

Sermon Notes on I Pet. 3:8-9, Trinity XXII

1. By nature, sinful man does not produce the wonderful fruits listed in these two verses. In fact Rom. 3:12 says: "There is not one who does good, not even one." And Jesus said: "No one is good except One, God." Mk. 10:18. The Bible never calls even Christians good. What a devastating picture! Even the Christian's heart is like a cesspool of dirty water.
2. No wonder that the Bible urges Christians, who have the Spirit of God in them, to do good works. Christians are like little children who must be told frequently what they are to do. This is a somber reminder that they are sinful. Vss. 1-7 before our text tell us how wives and husbands are to treat each other. Then our text begins with "finally." It is a summary of the life of a Christian.
3. All of these Christian virtues are summed up in one sentence: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." It is found throughout the Bible. For example, Lev. 19:18 and Rom. 13:8-10. There are, finally, only two great commandments. See Mt. 22:34-40. The whole Bible can be summed up in one word: "love." God is love. And the two great commandments can be summed up in "love."
4. When a human being is born again spiritually by faith in Jesus Christ, he is raised from the dead. Life enters that person. Christ Himself makes him His home. The good works in a Christian are fruits of faith, fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22-23. The Bible never calls Christians good but it does call their works good. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works." Mt. 5:16. Eph. 2:1-10 makes very plain that God alone creates good works in the life of the Christian. Jn. 15:1-8 tells us that Christians are branches on the Vine, Christ. He says: "He who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit. For without Me you can do nothing." Also the OT in many places makes plain that good works are a gift from God to men. For example, "He will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season." Ps. 1:3. The whole life of the Christian is of the mercy, grace and love of God, both salvation and the new life.
5. The seven Christian qualities mentioned in our text are so simple that they need little comment. And yet perhaps several of them do need a bit of explanation. The first one is variously translated "live in harmony" "agree among yourselves" "be of one mind" "have unity of spirit". It is more fully explained at Eph. 4:3 "Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," Paul then speaks of "one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." But aren't Christians different from each other? Must they think alike in all respects? No. In things which God has neither commanded nor forbidden Christians can have different convictions. The NT speaks often about these things. For example, at I Cor. 11 Paul discusses the matter of women having their heads covered in church. God has neither nor forbidden this. There are many things which He has neither commanded nor forbidden. Christians do not always agree in these matters. Nor need they. But they should not despise each other for their differences. Some Christians cross themselves. Others do not. Some Christians fast before going to communion. Others do not. Let each have his own conviction but do not despise each other because this breaks the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
6. Vs. 9 speaks of Christlike virtues. See I Pet. 2:21-25. The first part of vs. 9 means: "do not be vengeful." Vengeance belongs to God. To bless people when they curse us means to love our enemies. See Lk. 6:27-30. Finally, the humble person is one who despises no one but is a servant to all. He is first in the Kingdom of God.

## Sermon Outline on I Pet. 3:8-9, Trinity XXII

Theme: HOW CHRISTIANS ARE TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD

Introduction: When we look about ourselves in this world we might become discouraged. There is so much sin and evil. We tend to give up. But we must not. The prophets and apostles did not give up. Our Lord Jesus did not give up. He Himself has told us to come to Him and take His yoke and burden upon ourselves. They are light and easy to bear. And He will be with us in Word and person to help us.

### I-Why It Is Necessary To Tell Christians How To Live In This World.

- A-They are sinners just as are all other people. The world has the erroneous idea that Christians are or are supposed to be perfect and sinless. They are quick to point out imperfections in the Christians. They accuse the church of harboring hypocrites which, of course, is true. But what grieves the Christian most is that he IS a sinner. St. Paul, in Rom. 7, called himself and all of us wretched people because sin still lives in us and is active. He called all of us with himself a chief of sinners (I Tim.). Sooner or later all Christians realize the truth of this in their lives. Christians must learn that in their flesh dwells no good thing and that their flesh cannot produce anything good in God's sight. This is simply a fact of life.
- B-Good works come from faith in Christ, not from good people. Jesus once said: "No one but God is good." Paul said: "There is no one who is good, no, not one." But where you have faith in Christ there will be good works. This faith in Christ cleanses the person of all guilt and sin. The Christian is justified by faith without doing the deeds of the Law. Jesus said: "He who abides in Me and I in Him, the same brings forth much fruit. For, without Me you can do nothing." Paul said that the reborn man, the Christian, is one in whom God works good works, works which He has created (Eph. 2:1-10). I must hear the Gospel often because the Gospel feeds my faith in Christ and my faith in Christ produces the good works mentioned in our text.

### II-The Good Works Which Christians Must Do In This World.

- A-Those which they do toward each other. Evidently the works listed in vs. 8 of our text speak especially of works Christian do to each other. There are five of them. We take them one at a time. 1) They are to be like-minded. In Eph. 4 Paul speaks of "one faith." That is summarized for us in the Apostles Creed. Above all, they all believe in Jesus, the God-man, Who takes away their sins. They believe that the Bible is the Word of God, true in every respect. Their unity is centered in the Word of God. In matters in which God has made no command they may disagree but not in enmity but rather in love. 2) They are to be sympathetic to each other. People have many weaknesses, suffering and shortcomings which require our sympathy. That means to put ourselves into that person's place and feel what he feels. 3) We are to practice brotherly love. Not just love but brotherly love for fellow Christians. Why? Because we are one in the faith and are on the way to eternal life together. 4) We are to be compassionate. The Good Samaritan had compassion on the man who was lying half-dead at the road-side. Jesus had compassion on the 5000 hungry people. Above all, He had compassion on a sinful world and gave His life for it. 5) We must be humble. This is the opposite of arrogance. Pride makes people arrogant. Repentance makes us humble.
- B-Those which they practice in the world, vs. 9. 1) They must not return evil for evil. See Lk. 6 on loving our enemies. Think of Christ praying for His enemies. 2) They must rather bless them. Why? Because we are the recipients of so many physical and spiritual blessings. Stephen prayed for those who stoned him. Christ asked for forgiveness for those who were crucifying Him.