

11. September 2019 „The true fight“

Col 3:1-11

Since you have been raised up to be with Christ, you must look for the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on things above, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed -- and he is your life-you, too, will be revealed with him in glory. That is why you must kill everything in you that is earthly: sexual vice, impurity, uncontrolled passion, evil desires and especially greed, which is the same thing as worshipping a false god; it is precisely these things which draw God's retribution upon those who resist. And these things made up your way of life when you were living among such people, but now you also must give up all these things: human anger, hot temper, malice, abusive language and dirty talk; and do not lie to each other. You have stripped off your old behaviour with your old self, and you have put on a new self which will progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its Creator; and in that image there is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised and uncircumcised, or between barbarian and Scythian, slave and free. There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything.

Today, St. Paul says words that are probably less and less popular in our times, but no less important. It is a serious decision to follow the Lord, what also includes right asceticism. Without that, it is hardly possible to go this path. The Lord has taught us the real fight in many ways. One important point is not to follow the "*desire of the flesh*" and to rein it in.

Fornication is a plague when man surrenders to it. It is a sin and thus separates from God. The effects are manifold, because in this way man loses his inner freedom and dignity, he may become very inconstant. The more he loses himself to this inclination, the more he is enslaved.

It is a wrong way to relativize fornication or even to integrate it into life as normal. This is, in a sense, a capitulation to sin, and with it the struggle assigned to us is lost.

It is different when someone seriously tries to resist the tendency to use sexuality in a disorderly manner and fights for purity. God knows very well the weakness of man and will always serve him with his mercy if he becomes weak and suffers defeats. This can be a long and hard fight, there are many temptations.

The Lord, however, will honor such a struggle. But he cannot and will not do it if we do not try to fight that has been ordered to us at all, or if we give it up very fast.

What has been said about fornication also applies to the other things mentioned. They do not belong to the spiritual order to follow the lord and are alien to a life in God. Whenever they find any space in us, it is a matter of turning seriously away from the temptation with our prayers, with the reception of the sacraments, and in the constant search for virtues.

The pagan colossians carried the burden of an earlier life far from God. But now, with the grace of God, a new life has begun for them. This new life was freely given to them by the grace of God but does not bring further fruits without our participation.

Take, for example the longing for chastity. The beauty of this virtue that attracts us does not mean that we already possess it. It is like a taste of grace, a call from God, a sweet invitation of the Spirit. If we follow this invitation, we will not tolerate appropriate actions, impure thoughts, unchaste desires, abusive language, dirty talks in us and try to overcome all. The so-called second freedom should be activated.

The "second freedom" means not only to have a general will and a corresponding decision, e.g. for chastity, but also to take the necessary measures to support this decision, e.g. to avoid certain fimes, possibly certain websites to lock, etc. It is good that we know ourselves in this context and do not have any illusions about our weaknesses.

The "new man" who is able to look for the things that are above is a great gift from God, which we have not deserved, but which has been given to us by

grace. Now we are called to participate with the grace, so that this grace will live in us.

God wants us to fight with the so-called "old man", and with his help we will find true freedom and dignity, and will be no longer the prisoners of our disordered passions and desires.

We are renewed according to the image of the Creator, that is, to what we are really in God's plan. It is the Holy Spirit who performs this wonderful work in us, and if we follow Him every day, the image of God will be more and more formed within us. The Holy Spirit will also give us the strength to overcome what deforms and distorts this wonderful image with the true fight we are called for.

But this will not be possible unless we earnestly seek for holiness, without which no one can see the Lord. Without such a decision to follow this holy vocation of God, we will not fight the necessary struggle! Therefore, we have to be very careful if "another spirit" offers a very easy way to follow the Lord.