

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity

- FRIDAY -

We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

- Romans 15:1.

Many are the Christians who, because of the infirmities of their sinful flesh, often fall at Satan's behest into sin, contrary to the will of the New Man within them (Cf. Romans 7:18-19). They are weak with regard to their daily walk and conduct, who soon stumble and fall, who are easily led into some sin, or give way to sin, such as anger, untruthfulness, intemperance, and the like, or who do not succeed in breaking away altogether from some habitual sin, though they greatly desire to do so. Such Christians, indeed, are weak; they lack spiritual strength. And it must be admitted that it is their own fault, surely not God's fault; and it is certainly not the will of God that they remain weak. Now if you are strong, if you show great spiritual strength in ruling over the sin tempting you from within and do not permit it to prevail with you, this is indeed a evident fruit of faith produced in you by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 24-25; Philippians 2:13). But the battle between the flesh and the spirit or New Man within you will continue as long as you live here in this world; and the flesh will prevent your perfection in Christian sanctification (Galatians 5:17). If by God's grace you actually are strong, what, then, should be your attitude toward the weak? You should "*bear [their] infirmities.*" "*Bear*"? What does that mean? Overlook them? Tolerate them? Let them pass? That indeed will not help them. You must help the weak in faith to get strong. You "*wretched man,*" as St. Paul calls himself (Romans 7:24), you dare not be pleased or satisfied with yourself, much less pride yourself on your strength, who stand only by the power and grace of God (I Corinthians 15:10). Your demeanor should be, in all humility, to please and help your neighbor for his good, to admonish him (Matthew 18:15ff.), to restore him (Galatians 6:1), to edify him or build him up (Romans 15:2), and thus to strengthen him, as Christ deigns to strengthen us "*to the glory of God*" (v. 3, 5, 7), that all of us may be preserved steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end; for "*this is His gracious and good will*" as Luther states in the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

PRAYER – Dear Lord, when by Thy grace I have been strengthened in my faith and in my daily walk as Thy child, the glory is entirely Thine. Grant that in humble gratitude for Thy grace I then also engage my weak brother, not suffering sin upon him (Leviticus 19:17), not deserting him or forsaking him, but lovingly helping him by patient admonition with sound speech that cannot be condemned (Titus 2:8) to forsake the sins which easily beset him and to run with patience His Christian course, strengthened with the might of Thy grace in the inner man, to Thy glory alone. Amen.

Grant Thou me strength to do with ready heart and willing whate'er Thou shalt command, my calling here fulfilling; to do it when I ought with all my might, and bless the work I thus have wrought; for Thou must give success.

Oh, let me never speak what bounds of truth exceedeth; grant that no idle word from out my mouth proceedeth. And then, when in my place I must and ought to speak, my words grant power and grace, lest I offend the weak.

Hymn 395, 2 and 3.

* Scripture reading for Friday: Mathew 13:36-43 Theme this week: The World