

Welcome to the church of Christ at Alisal

Sermon for the Lord's Day
"Are You Spiritually Blind?"



The Haste of the Hermandads Neal Pollard

In the 1100s, in an effort to protect travelers going from northern Spain over the Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia (Dogs of God, Reston, 50), a military force known as the hermandads ("the brotherhood") was organized. Soon, these vigilantes spread across Spain and offered themselves as protectors of roads and merchants. Eventually appointed as a national police force who could collect taxes and prevent insurrection in every municipality, they would go on to exterminate untold numbers of Muslims, Jews, and other "enemies of the state" during the Middle Ages. Reston mentions an unsettling "right" granted to the hermandads in the 15th Century, during the famous reign of Isabella and Ferdinand. He writes, "In a curious turnabout, executions took place first, and trials were held afterwards" (51).

Given our country's constitutional concept of "innocent until proven guilty," this practice seems both backward and barbaric. How useful is a trial to present facts about a case after the defendant has been executed? What if the deceased was found innocent? What if there was no proof of guilt? Of course, the "facts" of every case incredibly supported the punitive action that preceded it.

While we may find such a practice appalling, how often do we do the same with our tongues? Through rash anger, reckless gossip, and rabid prejudice, we can serve as judge, jury, and executioner of the reputation and actions of another. How often do we jump to conclusions and assassinate another's character, but later revelations prove our actions both premature and unjustifiable? Unfortunately, the damage having been done, nothing done by way of reparation can fully undo the effects upon the victim.

What we need to see is the spiritual danger we face who "execute" before "trial." Solomon wrote, "He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him" (Prov. 18:13). A few verses later, he says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue..." (21a). That New Testament "wisdom writer," James, adds, "But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way" (3:8-10).

Be very careful! Even when we think we have the facts about another, let us post a guard outside the door of our lips (cf. Ps. 141:3). Better to deliberate and reserve judgment than to execute before the trial has been held!

Worship today will be via Zoom @ 9:00am

Write and let us know if you would like an invitation.

Our Lord's Day Plan...

- Opening Prayer** - Jordan
- Hymn** - Kerry
- Lord's Supper** - Kerry
- Morning Lesson** - Paul
- Hymn** - Kerry
- Closing Prayer** - Nito

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And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:35

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We are praying for you!

Evelyn Cruz, Rosemarie Johnson, all our elderly members, Norma, Beverly, Charles, Judy, and Paul, and all our friends and neighbor.

Pray for spiritual enlightenment of all people

The wisdom of Solomon...

*People who think they are wise when they are not are worse than fools.
Proverbs 26:12 (ERV))*

[Jesus continued,] “To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.” — Mark 4:25

Thought:

Jesus wants us to know that as we apply ourselves to listening to him, he is still active in communication. He will help us understand more! But, we must be open to his teaching. We must be willing to listen, hear, and apply his message to our lives. But if we are sloppy, disinterested, or hard-hearted toward the message of Jesus, what little we understand will be stripped away from us. There is an urgency to our hearing the Master. Two raindrops can land inches apart on either side of the Western Continental Divide in the U.S., and one will ultimately end up in the Pacific Ocean and the other in the Atlantic Ocean. Listeners to Jesus’ message can also end up oceans apart based upon their desires to be open to his teaching. We have a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to listen to Jesus! Our commitment to doing so greatly determines the ultimate destination of our lives.

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Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Colossians 3:5

The Greek word underlying “covetousness” is pleonexia, which means “the desire to have more.” This is among the ugliest of sins because it involves idolatry as well as its effects on others. The Greeks defined it as “the insatiable desire to have what rightfully belongs to others.” It is further described as “ruthless self-seeking,” the kind of attitude that the arrogant and callous person has, assuming that others and their things exist for his own benefit.

The desire for more money can lead to theft; the desire for more prestige, to evil ambition; the desire for more power, to tyranny; the desire for a person’s body, to fornication and adultery. Paul identifies covetousness as idolatry because, in the place of God, it puts self-interest for illicit things. A man sets up an idol in his heart because he desires to get something from it. So he serves it to get that something rather than to obey God’s commandment. That, very simply put, is idolatry.

The essence of idolatry is to get for the self in defiance of God. However, we have to give ourselves to God if we want to overcome illicit desires. Paul says to “mortify” (KJV) or “put to death” (NKJV) whatever is sinful. That does not mean to practice ascetic self-discipline—it means to kill. The Christian must kill self-centeredness. In his life, he must make a radical transformation, a shift of the center of his life. It is the same principle as described by Matthew 5:29. Everything that keeps a person from fully obeying God and surrendering to Jesus Christ must be surgically excised from his conduct.

The tenth commandment, then, has a function similar to the first. They both act as governors, controlling whether we keep the others. — John W. Ritenbaugh

August 12, 2020



Meeting Days and Times
Sunday 9:00 am
Wednesday Bible Class, singing & prayer - 6:00 pm

Zoom Times...

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