

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

God, in love, desires that you be clean. He is Holy. Uncleanness cannot draw nigh unto God, it is destroyed in His presence. It is not that God takes joy in destruction. It is that He is the source of all Holiness. The Law deals with the distinction between clean and unclean.

So it is in love that God gives His Law. The Law is nothing more than an expression of the Holy Will of God. God desires that you have no other Gods before Him. That's what faith does. That's what holiness does. If you have other Gods, you will be destroyed. God takes no joy in destruction. So He gives His Law that you know His Will.

Even the minutia of the ceremonial and civil laws that God gave Israel were given for good purpose. Lepers and centurions were unclean according to Jewish Law. In the wisdom of the Jews, they were excluded. That was not because God is mean. It was to protect the people from false doctrine, from plague, and from epidemic.

But the greatest epidemic, the most fatal plague, was the infection that began in Eden. And with that lethal sickness, you have been infected. The Law of God as an expression of His Will, as an expression of His Holiness, given in love, stands to show you the nature and extent of your infection. God does this not that you perish, rather that you confess your sin and be healed.

The world, fallen, corrupt, perverse, a twisted shadow of what God made, rejects God's will. The world teaches that man can heal himself. The world teaches that man can self-improve. That self-improvement is the center of the world's religions.

But the true religion, the Holy catholic and Apostolic faith, does not deal with self-improvement. It doesn't promise temporal happiness. It promises a joy that surpasses all understanding, an eternal joy. Inasmuch as you believe in Christ, you have that joy now. That joy is the source of hope and strength for the Christian in the face of earthly suffering. And in this world, those who believe in Christ do suffer.

In fact, the Lord taught His disciples, and so each one of us who would be called Christian: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

So the world ridicules the Word of God, the Will of God, God Himself, and those who believe in the only True God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The world has its own wisdom, a false wisdom that began in Eden when your first father decided to follow the tempter, a corrupted wisdom that leads to death.

And each time you have sinned, it was by rejecting God's Wisdom, God's Will, by rejecting God's Law, and following instead the twisted wisdom of this fallen creation, preserved for a time, prepared for the consuming fire of judgment. So hearken to the Word of the Apostle: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Thanks be to God, Holy Scripture speaks of a better wisdom, a wisdom not of men, but of God. That wisdom God teaches in His Word. He teaches of Himself, and His Holiness. So do not be wise in your own opinion. Pray with the Centurion “Lord, I am unworthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof. But only speak a Word, and I, Thy servant, shall be healed.”

For as the Lord Himself promises, He is willing. He is willing to take on your flesh to redeem you. He is willing to live a perfect life, emptying Himself of His Divine Powers. He is willing to endure the slander and blows of unbelieving men. He is willing to suffer sham trial and scourge and public humiliation. He is willing to die for you, that His shed Blood atone for your sins, and the sins of all men. And He is willing to take up His life again, that the life He gives you be a life of eternal bliss, peace and joy.

For it is not in the Jordan, not in the Abanah or the Pharpar, but in the waters of the Baptismal Font that the God of Love heals you. It is there that He makes you clean. It is there that His Will is done, for He is willing to make you clean. In that Spirit-giving Washing, He gives you faith, faith that clings to Him, faith that receives His salvation, faith that receives His cleansing, faith that receives His healing.

That faith brings His Holiness to you, as you are declared to be righteous in His sight, simply by believing. It is by that faith that you receive true Wisdom, which is to receive Christ. It is of that faith, faith that trusts in Christ above all else, that the Lord Himself says “Assuredly I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel.” That faith hearkens to His Will.

It is not that in Christ the Law is abolished. The Law is an expression of the Will of God. It remains forever, for God is immutable. But in Christ, the Law is fulfilled for you. And in faith, you strive to do the very things that please God. So the Commandments are a description of what faith does, which is to say that the Commandments describe Christ.

In faith, you can pray with David “Lord, Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day... I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.” And so it is that the Apostle writes of the life of faith: “Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.” Love, God’s love for you in Christ, is the fulfillment of the Law, for against love there is no Law. God is love. Christ is Love Incarnate.

The Lord healed the leper with a simple touch and a Word. The Lord healed the Centurion’s servant with a Word from afar. By touching you with the water of Holy Baptism, and with His Sacred Triune Name and Word of Promise, God has cleansed you. By His proclamation through His Called and Ordained Servant He forgives you your sins, healing you from afar by His Word.

And in the Sacrament of the Altar the same Lord brings His forgiveness and salvation to you by His Word of Promise with tangible elements that touch you. God is willing. He heals you as surely as He healed the leper. He heals you as surely as He healed the Centurion’s servant. He heals you, making you clean, reconciling you to Himself, His righteousness imputed to you. So kneel at this altar, eat Christ, drink Christ, and as you have believed, so let it be done to you.

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