

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Fifth Sunday After Trinity, June 30, 2024**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 339 (26:6) 354, 477, 485:7

Lessons: Psalm 32; Galatians 2:11-21; Luke 7:36-50

Text: Acts 3:1-10

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

In the name of Jesus, dear friends,

Surveys will tell us that fewer than 30 % of the people in our country regularly attend worship services each week. That's a very poor showing for people who live in a country where God has given great opportunity to hear his Word. Anyone who lives in a city will notice that on Saturday night traffic is heavy because people want to go shopping or go out and celebrate. But on Sunday morning the traffic is light. Too many people think that Sunday morning is the time to sleep. They must think that going to church is not very important. There aren't a lot of church-going people. This leads us to consider the question,

**IS IT PROFITABLE TO GO TO CHURCH?**

- 1. Unbelievers say it is not profitable;**
- 2. Believers in Christ know that it is profitable.**

In our text we are told about two of the apostles going to the temple. *“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – at three in the afternoon.”* There was someone else also who was at the temple, but for a different reason. *“Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.”* This man had been born crippled and was now 40 years old. He couldn't walk to the temple and was put by a gate of the temple by friends so he could beg from the worshippers. *“When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.”* Because this crippled man could get money from people going to the temple; he no doubt thought it was profitable to go to the place of worship.

But in our day and age especially, many people would say that it is not profitable to go to church. They are not thinking of what they could get by going to church. Rather, they think of what it is going to cost them. It is not financially profitable. They know that church members have to support their church. There is the minister's salary to pay. The church property has to be purchased and kept up, and there are many other expenses. Because of their unbelief they cannot possibly know or realize what good the support of the church can accomplish. They are only concerned with the fact that being a church member will cost them money. So for that reason they think it is not profitable to go to church.

There may also be other reasons why unbelievers do not want to go to church. They may have heard that in church the pastor preaches about being a sinner. For example, in church they might hear Bible passages such as these: *“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God,”* Romans 3:10. How humiliating that is! Or they might hear, *“There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”* Romans 3:23. They think that this is insulting and do not want to hear it. They might hear, *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags,”* Isaiah 64:6. But they think they are fine, upstanding people, and they would like to hear some praise for all their

“good” deeds. The unbeliever will conclude that going to church and being a member of a Christian congregation cannot be profitable. To be sure, the church cannot give them what they desire, worldly honor and praise, and recognition for what they think are good deeds.

Do unbelievers have the right judgment as to whether it is profitable to go to church and be members of a Christian congregation? There is another group of people, the believers in Christ, from whom we can learn **that it is profitable to go to church.**

2.

When the crippled man begged for money, our text says, ***“Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, ‘Look at us!’ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’”*** What the crippled man received when he was laid at the temple gate and asked Peter and John for some money was far more important than anything that money could buy. His legs and ankles that had been crippled and stiff now suddenly became firm and strong. The lame man was now healed. After our text we are told. ***“He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.”***

But there is something else we need to consider as we hear about this crippled man being healed. In this miracle we see the blessed power of Jesus’ name. Jesus is the Savior of mankind. He did not come to this earth to make all sick people well. But he did come to win salvation for the whole world of sinners. Peter emphasized the name of Jesus, not merely as the name people used when they wanted to speak about Jesus, but as the blessed name of our Savior. This is what the angel of the Lord told Joseph before Jesus was born, ***“You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins,”*** Matthew 1:21. That’s why the Christian poet wrote in one of our hymns:

*“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believers ear!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.  
Dear name! The Rock on which I build,  
My Shield and Hiding-Place;  
My never-failing Treasury, filled  
With boundless stores of grace.”* (The Lutheran Hymnal 364)

Jesus as the Savior of sinners is revealed to us in his Holy Word. To know him is to believe in him as our personal Savior. The apostles surely proclaimed to the man who had been healed what Jesus has done for sinners. Through their preaching of the Gospel the Holy Spirit could work faith in his heart. This was a blessing far greater than being healed physically. This also was a blessing given to him in Jesus’ name.

It is the work of Christian congregations today and for all time to proclaim Jesus’ saving name in the Gospel message so that sinners may be brought to faith in Jesus. Isaiah the prophet wrote about the priceless blessings offered to sinners. ***“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost,”*** Isaiah 55:1. This is the invitation given to people who are troubled by their sins and thirst for salvation. The church, indeed, has something to give to people, and it is far more precious than money or any material possession. We must conclude, then, that it is profitable to go to church and hear the Gospel.

Someone will object and say that something that is given away free cannot be of much value. Here again we see the reasoning of the worldly-minded person. It is true you seldom get good quality in such material goods as clothes, land and houses, and cars, unless you are willing to pay the high price. But there are many things that are most valuable and cannot be bought at any price. Is not good health a great blessing? Who can buy it?

Likewise, you cannot buy a sound mind, beauties of nature, true love, and many other blessings. We as believers in Christ like to repeat the words of the psalmist, ***“Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; he redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. He satisfies my desires with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s,”*** Psalm 103:2-5. So the objection that nothing of real value can be had without money is simply not valid.

The blessings offered by the Lord through his Word as proclaimed in church are too valuable to put a price on them. The Lord did not command his followers to do miracle healing, but said that miraculous signs would accompany the believers. What should be emphasized when we speak of the work of the Christian Church is that the Gospel can be proclaimed and the Sacraments administered. Through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament sin-sick souls may be healed. The Savior invites all sinners in these words, ***“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,”*** Matthew 11:28. What the Savior promises in this invitation will be received. In the Gospel in Jesus’ name we are assured, ***“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding,”*** Ephesians 1:7-8. This is a gift that cannot be purchased by any price. This is something altogether undeserved, for ***“while we were still sinners, Christ died for us,”*** and ***“when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”*** Romans 5:8, 10. We have this assurance also, ***“He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification,”*** Romans 4:25. We are assured that we stand before the holy and righteous God as holy people now because Jesus took our place and suffered and died for our sins. As believers in Jesus, think of the comfort that we have in this life when we are sick, when we are troubled, when we are at death’s door. With Paul we can ask, ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword,”*** And with Paul we can answer, ***“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us,”*** Romans 8:35, 37. We can say with Paul, ***“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us,”*** Romans 8:18. We are assured of eternal life in heaven with Jesus. He promised, ***“Because I live, you also will live,”*** John 14:19.

These are the priceless gifts we have in Jesus’ name. These we can have as members of a Christian congregation. Therefore we can say with conviction: Yes, it is profitable to go to church. It is profitable to be a member of a Christian congregation. We pray,

*“O Lord, let this Thy little flock, Thy name alone confessing,  
Continue in Thy loving care, True unity possessing.  
Thy Sacraments, O Lord, And Thy saving Word  
To us e’er pure retain. Grant that they may remain  
Our only strength and comfort.”\_ Amen.*  
(The Lutheran Hymnal: 477:2)

(Revised from a Ministry By Mail sermon for June 12, 2005.)