

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity

– Friday –

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. — I John 2:15-16

“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). According to the Word of God, friendship with the world is idolatry. The first element of this idolatry, of worldliness, is the “*lust of the flesh.*” “*In my flesh dwelleth no good thing,*” writes Paul in Romans 7:18. Its sinful desires run contrary to the Word and will of God, and would have us do likewise — to seek happiness in self-gratification by following our sinful impulses and desires and doing those things which should not be once named among believers (Ephesians 5:3-4).

The second element in worldliness is the “*lust of the eyes.*” Satan uses our eyes as his tool to focus our attention upon things which have been forbidden by God. He used Eve’s eyes to see the forbidden fruit as “*good,*” easy to look at, and “*to be desired to make one wise*” (Genesis 3:6); but it was a deception and seduction. Sexually suggestive and even explicit advertising today tempts us by means of our “*eyes*” to look at and long for things which destroy saving faith (Matthew 5:28; Ephesians 5:5) and “*drown men in destruction and perdition*” (I Timothy 6:9). And the world’s slogan, “*Look, but don’t touch,*” only increases the deception that there is no harm in it.

The third element in worldly idolatry is the “*pride of life.*” This means the seeking of happiness in the praise of men, in honors bestowed by men, and in arrogance that sets itself against the Lord. We as God’s children should seek satisfaction solely in that which God gives us and has promised us in His Word, and true joy in walking “*in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake*” (Psalm 23:3; Galatians 5:25). Jesus said to His disciples (and of course also to us): “*Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world*” (John 15:19); indeed, “*What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*” (Mark 8:36). St. Paul exhorts us: “*Be not conformed to this world*” (Romans 12:2), because, as Jesus says: “*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon,*” that is, *materialism*, the god of this world (Matthew 6:24b); such dual service is idolatry. James writes: “*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, . . . to keep himself unspotted from the world.*” There is nothing uncertain about these statements. They declare that there is and always will be a clear line of separation between the people of God and the children of the world (cf. Joshua 24:15). Ignoring it jeopardizes our souls! “*Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing!*” (II Corinthians 6:17).

Prayer — O Father of all grace and mercy, preserve me from the evil influences of this wicked world, from “*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.*” Keep me from establishing friendships with evil associates who, Thy Word says, “*corrupt good morals*” (I Corinthians 15:33). When the devil, served by the temptations of the wicked, try to deceive me and seduce me into misbelief, despair and other great shame and vice (Luther), keep me from consenting to and following in their ways, and guard my feet from their paths. O Lord, Thou hast hitherto reared me as a father does his son; grant me grace to walk in Thy ways to the glory of Thy grace. Amen.

Watch! Let not the wicked world with its power 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! —But while watching also pray to the Lord unceasing. He will free thee, be thy Stay, strength and faith increasing. O Lord, bless in distress and let nothing swerve me from the will to serve Thee.

Hymn 446, 3 and 5:

Scripture Reading: Romans 7