Sunday School Rally Day
18th Sunday after Trinity
Rolling Meadows - 1967

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IN NOMINE JESU

Deuteronomy 6: 6,7 And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

A TREMENDOUS ASSIGNMENT

A 13 year old boy sat across from me in my study this last week and defiantly declared: Nobody's going to tell me what to do! DID YOU HEAR THAT? - NOBODY! The words rolled off his tongue like he had been reciting for a long time this personal declaration of independence.... Such disregard for any authority or any type of discipline seems to be the common cry of our age. Nobody's going to tell me what to do! Headstrong children say it, and so do headstrong adults. Nobody's going to tell me what to do! College students are saying it, and so are their critics in the older generation. Nobody's going to tell us how late we can stay out at night, say the young people; and Nobody's going to tell us how to treat other people if we don't happen to like them - whether inside or outside the church, say their elders, who are supposed to furnish guidance for the young people.... A man with a drinking problem, whose wife was at the point of a nervous breakdown in her concern for the future of her marriage and home, insisted vehemently: No woman is going to run my life or tell me what to do - I'll drink just as much as I please. .... Freedom is what people want - freedom to think, and say, and do what they please, no matter how many get hurt in the process; freedom to get what they want, though they have to trample on others to get it; freedom to be themselves, even if it kills them. Without regard for God or man they continue to say with grim determination or quiet desperation: NOBODY'S GOING TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO! NOBODY! NOT EVEN GOD!

to marshall our forces - acclaim our allegiance - confront our barriers - & march in the army of Christ

In the midst of all the willfulness, and waywardness, and lawlessness and undisciplined self-assertiveness that has become so characteristic of our age and our time, we have come together to celebrate a SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY DAY SERVICE * to encourage and strengthen one another in the task, the aims, and the worth of CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - to say that the Christian way, and the Christian faith, and the Christian life IS important - both for the life that now is and that which is to come. To say

say the least, this is A TREMENDOUS ASSIGNMENT. It is A TREMENDOUS ASSIGNMENT not only for the children, teen-agers, and adults who are being taught - but, above all, it is A TREMENDOUS ASSIGNMENT for those who teach. Eternal destinies are at stake; and the warning of Christ is unmistakable: WHOSO SHALL CAUSE ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES WHO BELIEVE IN ME TO STUMBLE AND FALL, IT WERE BETTER FOR HIM THAT A MILLSTONE WERE HANGED ABOUT HIS NECK AND HE WERE DROWNED IN THE DEPTH OF THE SEA.

Can you think of anything the devil, the world, and our own flesh would fight against with more united power? They gather themselves together, especially today, and raise their ugly voices in order to convince us that Christian educatic and training is really irrelevant, immaterial, and quite trivial. The extent to which they have succeeded is evidenced in our worship life, our devotional life, our prayer life. It can be seen in the haphazard and slipshod attendance at worship services and Sunday School - in a general indifference toward week-day school and Bible classes - in confirmands who do not prepare their lessons and post-confirmands who are conspicuous by their absense from the Lord's Table and from any further training in the Christian faith and life. For all practical purposes, God and His Word, Christ and His Cross, are pushed to the periphery of life. They don't really count - except, perhaps, in cases of extreme emergency How all of hell must howl in unholy glee when we rise up to assert either by our words or our actions: Nobody's going to tell me what to do!

The job of Christian education and training - of BRINGING CHILDREN UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD - is a big one. It is a TREMENDOUS ASSIGNMENT. The Church cannot do it alone - Sunday School teachers cannot do it alone - Weekday School teachers and Bible Class teachers cannot do it alone - the pastor cannot do it alone! The formal training of the Church was never intended to be a substitute for the informal training of the Home. Nor do we presume to ussurp authority over the home and lord it over you. We are here to serve, and help, and assist you fathers and mothers in YOUR ASSIGNMENT from God. We are simply trying

to follow the example of our Lord who TAUGHT DAILY IN THE TEMPLE - to be faithful to the Commission which He has given to His Church: MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM.... AND TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; who told Peter: FEED MY LAMBS! FEED MY SHEEP! But the primary responsibility still lies with parents! Our text is speaking specifically and pointedly to fathers and mothers: THESE WORDS WHICH I COMMAND YOU THIS DAY SHALL BE UPON YOUR HEART; AND YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE.

THESE WORDS WHICH I COMMAND YOU - What words? You don't have to read very far in the Book of Deuteronomy to know that THESE WORDS are the WORDS OF THE COVENANT - that God wanted to be their God, and He wanted them to be His people. In His grace He had picked them - a tiny, poor, miserable, out-of-the-way nation among the nations of the world - a slave nation. He had delivered them from their bondage in Egypt - led them through the waters of the Red Sea - fed them in the wilderness with Manna from heaven - and brought them at last into the Promised Land. They were never to forget all that He had done for them - they were never to forget His covenant with them - THESE WORDS were to be UPON THEIR HEART and they were to TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO THEIR CHILDREN.

We are the people of the NEW COVENANT - a Covenant SEALED by the blood of the Cross. God sent to us a Prophet - one LIKE UNTO MOSES, His own Son, to deliver us from the slavery of sin - lead us through to waters of Baptism into a new life of fellowship and communion with God - to feed us in this wilderness of the ~~world~~ wickedness & sin with His own body and blood as the surety of His love and forgiveness in the Holy Supper - and finally to bring us to Paradise. We too are never to forget the Covenant - forgiveness, life, and salvation He has brought us - we too are to teach these things DILIGENTLY TO OUR CHILDREN: God wants to be our God, and He wants us to be His people.... At the end of His Gospel St. John writes (and his words certainly apply to every other Book of the Bible): THESE (things) ARE WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT BELIEVING YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME.

LIFE IN HIS NAME - Surely we must see by now that this thing called Christian education is not just an intellectual pursuit - it is a LIFE - a LIFE lived in the Company and Companionship of God Himself - a LIFE that is full, and free, and filled with joy because it is only in Him who created us, and redeemed us, and called us to be His own that TRUE JOYS ARE FOUND. It is a LIFE that is filled to the brim every minute of every day - a LIFE that one never grows tired of living, or sharing, or giving or talking about: YOU SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE.... How can anyone ever get too much of this, or grow tired of it, or (God forbid) complain that it has been crammed down his throat.

This is the Gospel - and the Gospel is always GOOD NEWS - and one never, never, never grows weary of GOOD NEWS. Parents - teachers: This is what our instruction and teaching is to be about - the GOOD NEWS of GOD BEING IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF. Our whole life must radiate that fact.* If our teaching is to be THE GOSPEL, then it must be it from TOP TO BOTTOM - first of all in our own HEARTS. We must know WHY we are teaching! And there is no substitute for a FULL HEART - a heart that is convinced, and convicted, and committed to the greatest thing in all the world - JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED FOR OUR SINS! We must know WHY we are teaching! This isn't because we are the world's best teachers - but this is because we are convinced that in everything we do, beginning with our own personal life, WE MUST SHOW FORTH THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

natural as breathing

Say it and pray it with me then: NOBODY - NOBODY EXCEPT CHRIST - IS GOING TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO! But for as long as He gives me breath I shall be faithful to His instruction: THESE WORDS WHICH I COMMAND YOU THIS DAY SHALL BE UPON YOUR HEART; AND YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE. Amen.