

Holy Work 2 Tim 4:4-13 St. Luke Oct 18, 2020

For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. 12Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 2 Timothy 4:10-13 Holy work

Brothers and sisters in Christ, today is St. Luke the evangelist Sunday, the day we remember St. Luke, the one the Spirit inspired to write one of the four gospels and acts. And you might think we will talk about some of the high points from the Gospel that bears his name - the birth of Jesus, the good Samaritan, the ascension. And each of these could be a sermon on its own. But not today. We might refer to them but they are not central today. Today we talk about Luke.

But there is a problem with talking St. Luke - he is barely mentioned in the scriptures. In fact, the passage above is one of the few places in scripture he is mentioned by name - and the most substantial. He was not an apostle. He was not one of the twelve. He did not pastor a church. He appears in Acts only in that, sometimes, the text says goes from saying "they" to saying "we", implying Luke, the author, was then with Paul and his retinue. He performs no miracles and delivers no sermons. In fact, you might be wondering why we spend a Sunday remembering him at all. And Luke, who never name himself in Acts even when he was there, might wonder the same thing.

When you look through my grandparents' photo albums, you see lots of pictures of my grandma and my mom and my uncles. You see lots of pictures of the places they camped and the sights they saw. But you might notice someone is missing. My Grandpa almost never shows up. It is not that he wasn't there - he planned the trips, he drove the car. But he was behind the camera. He was the one taking the pictures. And while most of these trips couldn't have happened without him, you probably know someone like my grandpa. Who was there and part of the story of the trip, of the family, of life together, but never makes it into the picture. Maybe you are that someone. And if you are, maybe we remember St. Luke for you.

Often we remember mainly the big stories from scripture. Of course we remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. They are big stories. But we also remember stories where demons are cast out and the devil defeated, where giants are cast down and God's people victorious, where God shows great power. And these are good and true. But sometimes our focus can lead us to a God who cares about the big things, the spiritual things. It is hard to remember that God is God of the physical and the small things too. In fact, to misuse an old joke about a man and his wife., sometimes our lives are lived like we think God is there to make the big decisions, and we will make the small things. The thing is, there has never been a big decision. It's all what to clean and what to eat and where to work and what to wear. All small stuff to little, to earthy, for God to notice. May God protect us from this thought. In fact, God uses Luke to protect us from this sinful thought.

You might think the part of our text I emphasized is odd. Our text starts with Paul speaking about having fought the good fight and finished the race - that God will give him the crown of life righteousness. Big thoughts, and true. Big thought you might put on a poster or make a

meme of or even use as a eulogy. God gives us victory in Jesus, in his death and resurrection. But then Paul continues with instructions to come and who is with him, things we might wonder why they are in scripture. And here we hear that Luke is with him, encouraging an old man as his final hours approach. Here we see Luke sitting with and encouraging his friend. That too is Holy work. And thinking of Luke and asking for timothy, Paul thinks of earthly things. A cloak and some scrolls. Not in that they are not of God, but that they are. This too is scripture. God is god of our final salvation, but also of the little foretastes we get in this creation. The god of life and death and salvation and also the God of cloaks and scrolls. Of how we dress and what we read. This might fill us with trepidation - we should consider how we dress and what we read and watch - but even more with joy, that no part of our life, what we wear or eat or talk or where we work is too small for God to care. Even the hairs on our head are numbered. And God tells his people to think of him and his word in each of those pursuits - shen they rise and when they lay down, when they go out and when they come in. This was true for Israel but sounds even more true in our commuter society , where it easy to forget our God.

Reformation Sunday approaches. Luther was against the monastaries. They taught their works were better, as they made up works of abrogation and punished themselves. God told us to help our neighbor, and we as Luther to see that work as work god approves - holy work. Luke reminds us of this as he speaks of all work as helping and being done at the feet of Jesus. Let all your work, big and small, be done to God for the good of your neighbor. Let God in your neighbor be your focus - for Jesus said as often as you do it for the least of these - you did it for m. We teach not that the work of word and sacrament is made common but that our lives, our service, are made holy. They are Holy work.

And Luke shows this. Luke shows God's salvation being worked even in dressing a baby in swaddling clothes, even in laying him in a manger. He shows to remember God even in our work in the kitchen as he speaks of Martha, and He tells us about God caring to put a bandage and oil o. In our harvesting to remember where all good things come from. He tells us God is in our travel as God directs Paul, and those unnamed near him. There were 12 disciples but 72 sent out. There is lots of work, big and small that God is doing, and he calls each of us to work in the harvest, whether it is doing the harvest or making a meal for the harvesters.

And God gives his blessing on the small things. Luke, who is barely mentioned, Luke, who cares about the small things, writes an account of Jesus life, and writes how his life continues in the Church. Through Him, God encourages us in our lives to see him as Lord of our whole life. Let us do the Holy work he gives us, listening to his word, receiving his sacraments, and living for our neighbor. Let us fight the good fight and do the holy work he gives us. Amen.