

# CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

## Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn\*

for the

Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity

-SUNDAY-

*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men.* – Matthew 6:1.

Alms are gifts of love given out of pity for the needy, whoever those truly needy are and wherever they might be, even thousands of miles away, as, for example, our dear needy brethren who are in the far-away lands of Nigeria and Russia. Let us remember and put into practice the divine counsel of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6: “*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*” (v. 10). When our dear Savior says: “*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men,*” this teaches us, His beloved Christians, that we are to give alms. Christian, sacrificial love, which is a fruit of God’s sacrificial love in Christ Jesus toward us (John 3:16; I John 4:9-11) --- “*Faith which worketh by love*” (Galatians 5:6b) ---impels us Christians, according to our “*new man*” (Ephesians 4:24), according to our faith in Jesus’ active and passive obedience to God in our behalf and in behalf of “*all*” (Galatians 4:4-5; I Timothy 2:6a), to cheerfully (II Corinthians 9:7b) give alms to those who are truly in need (James 2:15-16; I John 3:16-18). We are to willingly give such alms according to what we have, “*not according to which [we do not have]*” (II Corinthians 8:12), according to how “*God hath prospered [us]*” (I Corinthians 16:2b). Our Savior instructs us in God-pleasing alms-giving, and to be cautions, to be on guard against self-glorification in our gifts of alms (when and where they are really needed) in these words (including our theme verse): “*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly*” (Matthew 6:1-4). Since “*it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13), all praise, honor, and glory ought to go to Him for all the fruits of saving faith in our hearts and lives, “*for we are HIS workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (through His priceless vicarious atonement) unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (Ephesians 2:10).

**PRAYER** – Dear heavenly Father, help us, as Thy dear children, to grow more and more merciful toward others, especially toward those who are truly in need, in gratitude for Thy great, everlasting mercy toward us and toward the whole world in Christ Jesus. Amen.

**Scripture Reading for Sunday: Epistle – Ephesians 4:22-28    Gospel – Matthew 9:1-8**

\* Adapted and revised from original publication