

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

- SATURDAY -

God hath set some in the Church...teachers. – I Corinthians 12:28.

If, as we saw yesterday, the Office of the Keys, and all the powers connected with it, has been given to the Church, what, then, is the purpose of a pastor? In a Christian congregation the Office of the Keys must be administered in public, the Gospel must be preached, Baptism and the Lord's Supper must be administered, sin must be remitted and retained. Not all members of the congregation have been called by God to do this publicly. Rather, God has ordained that each congregation should choose and call a man who is to perform the functions of the Office of the Keys publicly, in the name of the congregation and in its midst. Such a man is called pastor, shepherd, bishop, teacher. When he has accepted the call of the congregation, it is God Himself that has given him to that congregation, as our text shows. He then is the steward of the mysteries of God, as far as his public office in the congregation is concerned (II Corinthians 4:1). This, his stewardship, he has received from God through the congregation. But the instructions, the directions for his stewardship of the Office of the Keys, he has received from God alone. For the functions of the Office of the Keys are ordained by God; no man is permitted to alter them in the least. If a pastor does not adhere to the divine instructions, or if it becomes evident that he is a wicked man, then, after due admonition, the congregation should remove him. But if he *does* adhere to the divine instructions; if he preaches the Gospel in its truth and purity; if he administers the Sacraments according to the institution of Christ; if he forgives and retains sins according to the regulations which God has laid down; and if he leads a Christian life, then the congregation should know that God has given them that man to feed them. He himself should also be well aware at all times that God has appointed him to serve that congregation (Acts 20:28). It is a great and gracious gift of God for a Christian congregation to have a faithful pastor and teacher.

PRAYER. – Lord, my God, I pray Thee that Thou wouldest at all times give us, Thy believing children, upright teachers and ministers of Thy divine Word, and keep them in purity of doctrine and rectitude of a Christian life. Bless them in their office, and bless their faithful labors, that through their Gospel ministry our faith may be strengthened, and every good work prosper among us. And give to me and to my brethren and sisters in the congregation Thy Holy Spirit, that we may willingly accept and receive that which they preach to us out of Thy revealed Word. Amen.

Lord of the harvest, hear
Thy needy servants' cry;
Answer our faith's effectual prayer
And all our wants supply.
On Thee we humbly wait,

Our wants are in Thy view.
The harvest, truly, Lord, is great,
The laborers are few.

Anoint and send forth more
Into Thy Church abroad
And let them speak Thy Word of Pow'r
As workers with their God.

Hymn 488, 1-3. (TLH)

*** Scripture reading for Saturday: Hebrews 6:4-6**
Theme this week: Repentance