

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

- TUESDAY -

Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. – I Corinthians 5:13.

The retaining of sins, the excommunication from the Christian congregation, the ban, as it is called, should be executed upon those members of the congregation who are “wicked,” that is, who are manifest and impenitent sinners. Their *sin* must be manifest, that is, a sin which is recognized by everyone in the congregation as an evident transgression of the Law of God. But even this is not enough for the execution of the ban. The *impenitence* of the sinner must also be evident to all in the congregation. But how is this possible? “Who can look into the heart?” you say. It is not necessary to look into anyone's heart. Our Lord and Savior has indicated a way in which it can be known whether a sinner is impenitent. It is given in Matthew 18:15-17. He that knows of the sin of a brother should go to him, and very lovingly, patiently, and forbearingly seek to convince him of his sin. If the sinner accepts the admonition, he has been gained, and all is well. If he refuses to accept it, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established, and again admonish the sinner very patiently and forbearingly in the love of Christ. If he neglects to hear you, then, together with the witnesses, tell it to the church to which the sinning brother belongs. This congregation should then try to persuade him to repent. If he persistently refuses to hear the congregation, then he is certainly impenitent; for the Lord Jesus, the merciful Searcher of hearts, says that we should then consider such a person a heathen man and a publican. Then the pastor of that congregation should execute the verdict of the congregation; he should retain the sins unto the sinner, exclude him from the congregation, and publicly announce this. But as soon as the sinner repents, he should be publicly absolved of the ban. For even excommunication is not intended for the perdition, but for the salvation of the soul.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus Christ, I pray Thee to grant Thy Holy Spirit to me and all true Christians, that we may deal with our sinning brother according to Thy will and Word, lest a dangerous lack of discipline and worldly-mindedness spread in the churches, but, instead, that sinners may be duly admonished and disciplined, to the end that God might bestow upon them His grace unto repentance and salvation. Amen.

Watch! Let not the wicked world
With its pow'r defeat thee.
Watch lest with her pomp unfurled
She betray and cheat thee.
Watch and see Lest there be
Faithless friends to charm thee,
Who but seek to harm thee.

Hymn 446, 3 (TLH)

* Scripture reading for Tuesday. **Romans 3:23-31** Theme this week: **Faith**