. And he is telling us how we can know this about ourselves and what it implies about our journey here on earth. Children of God are those who live according to the Spirit of God. They do not live according to the flesh.

"If you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Kill sin or it will kill you.

Most of the time, we focus on the term, “by the Spirit”. This term does not mean that the Spirit is a tool or a weapon that we hold. The Spirit is a Person.

We are in his hands, not he in ours! So, killing sin "by the Spirit" means having a mindset through which the Holy Spirit works to free us from the power of sin.

Here is what Paul is teaching us: “kill sin by the Spirit”, because "all who are then led by the Spirit are the sons of God." In other words, the evidence that we are the children of God is that the Holy Spirit confirms his presence by leading us into war with our sin. The children of God hate sin. The children of God have the values and priorities and tastes of their Father. They know what He likes and what he does not like. They are refined by His Spirit as gold is refined by fire.

And the reason they share these values with their Father is that they have his Spirit who leads them this way. He gives them new tastes and new preferences and the new values and the new pleasures and the new sadness. And so, the evidence of our sonship is: Do we fight sin in our lives, or do we let it determine our lives?

How can we be led by the Spirit of God (How do we know that we are led...)?

Meditate on the Word of God - What does it mean to meditate on the Word of God? It means to stop and think about what you have read, and allow the Holy Spirit to bring new revelation, even to a verse you have read a hundred times. Meditating on the Word of God is more than reading the Bible—it is studying, analyzing, seeking, and reflecting. It is seeking God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Be a doer of the Word – Many Christians are no longer doers of the Word. They talk the talk. But when it comes to the walk, they behave like everyone else. Today, Jesus is telling you, “not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”. Talk the talk! But also walk the walk! Let your life follow what you preach.

Place the Word of God above everything else – Proverbs 4: 20-21 says, “My son, attend to my words; consent and submit to my sayings. Let them not depart from your sight; keep them in the center of your heart.” When you do that, you are sensitive to the Lord’s leading. I remember the story of king Asa in 2 Chronicles 16: 12-13. He developed a serious foot disease. He failed to turn to the Lord for help. Rather, he turned to his physicians...A few months later, he died. The lesson for us here is to seek God’s face in every situation.

Refuse to entertain the spirit of fear – Because they cannot be two captains in the same boat! You cannot allow the spirit of fear to dwell if you want the Spirit of God to lead you. Paul said in today's Epistle that we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.

When you follow these four ways to be led by the Spirit of God and practice them daily, you will always know in your heart what to do in every situation. When you meditate daily on the Word of God, when you are a doer of the Word, when you place it above everything in your life and say “no” to the spirit of fear, you can know the will of the Father all the time even in the smallest details of your life. You will not be led by false prophets...You will have enough discernment to see their fruits because you are led by the Spirit of God.

As we come to this Eucharist, may the Lord cast away from us every spirit that does not confess his Holy Name in our lives and give us his Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Lord, what is your will for us? We are completely and totally open to your plan for our lives and for our Church family. Guide us with your Holy Spirit. Take control of our lives and lead us in a plain path of righteousness. Fill us with the knowledge of your will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Through Christ our Lord! Amen.