

Sermon: The Noonday Demon

Text: Romans 12: 11

¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, and serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

In the name of Jesus:

A few weeks ago Grandma Luann spent the day at home (aren't we all spending the day at home?) baking cookies with Declan and Graeme. In preparation for baking the cookies, Luann gave Graeme a job to do: spray the cookie sheet with the non-stick spray. When Luann told Graeme what she wanted him to do, he looked at her with bewilderment and asked, "Why are we putting sunscreen on the cookie sheet?" Oh, out of the mouths of babes! That is how children learn, though, they learn by doing and learn by doing with their elders.

It is the same with the Christian walk. We learn by doing. We can learn a great deal from those Christians who have gone before us, especially from those who practiced social distancing a long time ago.

Many years ago there were desert monks who sought to separate themselves from society in order to live for Jesus. They left behind the pleasures of the world as they dedicated their new lives to prayer, meditation, the study and memorization of Scripture, charity and forgiveness to all, and, a lifestyle rooted in prayer. As they lived, they

became very much aware of their own nature. In their solitary lives, they experienced temptation from the devil and his demonic band. It was as a result of the experiences of fighting temptation that came from it what is now known as “The Seven Deadly Sins.” One sin that particularly plagued them was the sin of sloth, or what was then known as Acadia. Acadia was called the Noon Day Demon.

This Noon Day Demon usually attacked at high noon, when the sun was at its highest overhead. Then, in the middle of the day when the monk was busy, the sun would distract him, looking at it and feeling as if time stood still, then he would become indifferent, lackadaisical, and just would not care about God or anything else. And that is why it was called the Noon Day Demon, for this demon would attack the monk out of nowhere, making him feel as if he just didn’t care anymore.

What the monks experienced wasn’t depression, not by any sense or stretch of the imagination, it was what they called Acadia, an attitude of not caring anymore. A dangerous attitude where you don’t give a rip about anything, including not caring about God or your relationship with Him.

It has been said that this noonday demon is the demon and the chief sin of our culture. Acadia tempts and plagues all of us. There is a

spirit of Acadia that fills the world, a spirit of people not caring anymore, about life, about God, about themselves, and about those around them. Acadia strikes when we hear the news of death and despair in this Pandemic and we become hardened to its effects on us and on others.

You can notice Acadia taking hold in your life during this Pandemic when, having a lot of time on your hands, you grow bored and indifferent to life. You grow indifferent to God, to the Church, to His Word, to prayer, you find your life boring, and you want change, because you find yourself doing the same old thing by repetition day after day.

Soon your soul becomes dry, your spirit lifeless, you feel as if your spirit is parched, dry like a desert. You go from one thing to the next, trying to find enjoyment and pleasure, but you can't because Acadia has taken hold.

Today you and I are forced to be hermits and live a type of monastic life. You will experience, if you haven't already, what the desert monks experienced, this thing called Acadia. You may feel restless, a sense of spiritual unease and an urge to escape the harsh realities of this type of quarantine.

What is the answer? We can learn from these desert monks. They didn't have Netflix or a computer, so they didn't turn to any type of technology. Instead, the monks found their answer when they turned to God, when they daily went to the Scriptures and renewed their commitment to God each day.

In dedicating themselves to the Word, prayer, and the Lord they focused on Jesus. Jesus changed them through His Word.

Acadia would still strike, but they would battle it by immersing themselves in the Word.

So make sure to spend time in the Word. Read the Bible. Meditate and pray on the Scriptures. Take to heart what God says in His Word: " ¹⁶ make the best use of your time, ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen