

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Eighteenth Sunday After Trinity

-THURSDAY-

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee: Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. – Matthew 5:25-26

The picture (in words) is of two people on the way to the courtroom where the difficulty caused by one of them will be settled by the judge. Remember the context: “*Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar [you are already in God’s house], and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee [because of your sin against him], leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way [don’t put your offering in the collection plate just yet]; FIRST BE RECONCILED TO THY BROTHER, and then come and offer thy gift [first go to your brother or sister and confess your sin against him or her – James 5:16a; if it is your spouse, your child, or a fellow member of your congregation, you can take care of it without leaving God’s house], and then come and offer thy gift [now place your thank-offering in the collection plate AFTER confessing your sin to your offended brother, receiving his forgiveness, and rejoicing in God’s grace in not charging your sin against you]*” (Matthew 5:23-24). Using different words, the Savior repeats Himself when He says to us: “*Agree with thine adversary quickly [without delay, tell your offended brother: Yes, I have sinned against you and I am truly regretful; will you forgive me?] whilest thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary [the offended brother] deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer and thou be cast into prison [you refuse to do what you should do to be reconciled with your brother or sister, and, as a result, suffer the terrible consequences]*” (v. 25). “*Verily, I [Jesus] say unto thee: Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing*” (v. 26). This is a strong warning from our Savior! Let us take this warning to heart and apply His counsel to our own lives, confessing by our words and by our actions the confession of Joseph: “*How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*” (Genesis 39:9). How can I remain impenitent, unreconciled, and unloving toward a brother or sister whom I have sinned against, and also offend my gracious, merciful, and forgiving God, that God who “*was in Christ reconciling the world [which includes me] unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them [not imputing my trespasses unto me], and hath committed unto us [which includes me] the Word of reconciliation [the good news, the Gospel of peace with God through our dear Lord Jesus Christ, received and enjoyed by faith in Jesus – Romans 5:1]*” (II Corinthians 5:19).

PRAYER – O Holy Spirit, through Thy Word, keep me daily repentant over my sins and daily clinging to Thy priceless and saving Gospel. In the name of my Savior, daily carry out my request. Amen.

Scripture Reading for **Thursday**: I Corinthians 13 Theme this week: Love