

Instructions for Holy Ones

Sunday, 10/6 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 10/7 at 7 PM

17th Sunday after Pentecost / 16th Sunday after Trinity – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: The “**A**” Verse tells us that “**All have sinned...**” – *which has made us unholy*, but the “**B**” Verse tells us that those who “**Believe in the Lord Jesus... will be saved.**” Now, *because of God’s love for us and His work through Holy Baptism*, †we do believe in Jesus, †we have been clothed in Christ, and, *in God’s sight*, †we are holy ones. Now what?

- Regarding children: The “**C**” Verse tells “**Children [to] obey their parents in everything...**” Why? *As a way to express their love and thanks to God and their parents!*
- Regarding adults: In today’s gospel reading, Jesus gave instructions to people who †trust in Him, †learn from Him, and †follow Him, *thus to holy ones – like you and me. As the obedience of children expresses love and thanks, so let us express love and thanks to Jesus by being obedient to His instructions!*

1. **Don’t Tempt Others to Sin:** ¹ And [Jesus] said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe [disaster, calamity] to the one through whom they come! ² It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.

- a. Right now we are in [Luke chapter 17](#); however, in [chapters 11-16](#), Jesus encountered various Pharisees.

They were “an organized society of Jews who claimed authority in interpreting the Scripture and setting rules for the observance of the law in daily life” (Friberg, BW).

- b. Regarding the Pharisees, Jesus oftentimes called them hypocrites, thus actors – *ones who pretended to be godly, yet they trusted in their own good works and encouraged others to do the same*. By giving such encouragement, *they were tempting others to sin*.
- c. The word used by Jesus means even more than to tempt, *it also means to trap and kill*, so, spiritually, *it means to pull an immature believer away from Jesus*. That is why Jesus said: *It would be better for such a person to die a very tragic death*. Therefore, let us never do anything to pull others away from Jesus!!

2. **Keep Forgiving:** ³ **Pay attention to yourselves** [to each other, to fellow-believers]! **If your brother sins** [whether against you or against anyone], **rebuke** [strongly warn] **him, and if he repents** [feels regret, is sorry], **forgive him,** ⁴ **and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”**

- a. The whole purpose of what Jesus said ties in with forgiveness: For the one who sins, *he should be warned*; for the sinner who is sorry, *he should be assured of God’s forgiveness*. It is important for *the believer to extend God’s forgiveness*, and it is important for *the sinner to receive God’s forgiveness!*
- b. Regarding seven times in a day: That must refer to seven different sins, not the same one seven times.
- c. Here is another very important distinction to make: Whenever anyone sins against us, *it is essential that we immediately forgive*; that is forgiveness from one

person to another. Here, *in this text*, Jesus was speaking about one person extending *God's forgiveness* to another person. Also, *for all believers*, we are called to forgive all who sin against us – *whether they are sorry or not*; however, *God's forgiveness is extended to and received only by those who are sorry for their sins!* Therefore, let us be bold to warn sinners and, *for all who repent*, let us gladly announce the good news of God's forgiveness!

3. **Grow in Your Faith:** ⁵ **The apostles** *[the future leaders]* **said to the Lord, "Increase our faith** *[add to what is already present]!"* ⁶ **And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree** *[a black mulberry tree with a strong root system]*, **"Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.**
- a. Why did they ask for more faith? Jesus had just told them: Do not tempt; also, warn and forgive; since such things are difficult, *they asked for an increase of their faith.*
- b. What were their problems? Sometimes they did not always use their God-given faith, *so they did not always receive the hoped-for results.* We can be the same, so let us ♣ feed our faith with God's promises and ♣ put our faith into practice in our daily lives.
- c. What about Jesus' illustration? **"...human impossibility is pictured by the tree... [Nevertheless], the tree is planted and flourishes in the sea. Exactly [that] very thing the apostles would soon do over and over again, for at their word the kingdom would be transplanted, root and branch, from Israel into the Gentile world in congregation after congregation"** (Lenski, 868-869).

4. **Do Your Duty:** Now, *as the apostles would soon be sent out to serve*, they needed to **remain humble**, **trust in their Master**, and **do their duty**, so Jesus told this story:
⁷ **“Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? [No!]**
¹⁰ **So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty [literally, what we ought to do we have done].’”**

- a. God our Father has bought us with a price, *the life and death of His Son*, so we belong to Him and we owe Him our service. Our service does not earn forgiveness, *but it is one way of thanking God for His gift of forgiveness!*
- b. As a bank does not thank a lender for paying off his loan, *so God owes no thanks to us*; however, because of Him, and not because of us, *He does shower us with countless undeserved blessings – both now and forevermore!*

This Week’s Challenge: Knowing we are forgiven in Christ, let us gladly follow Jesus’ instructions!

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, *TY for saving us*; help us to ✓ not tempt others, ✓ warn sinners, ✓ speak Your forgiveness to the repentant, ✓ use our faith, and ✓ gladly serve!

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