

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

What prophets and kings longed to see, and did not, was revealed to the lawyer. Moses promised Israel that the Savior would be a Prophet like him, raised up from among His brethren. Isaiah foretold His virgin birth and His suffering. King David confessed Him as Lord and Son. The Prophet Micah prophesied His birth in Bethlehem.

The Prophet Zechariah foresaw His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, and called Him King. David foretold a millennium before the thoughts of the Christ as He hung dying on the cross. The mark of the true Prophets is that Christ is revealed through them. And now what Prophets and Kings longed to see but did not, a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish lawyer sees.

But does he truly see? His question betrays him: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Seven centuries before Isaiah saw more clearly. So did Moses 14 centuries before. So did David a thousand years before. They saw from afar, they saw in part, but they saw more clearly than this lawyer, before whom the Incarnate Christ stood physically.

They heard distant echoes, he heard the very voice of God, and yet he did not hear as well as they. Although he saw and heard, his question reveals his deafness. his blindness.

The Prophets and Kings of old saw more clearly because they saw by faith. They heard more clearly because they heard by faith. But faith never asks “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” For faith knows the condition of man. Faith knows that men dead in sin can do nothing to inherit eternal life.

And yet in mercy, the Lord answers the lawyer: “What is written in the Law? What is your reading of it?” He is, after all, a lawyer. He ought to know the Law. In love Love Incarnate points the man to the Holy Scripture, for these are they that testify of Him. The Law describes a Perfect Man, a Man no sinner could ever be. The Law accuses all men, the Law accuses you, of your sin.

The Law, the Apostle writes, was “added because of transgressions...” And this lawyer certainly had transgressions, as have you. The Lord directed the lawyer to the Law because “the Scripture has confined all under sin.” The Scripture has confined you under sin as well, and that justly.

Rather than falling to his knees, beating his breast and praying “Lord, have mercy!”, the lawyer answers “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” And he is not wrong. That is the summary of the Law. The First Table, love for God, and the Second Table, love for neighbor, is what the Law requires. He answers rightly. But if he believed his own answer, he never would have asked his question.

The Lord sees his heart. And the Lord speaks perhaps the strongest Words of condemnation: “Do this and you will live.” The lawyer, as lawyers do, seeks to examine the Law. But to do so without faith is to fail to understand. It is to fail to hear, to fail to see. “Do this and you will live”, the Words of Christ, are true. But like the Law itself, no man born of woman can do this.

No one can keep the Law. Christ's Words are the strongest censure, the ultimate condemnation. For while faith shudders at those words, in unbelief the lawyer thought he could accomplish it.

But that's him. That's someone else. He lived a long time ago in a city half-way across the globe. What does that have to do with us, 2000 years later and 6000 miles away? It would be too easy to say that each of us are like unto the lawyer, blinded by sin, deafened by transgression.

It would be too easy to say because you know that already. You know it's true. You know that you, like the lawyer, have desired to justify yourself. You know that your flesh has believed that you're bright enough to answer rightly, to negotiate with God, to present your case, to argue for your own acquittal.

What purpose does the Law then serve? The Apostle answers that it was added because of transgressions. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the Law. But the Scripture has confined all, the Scripture has confined you, each of you, under sin.

For "if the inheritance is of the Law, it is no longer of Promise." It is not Law that saves, but Promise. The Law was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. But the Promise by faith in Jesus Christ is given to all who believe. It is given to you. Abraham was before Moses. The Law, which was 430 years later, cannot annul the Testament that was confirmed before by God in Christ. And that Testament is the Testament in Christ, the I AM who was before Abraham.

And the Promise is this: Christ is the Good Samaritan. He found you, dead, in the ditch of your transgressions. He, being without sin, lay down in that ditch, in your death, in your stead. He did not pass you by. Although He is Prophet, Priest and King, He suffered and died for you. He fell among thieves, thieves who would, if it were possible, take the Kingdom by force. He was stripped and beaten. He was crucified. But He did it all for you.

It is Christ that comes to you, not with Law, for He has fulfilled that for you, but by Promise. He makes no demands. He freely offers forgiveness and life. He has compassion on you. The faith He requires He freely gives. It is Christ Himself of whom Jeremiah foretells "Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to His brother." He heals you by the forgiveness of your sins.

He wraps you in the balm of salvation, the Balm better than that of Gilead. He is the true Physician. He brings recovery and health to the daughter of His people, to His Cherished Bride, to you, His Holy Church. He does it with the Chrism of the Spirit of God, and with the Wine He makes His Blood.

He alone executes true justice, and shows mercy and compassion to you, His brother. He Himself bears you, He brings you to the forgiveness and healing you could not attain. He brings you to the Font. He does not leave you orphans, He brings you into His Church, into this Holy House, where you are cared for, where through His called and ordained innkeeper He lavishes upon you the Gospel in all its forms. You hear the Word of Christ, and by His Spirit you believe

and are saved. And that same Gospel, the Gospel of consolation and peace, heals you and sustains you, freely for you, at great cost to your Lord, until He returns, until He comes again.

Christ is the true Good Samaritan, for He is the One who had mercy on you. But He does not say to you “Go and do likewise.” He says “It is finished.” You are God’s child not by Law but by Promise, that the Promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to you who believe. So by faith when you fast, you fast for Him.

And by faith, when you eat and drink it is Christ you receive in His Holy Eucharist, Christ to your eternal benefit. So by faith you see what Prophets and Kings longed to see but did not. You hear the Prophetic and Apostolic Word made more sure, what they desired to hear but did not. And you confess Christ, which is to answer rightly. So by faith in Him, you shall live.

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