

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity

– Wednesday –

And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.

—John 15:27

The apostles were to be witnesses or testifiers of their Lord “*in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*” (Acts 1:8). They were to bring the divine message of man’s sin and God’s grace (Romans 5:20b), of man’s trespasses and God’s forgiveness in Christ (II Corinthians 5:19), of repentance and remission of sins (Luke 24:47) to a lost world. The duty and privilege for which they were thus commissioned involved great hardships, and the Savior warned them: “*Ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake*” (Matthew 10:22). The times were evil. Idolatry permeated the nations. It was interwoven with their legislation, philosophy, literature, and art, influenced all popular feeling, and was entrenched in the heart and life of the people. Among the Jews, to whom were entrusted the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament for their wisdom unto salvation (Romans 3:2; II Timothy 3:15), things were not much better; for they rejected, crucified and killed their own Messiah (Acts 3:14-15) rather than be gathered together under the wings of His mercy (Matthew 23:37). And while it is easy to imagine that things are not as bad today, when there are millions, perhaps even billions, of professing Christians on earth, the God of this world is undeniably *Mammon* [*materialism*], the Scriptures are ridiculed and rejected, justification by the deeds of the Law is the world’s creed, and the love of many erstwhile Christians has grown so cold (Matthew 24:12) that “*they will not endure* [i.e. *tolerate*] *sound doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:3). How great then is the danger still today that God’s witnesses might yield under persecution or become ashamed of the testimony that they are to render for Christ’s sake!

The children of this world cannot bear to hear witnessing Christians telling them that they are unrighteous and totally depraved sinners by nature, wretched and unworthy of God’s favor, murderers of their own souls by virtue of unbelief, and headed for damnation in hell. Such doctrines the self-righteousness of man rejects, and he embraces instead the wicked world which hates Christ and His Gospel (John 15:18-25). The world, and sadly many who profess Christ’s name, reject the very One who declared: “*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me*” (John 14:6) in favor of the “political correctness” which denies that apart from faith in Christ there is no salvation. But still He commands: “*Ye also shall bear witness.*” Why? Because “[*God*] *will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4). The Lord is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Peter 3:9). Therefore “*it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*” (I Corinthians 1:21). How shall we, who “*know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (II Corinthians 8:9), be “*ashamed of the testimony of our Lord*” (II Timothy 1:8-10)? How shall we flinch and refuse to be His witnesses, when in the face of trial, tribulation and even persecution “*we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us*” (Romans 8:35-39)?

Prayer — O Christ, our dear Lord and Savior, grant us grace that we may boldly testify to Thy love and mercy in redeeming the world from sin, death and Satan. Protect us from indifference and complacency regarding Thy Word of Life, lest sinners be lost eternally in ignorance of Thy grace and unbelief of Thy Gospel, to which we contributed by shameful silence. “*O Lord, open Thou [our] lips, and [our] mouth shall show forth Thy praise.*” To Thee be thanks and praise forever! Amen.

Onward, then! For naught despairing calm we follow at His Word,
thus through joy and sorrow bearing faithful witness to our Lord. Hymn 461, 4

Scripture Reading: John 15:27-16:11