

Sermon for The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Date: July 7, 2019

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Job 42:1-6

Epistle Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:6-10

Gospel Reading: Luke 9:23-26

Sermon Text: Luke 9:23-26

Sermon Title: God Doesn't Work?

Introit: Psalm 19:2,4-6; Antiphon: Psalm 19:1

Hymns:

LSB 966 – Before You, Lord, We Bow (v. 1,2,4,5)

LSB 427 – In the Cross of Christ I Glory

LSB 965 – God Bless Our Native Land

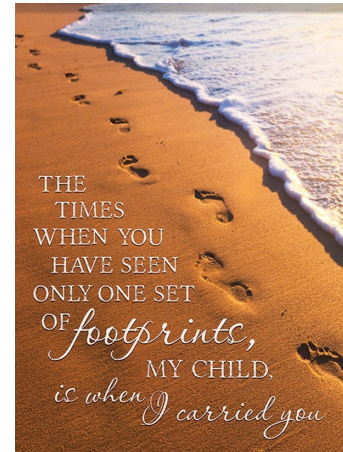
Distribution:

LSB 660 – Stand Up, Stand up for Jesus

LSB 658 – Preserve Your Word, O Savior

Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

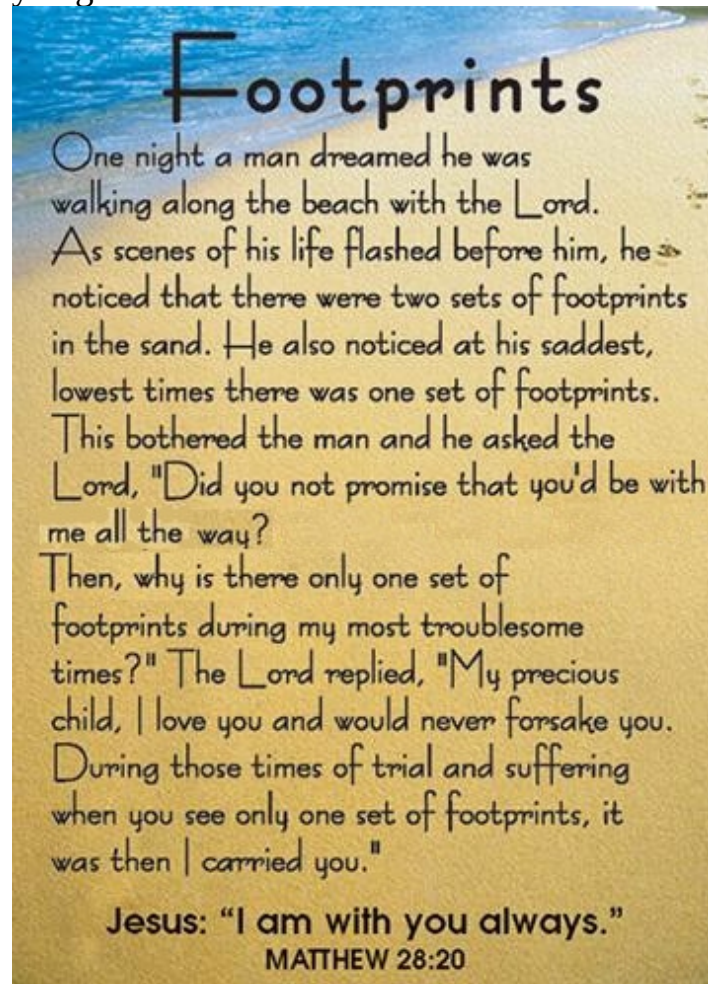


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Text: Luke 9:23-26

Jesus said to all of them, “Those who want to come with me must say no to the things they want, pick up their crosses every day, and follow me. Those who want to save their lives will lose them. Those who lose their lives for me will save them. What good does it do for people to win the whole world but lose their lives by destroying them? If people are ashamed of me and what I say, the Son of Man will be ashamed of those people when he comes in the glory that he shares with the Father and the holy angels.



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Grace to you and peace in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

A boy had just started his first paper route. He was eager to tell everyone about the struggles he endured because of his job. "I get up at 5 a.m. and while I'm getting dressed, Mom makes me breakfast. Then, just as I'm leaving for work, Dad gets up. Mom fixes him breakfast, too. When I get home Mom has lunch on the table, but I'm so tired by then I can hardly eat. Work is so exhausting."

When asked if Mom had a job, he said, "Naw, Mom just cleans the house, runs to the store, takes care of the other kids, washes clothes and does some ironing. She's ain't got no job."

The part the boy liked best was to talk about getting paid. He liked getting paid. What about Mom, does she get paid? "Mom, get paid? Of course not. Mom don't get paid. She's ain't got no job. She don't do no work."

I'm sure most everyone of you is smiling at that young man's ignorance. You know moms do plenty of work even though she doesn't have her name on a company's payroll. The whole family is clothed, fed and comforted, the children are taught about Jesus, because she, in her devotion and dedication, and above all in her love, keeps on doing what she's doing. Not got a job? She's got the most important job of all. It's just that sometimes those who ought to realize it, don't.

Now I know what your thinking, "pastor's got his calendar all mixed up. This isn't Mothers' Day. I'm don't. It is precisely because we are celebrated the Fourth of July this past week that I tell you this story. I think most of you can recognize how much the boy underestimated the value and work of his mother. I think God can understand too. God understands because so many these days are saying, "God, He don't get paid. God's ain't got no job. God don't do no work."

That's what too many in our nation's capital believe, and it'd be easier for them to make their point if the Washington Monument didn't keep getting in the way. By law it is the tallest building in Washington, D.C.. At the very top are two Latin words: "*Laus Deo.*" 'Praise be to God.'

Some might say, "It doesn't matter what is carved on top of a monument, our first leaders were not all good Christians." That's partly true. Some of the founding fathers had questionable morality and embraced wandering style of worship, but most of them recognized that God ruled over the things of men and nations. In fact one of the most quoted book, by the founding fathers, are words taken directly from the Holy Word of God.

God ain't got no job. God don't do no work. Tell that to George Washington. In Washington's diary, in his own hand are these words:

Let my heart, gracious God, be so affected with Your glory and majesty that I may... discharge those weighty duties which Thou requirest of me... Again, I have called on Thee for pardon and forgiveness of sins... for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered on the cross for me. Thou gavest Thy Son to die for me; and hast given me assurance of my salvation.

Tell Washington, "God's ain't got no job."

God don't do no work. Tell that to John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In 1816 he wrote:

It is the duty of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for our rulers.

Tell it to Justice David Brewer who, 75 years later, said:

This is a religious people... this is a Christian nation.

Tell it to Chief Justice Earl Warren who wrote:

I believe no one can read the history of our country without realizing that the Good Book and the spirit of the Savior have from the beginning been our guiding intellect... I like to believe we are living today in the spirit of the Christian religion. I also like to believe that as long as we do so, no great harm can come to our country.

Tell these Supreme Court Justices God's ain't got no job.

God's got no job. God don't do no work. Tell that to the Continental Congress whom on September 11, 1777, it imported 20,000 Bible for use in the public schools? Tell that to the Congress of the Confederation whom on September 10, 1782 approved the printing of Bibles, at government expense, for use in the public schools?

Of course such a gesture could not go unquestioned; not then, not today. The difference is back then when the government was asked to remove the Bibles, the Supreme Court ruled:

Why should not the Bible, and especially the New Testament, be read and taught as a Divine revelation in the schools? Where can the purest principles of morality

be learned so clearly or so perfectly as from the New Testament?

They thought God had a job back then.

God ain't got no job. God don't do no work. That's what we've been told our founders believed. What we've been told is profoundly wrong on a number of accounts. First, it's wrong because it's not true. It is also wrong because anytime we deploy our troops around the world we find a job for God to do, and it is right we do so. We ask Him to give us victories and bring our sons and daughters safely home. God's got no job? I've noticed when a plane crashes, when terrorists attack our country, very quickly we find a job for God.

Sadly, as soon as things calm down the word goes out. "God don't do no work." You do realize if that is true then you and I are here on our own. It's no wonder people these days believe that have so little hope for their future. They've seen the greed of humanity, the hatred of their fellowman, the cruelty, the envy, the selfishness, gossip and pride of their neighbors.

If we are on our own, there's no reason to hope or dream things will get better. If God's got no job, then Lincoln was wrong, and the dead of Gettysburg and every other American battlefield have died in vain. If God's not involved, there is no decision we can make, right or wrong. If God has no job, then we are left to the mercy of our own institutions, organizations and operations. Sadly, time has taught us our institutions, organizations, operations, no matter how good their intentions, are prone to fail.

If we really believe God's got no job, and God don't do no work, (and all too many people do) it is little wonder that corporate executives feel no loyalty to their stockholders; drug dealers are often the most influential people in their neighborhoods, and graduation speeches at countless colleges and home-town high-schools, sing the self-centered song, "I can do anything I want, but I must be loyal to myself, and myself alone." Albert Willis would not understand that kind of thinking. You see Albert Willis knew both he and God had a job to do.

Albert Willis was was a member of the Confederacy in Mosby's Raiders. Willis and a companion, who is never named, were captured and sentenced to be hung. Willis, studying to be a pastor was offered a Chaplain's exemption. Knowing his friend was married and he was not, young Willis gave his exemption to his friend, entrusted his soul to the Savior, and then was hanged in place of his friend. During the Civil War, on both sides there were many men and women like Willis, who knew their God and knew their duty.

The truth is throughout this country's history, and still today, we have been blessed by many such people. Yet now a new generation says patriotism is pathetic; sacrifice is silly; loyalty is lame, and heroes should be listed among the suckers that are born every minute.

I stand before today to say to you, "God does have a job." God's job, however, is not to have believers pass policies and positions legislating people into Christianity. God has a job to do. No matter what some might say, God's job is not to dress Himself in the flag, nor is His job confined to keeping our countries at the top of the world's pecking order. God's powerful play, most simply stated is this: to save your soul so that you can be forgiven in this life, and given hope of heaven in the next. To do this work, God's sent His Son into the world. To do this work Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, lived a life that resisted the most troublesome of temptations.

Jesus was betrayed and deserted by His friends. He saw His Church, His government, and His country, turn their backs on Him. Jesus was beaten, whipped, spit upon, crowned with thorns and crucified. What is God's job? Nothing less than saving of you from yourself, from the world, from the devil and from death.

When Washington, Jefferson, Adams and Franklin were alive, it was God's work to touch their lives with the saving message of salvation. When Lincoln and Lee walked among us, the Lord did His work summoning all to be servants of the cross. To all of these, and all who held rank in between, He said, "Repent, believe, trust in Jesus as your Savior." The time of these leaders has passed. Their lives are written in the annals of history, their place for eternity is written, or not, in the Book of Life. No more can be done or said for them on that account, but God's work goes on. God still has a job to do.

In every community, town and burg, in every house, apartment, and RV, He continues to work. He wants all to know He loves us. He has sent His Son to pay the price for us. God's work continues on even now as He calls you from darkness to light; from hell to heaven; from despair to the Divine.

It is sad that so many citizens great nation would prefer to live their lives in darkness, and keep their soul's citizenship in hell. It is a tragedy. Not only will they, if they persist, be lost for ever, all those around them: families and farms, cities and counties, will experience the negative impact of refusing the results the Redeemer's remedy.

You Christian people, surrounded by those who have no use for God, no belief in His ongoing work, will find life challenging. It is hard to remain firm when so

many around you are pulling you down. It is difficult to walk Jesus' narrow road when so many are eager to lure you to the wayside. Living in a country whose conscience has grown cold can be discouraging but I encourage you to carry your cross, stay close to Christ, cling to the cross. Your actions bear witness to the truth, "God's powerful play goes on." Your joy against the world contempt says, "God's work makes a difference." Your confidence says, "Jesus is in charge."

You may be content with your work, your home, your community, and your country. You may think God's got nothing to do with you or anyone else. You may believe that sincerely, but you'd be sincerely wrong. If however you don't like what you see in the world, if you feel things should be different for yourself, your family, your nation, I've got a Savior to tell you about. His job, His work, was and remains, to erase your sin and sadness and to give you something better.

May that be your in Jesus' name. Amen.