

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Eighteenth Sunday After Trinity

-TUESDAY-

Woe to that man by whom the offense cometh! – Matthew 18:7a

The word "offense" really signifies an obstruction, a stumbling-block placed in the way which could cause someone to fall and get hurt. In a spiritual sense, an "offense" signifies a temptation, a trap which may cause someone to go astray or to completely fall from grace; it is a seducing from what is God-pleasing to a life of wickedness. To "give offense" or to "offend" (v. 6) is to tempt and seduce one or more to do evil, to become wicked. When "offenses come" (v. 7b) teaches us that someone is tempting and seducing others to become wicked. No offenses should come from us Christians; we should not give offense by what we say, by how we behave and conduct ourselves, by our example. We should not tempt or seduce others to do what is wicked, to turn away from Jesus and from His Word, or to remain in unbelief and sin. Jesus gave this warning: "*Woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.*" On the contrary, we learned, in yesterday's devotion, that we Christians are "*the salt of the earth*" (Matthew 5:13a). If, because of our evil flesh, we have given offense, let us repent of that sin, and cling, by faith, to the only comfort for repentant sinners, the never-changing truth that "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing [not charging] their trespasses unto them*" (II Corinthians 5:19a), and then, with that assurance that our sin will not be held against us, strive more and more to hate and to avoid giving offense in the days ahead, wanting to live more and more for Him "*who loved [us] and gave Himself for [us]*" (Galatians 2:20b)

PRAYER – Lord Jesus, help me to more and more "*abhor that which is evil [especially abhor giving offense, and] cleave to that which is good*" (Romans 12:9b). I am ashamed of any offenses which I have given to others, maybe, in some cases, without even realizing that I had given offense. Comfort me with Thy perfect obedience and Thy sinless sacrifice, which are the reasons why my God has forgiven all of my sins and offenses, and declared me righteous in His sight. I thank Thee for willingly giving Thyself on the cross for me and all other sinners, thereby giving me, by God's grace alone, freedom from the condemnation which I deserve for my sins, all so that now I am equipped, with great gratitude, to be more and more "*zealous of good works*" (Titus 2:14b). In Thy saving name we bring these requests to Thee. Amen.

Savior, I long to walk, closer with Thee; led by Thy guiding hand, ever to be; constantly near Thy side, quickened and purified; living for Him who died, freely for me.

(TLH, Hymn 422, 4)

Scripture Reading for Tuesday: I John 4:7-13 Theme this week: Love