

Be Strong, and Be a Man

I Kings 2:1-4,

Quinquagesima (Church Anniversary) Sunday, February 15, 2015

Beloved of the Lord.....We live in a world today where the godly virtues of a godly man are mocked and ridiculed, and men are supposed to behave more like women. The Bible even contains the word effeminate, and such is when a man behaves more like a woman. Yet this is perverse and contrary to nature, for “from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.” There is no middle ground between a male and female, though we acknowledge birth defects and aberrations. Let it also be said here no one is born “gay” but people choose to do this deed because of the lusts of their flesh. Those false Christians today who accept homosexuality by saying it is not sinful but natural, such will be damned along with the homosexuals when they die, unless they repent. We know this because the Lord Himself says “abusers of themselves with mankind” “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” in First Corinthians six. Beware then of this vile and perverse teaching of the world, that a boy may be a girl, or a girl a boy, for “from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.”

All this is said today because David said to his son Solomon “Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.” A godly man then is one who does not accept or believe what the world teaches, but he is faithful above all things to God and God’s Word. David was telling Solomon to be a good soldier of Christ, a watchman upon the walls of Zion, a defender of the truth of God’s Word whose first love is always the Lord. This is similar to Moses who said to Joshua, “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” On this 56th anniversary of our congregation, these are good words for us and our children, the next generation who has been given the gift of God’s pure Word. The older generation of this congregation is passing away and receiving paradise above, but it is time for the next generation to join the battle and be good soldiers of the Lord. Be stronger therefore, and be a godly man for Christ is with you and will go before you in every battle.

I. God commands faithfulness of the next generation. While the older generation is still around, the younger soldiers ought to receive as much wisdom as possible from the older, as long as it is the true wisdom of God’s Word. King David, who was also a prophet and soldier of Christ therefore said to young Solomon “I go the way of all the earth”. He was soon going to die and be gathered to his people above in heaven. Like every good Christian parent, David wanted Solomon to be faithful to God unto death. This is why David commands Solomon, “be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.” A faithful Christian then (man or woman) is a soldier of Christ, who would rather die than deny one jot or tittle of God’s Sacred Word. When he is thinking the right way, according to the New Man, he fears neither the devil nor the world, for he finds all his confidence and strength in the Lord who has redeemed him. Such faithful believers do not want to bend and yield to the false doctrines of the world which overthrow some, but he wants to

be fruitful in God's vineyard, saying "Here am I, send me, send me." As Christ died and rose again for the justification of all, our greatest desire is the salvation of all men, and we would rather die than deny our good Lord Jesus who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Knowing the great love Jesus had for David, David tells Solomon not only to be strong and be a man, but also "keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses." This means all that God commands in the Bible, DO, and don't sin against God in any way. God then does not give us permission to tweak His Word, or twist it, or soften it up or make it more acceptable to people. We don't have the right to change His truth, His doctrine. This is why we are a little flock in a small fellowship today called the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation. We cannot tolerate nor stomach the false doctrine confessed in other Lutheran fellowships. The LCMS and WELS strayed from God's Word back in the 1930's and 1940's. There are other small Lutheran bodies, but we find them legalistic in certain areas, and God does not allow man to make up his own rules and doctrine. Let it also be said, we all know it is not easy to be in such a little fellowship. Is it worth it? Is doctrine that important? Yet God Himself answers this question in Second Timothy three, saying, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." God's Word then, Scripture, "is profitable for doctrine", namely God shows us the right way, the true doctrine in the Bible, and none of us have the right to depart. When you run into someone in this world then who says "Our churches should not be divided because of doctrine, but we should all just love one another and pray together", then we need to answer "Are you saying that some of what Jesus taught is not important or worth following? Is that how you love Jesus?"

It is true we are a very small fellowship, but Noah's fellowship was smaller, only eight souls. We have only fourteen congregations, served by eleven pastors. Likewise let it be said much of God's Word is rightly taught in the LCMS, WELS, CLC, ILC, and others, and we applaud them for holding faithful there. But the problem is they are not teaching ALL of the truth. We cannot be unequally yoked together or tolerate their false doctrines, lest we deny Christ. This is why we cannot pray and worship with the erring, because God has commanded us to mark and avoid "them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned." This too is part of being a man, for our Lord doesn't want us to be "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

This also is why it is so necessary and important that parents diligently teach their children God's Word, both Law and Gospel, as David did Solomon. Parents shouldn't just baptize their children, but also faithfully teach their children at home and bring them to church, keeping the love of Christ at the center and forefront of their little minds, for Jesus said "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is

the Kingdom of God.” Before the eyes and ears of our children, we are to remind them of the great miracles of deliverance God provided for the Israelites in the Old Testament, and the mighty miracles of mercy Jesus performed in the New Testament, upon the deaf, dumb and blind. Jesus also had power over the devils, and so we are to warn our children today of the devils lies. There is only one path to heaven, and His name is Jesus Christ. Likewise the blessing of marriage should be upheld, but God’s curse is upon adultery, fornication, and homosexuality. God’s Word alone is the shield which will protect our children and teenagers from the devil’s arts, and woe to the proud parent who thinks they’ve done enough!

II. If we are faithful, God will bless and reward such faithfulness. We should also teach our children they will be blessed if they keep God’s commandments, or cursed if they despise them by unbelief. Again this is why David commanded Solomon to be faithful in all “the law of Moses, that thou mayest PROSPER in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.” Several of God’s blessings upon parents who faithfully teach their children, is spoken of in Psalm 78. Their children will sing “the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.” Such is done “That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.” By instilling in your children God’s commandments, and especially the love Jesus showed them by way of the cross, God’s blessing is your children will “set their hope in God and not forget the works of God!” Their faith will be in Jesus and their hope, and when the enemy comes they will not forget God’s power! God’s blessing is also that these children will grow up, and teach God’s Word to them “which should be born”, namely the following generation. How wonderful! God has promised us His Church will endure and the gates of hell will not prevail against it for Christ’s sake! So do not give up hope regarding your boys or girls, but be strong and be a man and fight the good fight of faith because the Word always bears fruit!

But WOE to the parents or children who don’t obey God’s Word or listen! Those who break God’s commandments and despise His Word, God cannot bless. If a child grows up and becomes a fool, despising God’s Word, they receive from God only a curse and not a blessing, as long as they do not believe. Proverbs 30:11 says, “There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.” Consider how Jesus Himself was cursed for our sins upon Himself on the cross! Who then would be so foolish as to turn away from this love of Jesus, only for the sinful pleasure of breaking God’s commandments? Such bring the curse of God back upon themselves, and their life will be miserable, except they repent.

But now what are parents to do if they have such a foolish child that has gone astray? What if by unbelief their child is under God’s curse? Here we can be comforted knowing

Jesus seeks to save such lost sheep. So Jesus said in Luke 15, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" Yet the lost can only be found if they first realize they are lost in sin. Our duty then as parents is not only to pray to them, but also warn and admonish them. They need to hear the Law and God's wrath against them for sin. Whatever is their chief sin, the foremost they cling to which caused them to fall away, that is where the hammer must fall. Tell them of their sin and "thus saith the Lord" they which do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God, and repentance is needed.

And let us also have faith, for this is not a hopeless cause. We were all lost at one point in time, or perhaps we fell but now are restored. We also all know Christians who fell away, but were later returned by God's grace. We rely then on God's grace, and God's grace alone. In very early church history there was a great minister named Augustine, who wrote "The city of God". But he himself was once a pagan unbeliever, but his Christian mother prayed for him every day, and eventually he was converted. So the Lord can do for your children, but they do need to repent, so pray for them and admonish them, but may the love of Christ be in all you do knowing God is able "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end."

In closing then dear brethren, if you are older, be sure to do all you can to pass on God's Word to the next generation. And if you are younger, that up and coming next generation, take heed to obey God's commandments, remembering the mighty works Jesus did to save you and forgive you. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!" Be a good soldier of Christ. Be strong and be a man. "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Amen.