

# Trinity VIII

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Date: 30 July 2023

Preacher: Seminarian Ian Jarrells

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen. Please be seated. When I was in college, I had a couple of friends that I called the heresy hunters.

A heresy hunter is someone who is always on the lookout for someone they think is teaching false doctrine. It is prominent on social media these days because someone can know what someone else thinks on the other side of the country seconds after it is said.

However good intention the heresy hunters are to correct doctrine, the conversation always goes the same way. Social media usually increases hostility and forces people to dig their heels in even harder.

A good day of heresy hunting usually ends with increased tensions and a lack of peace in minds and in hearts. This heresy hunting mentality is not helpful.

[ 1 : 0 9 ]     Even so, we cannot forget the words of Jesus to his disciples in our gospel text. The image that is presented here seems quite extreme.

Wolves do not cohabit spaces with lambs without lambs being devoured. But why do false teachers get symbolized as something dangerous? There are lots of teachers or ministers on this earth who claim the Christian faith but do not teach it correctly.

But they don't seem to be as dangerous as wolves. There are a lot of heretics that are incredibly moral. It seems as if they would never hurt a fly. So why bother with them at all?

While it may seem that Jesus' statement about false teachers is a bit exaggerated, we only think that way if we do so because we have a warped view of what the truth really is.

The truth is powerful. Our Lord tells us that the truth sets us free from the powers in this world. Following after Christ is the same as following the truth because he is the way, the truth, and the life.

[ 2 : 2 6 ]     Truth is not just some ethereal force that exists on its own. It is incarnated in Jesus Christ. If we are concerned about following Jesus, then we must also be concerned about knowing the truth.

Truth and obedience following after our Lord, they have an inseparable relationship. That's why Jesus says that not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

The early church dealt with many forms of false teaching and teachers. That's why we had councils and clarified our teaching on the Holy Trinity and on the person of Jesus Christ.

Modern heresies, on the other hand, are a little different. Most of the false teachings about Jesus in the past had a theological basis, something to do with God.

And those still do exist today. But the most common forms of false teaching come to us in the modern era through a mistaken view of what it means to be human.

[ 3 : 37 ] One of the more common heresies we see today, both in the church and in the world, is the notion that self-care is a crucial part of being a healthy individual.

This is not a brand new heresy. It's been around for a long time. But it has increased in popularity today, especially through the means of social media.

If you don't know what this is, it's the idea that taking care of yourself is the first priority in life. On its surface, it seems like a good thing.

It is important to take care of the body. Any Christian should feel motivated to do such things because our Lord came to save the whole human being, both body and soul.

The problem occurs when self-care becomes an excuse to ignore the needs of others. Our Lord tells us that we will know whether something is a true teaching by how it takes root in the lives of those who teach them.

[ 4 : 39 ] You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears fruit, but bad trees bear bad fruit.

The kind of fruit that is born from the self-care mentality is an increased selfishness. When a human being focuses more on themselves, they are being formed not to care for the needs of others.

That's why the rich young ruler, if we remember, walks away sad when Jesus tells him to sell all of his possessions and give his money to the poor. He thought he kept the law, but in reality, he had not loved his neighbor.

He loved himself. We may not have as many possessions as he did, but we can become like him if we adopt this self-care mentality. The good news is we have someone who has borne good fruit.

You can know that a teacher is good when he sacrifices his own wants and desires for the sake of others. Christ was the prime example of a sacrificial love.

[ 5 : 49 ] He was not concerned about his own needs. He was concerned about the needs of others, both bodily and spiritual. His teaching is true because his will was to do the will of his Father in heaven.

Friends, our antidote to self-care is self-humiliation. If there is a true version of self-care, it is a recognition that we are not able to adequately care for ourselves.

It is Christ and his church who cares for us at the end of the day. The fruit that is born from self-humiliation is love for God and for neighbor.

Let us follow after those who care more for the needs of others than they do for themselves, because they are true followers of Christ. They have the truth because the truth lives within them.

When we have the truth within us, we also will care more for others than we do for ourselves. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

[ 6 : 53 ] Thank you. God bless you.