

Text: Mark 9:30-37

Theme: Receiving Jesus

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the ninth chapter verses thirty through thirty-seven.

Boys and girls how are you doing today? Excellent. Which would you rather be, the president of the United States or a child who has no money or anything to their name? I am sure that many of you would choose to be the President because that position comes with fame, honor, respect and a lot of money. The President certainly seems like a great position but what does Jesus say in our text for today? He says a little child is the greatest and whoever receives him receives Jesus. How does a little child become greater than the President? How do we receive Jesus? Ponder these questions, as we hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

### **Don't receive Jesus by what we do**

It must first be noticed what exactly it means to receive Jesus. Many today take this statement as meaning that they have to make a decision. They have to decide to accept Jesus within their hearts. Then, and only then, are they saved, because they decided and chose the right course of action. Dear Christian, this is a false belief. Choosing God? That's not something that we can do. In fact, quite the opposite! Left to our own devices, given the choice between choosing God or our own sinful nature. We are choosing our sinful nature all the time. We lie to those around us. We covet the possessions our neighbor's have. We become angry and frustrated when we do not get our way and lash out.

No, on our own we are blind, deaf, and dead in our sins and trespasses. As we confess in the Third Article, “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strengthen, believe in my Lord Jesus Christ or come to Him.”

### **Receive Him via H.S. and means of grace**

We receive Jesus solely by the faith that He gives to us as a working of His Holy Spirit. As the article continues, “But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts sanctified, and kept me in the truth faith.” We receive Jesus, not by something that we have decided, but by something that God has decided. God decided to send Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Jesus lived a perfect life in our place, goes to the cross to suffer, bleed and died. On the cross, Jesus pays the price for all of our sins. He forgives those times when we have become angry, those times that we have lied or coveted. He rises from the dead as proof that all of our sins are indeed forgiven. Having ascended on high, Jesus gives to us all of the blessings of heaven.

### **Takes us as least and makes us great**

All of this is ours, not by anything that we have done, but purely by grace. We are washed in the waters of Holy Baptism with water and the Word. There, the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel and enlightens us with His gifts, that we believe that what Jesus did, He did for me. Jesus takes us as poor, miserable, lost and dead sinners, and makes us alive and active by, in, and through His Word. We who are least, He makes great, having become the least for us.

### **We emulate JC’s meekness to those around us**

Jesus shows this reversal of least to greatness in an active parable by the use of a child. In Jesus’ day, a child is the least in his household. He is worth nothing and has nothing, fully dependent upon the Father of the household for everything. Someone worth that little Jesus cares about and loves. He even states that “receiving one such child in my name

receives me and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.” Jesus emphasizes service and humility. Though the child appeared insignificant, he was treasured by and connected to the Lord. In the Kingdom of God, every disciple represents the Lord. Jesus shows this reversal as well by going to the cross for you, taking all of your poverty and sin, giving you His righteousness in exchange.

As people redeemed by the Lamb, Our Lord calls us to likewise service, to show that same humility to those around us. We, having been so blessed by our Lord that we show that meekness by working in love with those around us. We think of ourselves, not as being greater than someone else, or arguing about who is greater than another. Rather, as Christians, we emulate our Lord’s service, serving them as He served us. We help those in need and give no credence to status. We help the poor, those down on their luck, those in need of help or assistance, those who may have a lot of money but need help in managing it. It does not matter their status, if they are rich or poor, we are called by our Lord to help them. By helping them, we are showing them the same love, care, and concern that our Lord has had for us and in receiving them, we are receiving our Lord.

May the Holy Spirit continue to shower us with His gifts and strengthen our faith, that it may show forth in our actions to those around us as we emulate the humility of our Lord in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.