

The Daily Bread of Life

Feed your household with the bread that endures to eternal life.
Feast on the words of God and works of Jesus.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Text

Mark 9:38-50

³⁸ “Teacher,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

³⁹ “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, ⁴⁰ for whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹ I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

Causing to Sin

⁴² “And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. ⁴³ If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. ⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ where

“ ‘their worm does not die,
and the fire is not quenched.’

⁴⁹ Everyone will be salted with fire.

⁵⁰ “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

Keys to Understanding

In Jesus' name: to do something in Jesus' name means to do it because you represent him—like a messenger or ambassador.

Millstone:



There were two kinds of mills—one that was operated by hand, and one that was turned by a donkey. Jesus was talking about the large millstone, the one that the donkey had to turn. He was serious about the danger of sin, and the dangerous influence that we could have on the young if we are not careful!

Salt: an ancient way of preserving meat. The sacrifices, in order to be acceptable to God, had to be seasoned with salt. Jesus is talking about the Law of God as salt. Though God's Law may burn like fire when it shows us our sin, it will preserve our faith.

Keys to Applying

Jesus is not actually telling us to cut off body parts. His point is that sin is so prevalent in us that we must be constantly doing whatever it takes to keep sinful thoughts from taking over in our hearts. Here we see the sins of **pride** and **jealously** in the disciples, and this right after Jesus had been teaching them about humility! Jesus takes this opportunity to teach us to put away pride and jealousy, so that we ourselves do not lose the reward of heaven. We must be humble enough to understand that we in our little group are not the only ones who can work for Jesus. Anyone who does anything in his name, no matter how small, is working for Jesus and will be rewarded for it. But how does one avoid these sins of pride and jealousy? It would not help to cut off a hand or gouge out an eye. It's the heart that needs to go, but that can't be cut out. We need forgiveness, and we need to be zealously guarding our hearts against sin. Imitate Jesus' attitude, and do whatever it takes!

Notice how patient Jesus is with his disciples. They are so slow to learn, and their hearts so far from him that they even would work against someone who is driving out demons for Jesus. Still, Jesus wants them to be his disciples.

Because we are Lutherans...

Fourth: *What does baptizing with water mean?*

Baptism means that the old Adam in us should be drowned by daily contrition and repentance, and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death. It also means that a new person should daily arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

Saint Paul says in Romans, chapter 6, "We were ...buried with [Christ] through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Martin Luther

Questions for Children

1. If you are really good at something, and someone else does it better, how does that make you feel?
2. The disciples were jealous of these other people who also were driving out demons. How did the disciples get the power to drive out demons? How did those other people get the power to drive out demons?
3. The disciples told those other people to stop driving out demons in Jesus' name. What was wrong with that?
4. Who gave you the ability to do things well?
5. How does God want us to act when we see that he has given other people the ability to do things well?
6. Explain that Jesus forgave his disciples, and patiently continued to teach them. Jesus also forgives us, and patiently continues to teach us.
7. Explain how God appreciates even the little things that we do for him, even as small as bringing someone a cup of cold water. We don't have to be the only ones who have talents to be valuable to God, because he appreciates even the little things we do.
8. What can you do to help yourself avoid sins of jealousy?
9. Are there other things in your life that cause you to sin, which you should get rid of?

Questions for Adults

1. Ask yourselves the "Questions for Children."
2. What can we do to "cut off" things that cause us to be jealous of the gifts that God gives to other Christians and other Christian congregations?" (so that we will rejoice when we see God blessing Christians in other congregations, and not be indignant when the Synod gives more help to other congregations than to us, or when one of our members transfers to another WELS congregation)
 - a. Would it help to attend the joint Reformation service coming up on October 4th?
 - b. Does it help to watch the WELS connection video after church?
 - c. Does it help to read "Forward in Christ?"
 - d. Are there other things that may help?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, you send the Holy Spirit to bless all your people in various ways and in different places. Lead us to see this all as your work, and be happy for what you are doing in every place. Help us to see the sinful attitudes in our hearts, and to remove from our lives all the things that cause us to sin. Comfort us with the thought that, though we are so very sinful, you still want us to be your people. Forgive us, and patiently teach us. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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The Text

Numbers 11:16, 24-29

¹⁶ The LORD said to Moses: “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you.

²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the Tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again.

²⁶ However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”

²⁸ Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, “Moses, my lord, stop them!”

²⁹ But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!”

Keys to Understanding

The Spirit: the Holy Spirit, who gave the Word of God to the prophets, and continues to distribute spiritual gifts to us today. Look up 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 for more information.

The Tent: the Tent of Meeting, or tabernacle. God commanded the Israelites to build this tent with its altars for sacrifice and incense. It would be the place where God would “dwell” among his people.

Keys to Applying

In this story, we see God giving the spiritual gift of prophecy to the leaders of Israel. We might wonder why Eldad and Medad were not with the other elders by the Tent. Did they miss the memo? Did they not think it was worth their time? At any rate, Joshua apparently didn’t think they were worthy of this honor of prophesying. On the other hand, Moses was humble enough to realize that this was God’s work, and so there was no need to tell them to stop. He was glad that God gave this honor to other leaders also. We see the sin of pride

Prophecy: to deliver a message from God to the people.

The elders: leaders of the people.

in Joshua, and the virtue of humility in Moses. This week as we focus on guarding ourselves against the sins of pride and jealousy, the lesson we learn today is that we dare not let pride in the abilities God has given to us cause us to discredit what God is doing elsewhere. Rather, rejoice that God is blessing us more by giving gifts to others also.

Because we are Lutherans...

(explanation to the third article of the Apostles' Creed) I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; *even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth*, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.

Martin Luther

Questions for all ages

1. What is something that you do well?
2. How can you use that to serve God? (Keep in mind that even small things, like “bringing a cup of cold water to someone who believes in Jesus” is good service to God)
 - a. Examples of service:
 - i. Making another person’s life pleasant is service to God
 - ii. Encouraging people to do the right thing is service to God
 - iii. Singing in church is service to God, and to all of us—it makes our worship beautiful.
 - iv. Others that fit your talents better...
3. Do you find that you are more often happy about the things you see others doing well, or do you wish that God would have given you those talents? When you are jealous of the talents God has given to others, that is a sin.
4. Notice that Joshua sinned like that in the story. God forgave him, and the proof is that he would later use him to be a leader of his people. God forgives our sins of pride and jealousy too.
5. Remember that Jesus values little children (from last week’s Gospel). He also loves to see the littlest things that anyone can do to serve him and serve others.
6. Moses said that he wished all of God’s people would be prophets, because then each of them could speak God’s word and help the people. We should be happy about the gifts and talents that God gives to other people, because it helps all of us.
 - a. How does it help all of us when God gives someone else...

- i. The ability to speak well
- ii. The ability to encourage
- iii. strength
- iv. good health
- v. wisdom
- vi. caution
- vii. the ability to play beautiful music
- viii. the ability to sing
- ix. other gifts and talents?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, forgive our selfishness for wanting to be the only ones with gifts, or wishing that we could do things that others do. Lead us to recognize the ways that you have blessed all of us through the abilities that you have given to other people. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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The Text

James 4:7-12

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

¹¹ Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

Keys to Understanding

Submit yourselves: The opposite of resisting God's will. Admit that God's will is right, and your sins are wrong and deserve punishment.

Wash your hands: Make up your mind to stop doing sinful things.

Purify your hearts: Put sinful thoughts and desires out of your mind.

Double-minded: On the one hand wanting to be a Christian, but on the other had wanting to continue to sin.

He will lift you up: a promise of forgiveness. God will give you joy again.

Slander: saying bad things about someone for the purpose of causing people to think badly about that person. Even if what you say is true, God has said don't do this. If you do, you are "judging the Law," because your actions show that you think what God has said is not right.

Keys to Applying

As we watch ourselves to keep our heart from sin, we will want to remember what to do about the sins we commit and the sinful thoughts we find in our hearts. When we see that even feelings of our heart can be sins, such as pride in the gifts and talents God has given us, we need to remember the words of verse 10, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. That means you don't try to justify yourself. You admit that God's ways are right, and ours are sinful. Humble yourselves before the Lord means that you take his anger and threats of punishment seriously, and be saddened that you have so greatly offended your God, and that you have done this though he has loved you so deeply. Do this, and believe his promise of forgiveness, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, *and he will lift you up.*"

Because we are Lutherans...

Indeed, the whole Lord's Prayer is nothing else than such a confession. For what is our prayer but a confession that we neither have nor do what we ought and a plea for grace and a happy conscience? This kind of confession should and must take place incessantly as long as we live. For this is the essence of a genuinely Christian life, to acknowledge that we are sinners and to pray for grace.¹

Martin Luther

Questions for Children

1. Use the story of Joseph (Genesis 37) to talk about why it is bad to keep jealous thoughts in your heart.
2. Talk about how "being humble" means that we will admit to each other and to God that we have done wrong. To God, we should even admit our sinful thoughts of pride and jealousy.
3. Admitting that we have done wrong is scary. If the parents don't know, the kids probably aren't going to tell. If the parents do know, they would like the kids to admit to the wrong they have done, but then punishment is probably going to follow. God knows, and he wants us to confess our sins to him. Talk about God's promise of forgiveness, and how he has promised that he will not punish us. He punished Jesus for us.

Questions for Adults

1. Ask yourself the "Questions for Children."
2. Think about how your forgiveness for your children should teach them how God forgives them.
3. Gossip is probably the most common form of slander among us. Why is gossip such a natural thing for the prideful, self-centered heart?
4. Christ has taught us to zealously "cut out" everything that causes us to sin—even if it may be people who cause us to sin, in the case of the man whom Jesus said ought to have a millstone hung around his neck and be thrown into the sea. What should we do about our tendency to slander or gossip?
5. Think about what James means for us to do about these sins that keep coming back to tempt us again and again:
 - a. What will it mean to "submit to God?"
 - b. What will it mean to "resist the devil?"
 - c. What will it mean to "humble yourselves before the Lord?"

Prayer

Heavenly Father, all of us have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We deserve your anger and punishment. As we think especially about our sins of pride and jealousy, we realize that, while we have been very concerned about the sins of others, we have often been too proud to see our own sins. When we have sinned, we have often been too proud to confess them to you. Forgive us, Father, and lift us up as you have promised, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

¹ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (458). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.