

**IN NOMINE JESU**

**IN THE FAITH OR OUT OF THE FAITH**

Hear again the Word of God for this fourteenth Sunday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity.

*My son, to my words, be attentive; to my sayings, incline your ear.<sup>1</sup>*

*Do not let them escape from your eyes; keep them in your heart.<sup>2</sup>*

*For they (are) life to them finding them, and healing to all their flesh.<sup>3</sup>*

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

This day's theme draws those who will hear to God's revelation that there are only two categories of people on this earth. Either a person is in the Faith; or a person is outside the Faith. God declares the first category saved; and the members of the second category are shown to be unsaved. God gives good gifts to people in both categories. Those who are in the Faith respond to the gift God has worked in them with good works that last before Him. Those who are outside the Faith respond to God's gifts with works that have no part in Him, even though they may appear morally right and good by humans standards.

So, which category do you fit into? Are you in the Faith, or are you out?

If you are not sure, look to what God has done for you in Holy Baptism. God does not call you to look any farther than that (though with Christian maturity, you may). When God baptized you with the Water and the Word, He caused you to die with Christ and rise to new life in Him. There, you were washed, and God the Holy Spirit indwelt you with the Real Presence of the Living God. That Spirit points you in one

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 4:20.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 4:21.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 4:22.

direction only, that is to Christ, who died for you to take away your sins, and who rose from the grave so that you are to be sure of your being declared right with the Father. There is an order that flows out of salvation for all who are brought into the Faith since the death and resurrection of the Christ – the Lord’s Word is proclaimed; the Lord’s Baptism is administered; Christ is revealed; and the one in the Faith, no matter what age, looks to Christ Jesus and Him crucified for Divine Wisdom. That is most clearly revealed in the God-given ability to recognize your sins, to behold your Savior, and in Him to turn from sin and walk in newness of life.

There is no gray area here, there is no in between category has revealed how He sees into human hearts, minds and souls. Either you are in Christ, or you are not. And that means, either you are in the Faith or you are not. God has provided proofs that He has given you the Faith of Christ. The first, Holy Baptism, you are encouraged to return to every day – morning and evening when you make the sign of the cross and say the prayers handed down to you from Christ’s faithful Church.

Other proofs that you are in the Faith are here today for you. You have heard the Word of God, and by His grace received it into your hearts. From there it has resounded from your lips in the public order of God’s service, in the hymns, and in your recitation of the Psalm for the day. You have a proof in the divine reality that God pronounced you absolved, forgiven, for all your sins and iniquities – and you believed His forgiveness spoken from man’s lips to be true for you. Certainty that you are in the Faith comes as you learn to discover Christ where He means for Himself to be revealed,

in His Old Covenant Word; in the God-breathed Word of the Letter of the Apostle, in the inspired writing of the Evangelist. It is only in Christ that you may, before God, remain confident that you are in the Faith He gives. Only in Christ who has died and risen from the dead will you remain in that Faith until you depart this mortal life and are shown before all Creation what you are – one who is clothed with the Faith's full immortality before God.

It is Christ's faith in you that enables you to hear and believe the Word of God for this day from King Solomon. The words declared in the Old Testament reading were first meant for his son. Yet, as the Holy Spirit moved the ancients to include them in the Book we now call the Bible, they are also meant for the Church of the ages, and today, for you. The reason that the assurances were given regarding the Faith in which you live were declared first in this sermon, and your thoughts and hearts so firmly anchored to Christ Jesus, is that in Him you are free to hear the wisdom words as that which God does in you, and not as Law which you must do to please God and effect your salvation.

First, the Proverbs for the day may be understood as containing the God-inspired instructions of the wisest king who ever lived to His Son who would, at the time they were given, someday surpass him in wisdom. That is, the words of our reading may be comprehended to be those of Solomon to the Son of His line, Jesus, Son of Mary! Writing prophetically, King Solomon in part, was writing to the only Descendant of King David's line who could, would, did, and does, keep his words perfectly. (And, because

you are in Christ, He keeps them perfectly in you now, and into eternity). With that held firmly in your heart, mind and soul by the Holy Spirit, recall Solomon's words to His Greater Son, and to you who remain in Him:

*Hear my son, and receive my saying, and there may be for you many years of life.*<sup>4</sup>

We know, from the record of Biblical narratives, that the fully human and not divine sons of Solomon did not hear and receive his sayings. They, like many sons of the faithful throughout the ages, chose to follow after their own sinful human hearts, and walk in the path of darkness. It was in the first generation after King Solomon's death that the steady fall of the once-chosen people of God in a united nation fell into first two nations, and then disappeared from history forever. (The modern nation-state of Israel is only connected to them by name, they are not ruled by descendants of King David). So, then, did King Solomon's words, *Hear my son, and receive my saying*, then fall forever?

No, for Christ did keep them perfectly. He kept perfectly the Wisdom of God, and He keeps it now. And in Christ, you also keep this Wisdom, which preserves you into the years of this life and carries you into eternity without time. Your new nature in Christ hears these words and rejoices:

*In (the) way of the wisdom I have shown to you; I have caused to lead you in paths of uprightness.*<sup>5</sup>

The Greater Son of Solomon, who in His human nature learned according to the ways of men, remained in the way of wisdom declared by His father. He stayed on

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<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 4:10.

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 4:11.

the straight and narrow path all the days of His incarnate, mortal life, and remains on them for eternity. This He is able to do, for He is the Path of Life, the One who eternally right with the Father.

You, dear son of the Faith, (that is not gender-neutral, all you who remain in Christ are named by God “sons of God,” inheritors of His eternal estate), also are in the *way of wisdom* which He has shown you. In the Way of Wisdom, in Christ who kept the Law perfectly for you, you are free and given the gift of eternal life. Can you hear that, without Christ in this text, you are lost from the path of wisdom. Outside of Christ, you are without hope, security, and left only to look to your own devices try to follow any blessed words of instruction. Without Christ, you will not - cannot - keep the words of life.

(Lest you think you are able, look to the earthly lives, and deaths of the mortal sons of Solomon, the grandsons of the man, King David, who was a beloved friend to God. In their examples your self-security will be ripped away, and you will see yourself as God sees you without Christ, a poor, lost, and condemned sinner).

Yet in Christ you are free to receive the words of Solomon’s instruction, and to keep them. Your new Man in Christ declares that as you remain in the One Man who kept in the way of wisdom, these words are true for you:

*When you walk in them your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble.<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> Proverbs 4:12.

Those words indicate to the faithful that they are free to live their lives in Christ. Walking and running are used to describe our mortal lives. We learn to crawl, walk, run. Then, as time goes by, we return to walk, and perhaps crawl again before we put off these mortal bodies. As the believer lives in the Word of Wisdom, he or she will conduct his or her life in godly wisdom. Such a life centers one on what may be rightly called, “the Christian life.” That is simply to live in daily sorrow over and turning from sin, and walking (conducting one’s life) in God’s forgiveness. That lies under the next words of Solomon, the Word of God for today:

*Cause to keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.<sup>7</sup>*

Those words bring to an end the words of positive instruction in the text.

Next follow words of warning, of Law, of curb and guide that the one in the Faith is free to use to drown his or her Old Adam, the sin which still clings to the believer in this mortal life.

*In (the) path of wicked ones do not enter, and do not walk in (the) way of evil men.<sup>8</sup>*

*Avoid it; do not go in it; turn away from it and pass on.<sup>9</sup>*

*For they cannot sleep if they have not done wrong; and they are robbed of sleep if they have not caused someone to stumble.<sup>10</sup>*

*For they eat (the) bread of wickedness and they drink (the) wine of violence.<sup>11</sup>*

*But (the) path of righteous men shines as (a) light of brightness, shining brighter as into full day.<sup>12</sup>*

*(The) way of wicked men (is) like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 4:13.

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 4:14.

<sup>9</sup> Proverbs 4:15.

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 4:16.

<sup>11</sup> Proverbs 4:17.

<sup>12</sup> Proverbs 4:18.

<sup>13</sup> Proverbs 4:19.

That was Law, with a glimmer of good news in it. I believe the words are clear, and don't need further explanation today. From them, the Proverbs for the week turn from warning against following the temptations of the world - the wicked, unrepentant sinners among whom God has placed us that we may be may be His witnesses - to His sacrificial love and forgiveness. Again Solomon speaks to his sons (those who failed to heed his words, as they had rejected saving faith), to his Son, Jesus, who perfectly heeded his words, to you who keep them in Christ. The Wise King says:

*My son, to my words cause to be attentive; to my sayings, cause to incline your ear.<sup>14</sup>  
Do not let them escape from your eyes; keep them in your heart.<sup>15</sup>*

Again the address, "my son," appears. It is as if he is addressing a young man, one who is about to enter this cruel, sinful, fallen world. And in them, he is addressing you. For, not even the oldest person here is old in terms of our everlasting life. Why, even in the long ago lost mortal life spans, even a 90 + year old woman could bear children. Our forefathers in the faith once lived long lives on the earth, some, before the Flood, approaching 1,000 years. After that time, their, and our, years diminished - by the mercy of God. We are long on the path to the end of this creation. The effects of the Fall are multiplied each day. To live much beyond 100 years in our era is to suffer woes from increasing sources. So, we all get to die young, even the oldest among us, that we may live forever without the effects of sin, the devil, the world, and our own flesh to drag us down into Hell. Solomon says of His words of Wisdom:

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<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 4:20.

<sup>15</sup> Proverbs 4:21.

*For life they (are) to them finding them, and to all their flesh healing.<sup>16</sup>*

There is the tie to the Gospel reading for the week. In it, the one man who was of the Faith, finds healing and life in returning to Wisdom. The Samaritan had walked that day by Faith, calling out in the Faith, to the Author of the Faith. He had returned to the Great High Priest of the Faith to give thanks to God. That man gave Faith's response to God's life and healing which he had just been given. The Samaritan's praise and thanksgiving to God for his salvation is yours also. Keeping in the way of Wisdom, that is, in the path of God, Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, is His work in us that makes the closing words of the Proverbs for today able to be accomplished in you:

*In all (of them) in vigilance keep your heart, for from these things are (the) sources of life.<sup>17</sup>*

The Spirit calls forth from the Word to the children of God. He testifies that, as you remain in Christ, you will remain vigilant over and against your Old Nature. As the Spirit of Life dwells in the center of your being, God will keep your heart. For from God comes the sources of life – that is in Wisdom, in the Word, and in the Christ. To His Words He causes you to be attentive; to His sayings He causes you to incline your ear.

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Trinity XIV (LSB One-year series)

Proverbs 4:10-23; Galatians 5:16-24; Luke 17:11-19

September 13, 2009

*Pastor Michael H. Morehouse*  
**SOLI DEO GLORIA**

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<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 4:22.

<sup>17</sup> Proverbs 4:23.

## TRANSLATION, SECOND DRAFT

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uprightness.<sup>19</sup>  
When you walk in them your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not  
stumble.<sup>20</sup>  
Cause to keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.<sup>21</sup>  
In (the) path of wicked ones do not enter, and do not walk in (the) way of evil men.<sup>22</sup>  
Avoid it; do not go in it; turn away from it and pass on.<sup>23</sup>  
For they cannot sleep if they have not done wrong; and they are robbed of sleep if they  
have not caused someone to stumble.<sup>24</sup>  
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<sup>27</sup> Proverbs 4:19.  
<sup>28</sup> Proverbs 4:20.  
<sup>29</sup> Proverbs 4:21.  
<sup>30</sup> Proverbs 4:22.  
<sup>31</sup> Proverbs 4:23.