

Sunday November 6th 2011 – A GREEN OLIVE TREE

John 15:1-5

¹ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

One for all, for truth, beauty and all things noble, patience wins all. That is the motto of the student sorority “Daugaviete”. The sentiment here is noble, and they are somewhat useful guidelines for life.

Today “Daugaviete” is celebrating its 90th birthday. They are here today to give thanks and honour to God.

As I pondered the motto of “Daugaviete”, it made me consider the importance of principles or guidelines in a person’s life. Many people today are unprincipled and lead their lives following after the desires and pleasures of the heart. Their god is their stomach or desires.

If a ship is sailing out in the ocean and it has neither a rudder or a helmsman, it is at the mercy of the wind and waves. It will be tossed about to and fro, and eventually it will hit the rocks. Many people’s lives end in shipwreck, simply because they have no rudder, no helmsman to guide them.

The sorority’s mottos are noble and to my mind, can only be fully realised, if Jesus is the captain of our souls. As he concluded His sermon on the mount, He spoke about two houses built on different foundations. He said that the house not built on Him will fall.

Let us have a read of His words:

“²⁴ Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.” (Matthew 7:24-27)

One thing, I do not want you to miss in this passage is that Jesus said: “The rain fell and the floods came.” Some translations say: “When the rain fell, when the floods came...” Jesus did not say “if “ but “when.” You see God’s Word is so real and true. Each one of us on an individual, as well as family, or organisation, or for that matter on a national level, will

experience times of floods. There are seasons in life when the winds blow, the floods come, and the waters rage.

The ship of our lives does not cruise along flat, calm water all the time, with not a cloud in the sky, nor a storm on the horizon. From time to time, the storms come. The waters are churned up, and we are under attack from all sides.

That's when our lives are tested. To use Jesus' illustration, our house is tested. If it is erected on a good solid foundation, that is the true and living Word of God, Jesus Himself, then it will stand. But if it is built on the sand, the philosophies and so-called wisdom and knowledge of man, then the sand will be washed away and the house will topple.

Jesus gives us this illustration in order to help us. He desires for us to understand that only His Word, and His Word alone is a good foundation upon which to build our lives. It is the only good foundation for our organisations as well.

Solomon expressed it beautifully in Psalm 127:

***1 Unless the LORD builds the house,
They labour in vain who build it;
Unless the LORD guards the city,
The watchman keeps awake in vain.
2 It is vain for you to rise up early,
To retire late,
To eat the bread of painful labours;
For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.***

Where Jesus Christ is not the foundation, there our labour is in vain. On the other hand, where He is the foundation, our work is blessed.

I believe that our Heavenly Father has so very much that He wants to give to us. He has many blessings for us, if only we would put our complete trust in Him. When we are united with Him in love and faith, when our life is founded upon the Rock, then we are in the place to be recipients of His blessings.

God is Love. These are very powerful words. It is a powerful truth. But God does not force His love upon us. If we choose to go our own way, do our own thing, then He permits us to do so, but we can be sure that no good will come of it.

Speaking of the house that was founded upon the sand, Jesus said: "Great was the fall of it."

Today, all around us, here in Australia, in our beloved Latvia, do we not have to say that the damage is great? So many have ended in shipwreck. Their lives are dashed to pieces upon the rocks. People are searching for life's meaning in all the wrong places. They are drawing and drinking from the wrong wells.

The answer to all of life's questions is Jesus Christ. He taught:

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

Notice the word seek. It is an active word. Jesus is not speaking of sitting back, with our hand in our laps awaiting His blessing. He said to seek. Be doing. Seeking has a goal.

Next look at the priority. Seek first: The Kingdom of God and His righteousness!

This is precisely where the majority of people mess it up. They seek after everything else first, and then if they think of it, or feel a need, they turn to God. That is neither good nor healthy.

Jesus said: “Turn to God first. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.” When we do then the outcome is very different.

Where we put God first, there the way for us opens up in an entirely different way. Where God is respected, honoured, sought after, worshipped, there His blessings flows.

The first Psalm puts it really well:

¹ How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,

Nor stand in the path of sinners,

Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

² But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

And in His law he meditates day and night.

³ He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,

Which yields its fruit in its season

And its leaf does not wither;

And in whatever he does, he prospers.

⁴ The wicked are not so,

But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the wicked will perish.

See how beautifully it is stated! You can be like a green, flourishing tree, that bears beautiful fruit, or you can be like chaff, which has no substance, that is simply blown away.

You can be successful and fulfilled in your life, in your work and family, or you can end up in shipwreck.

What makes the difference is where your mind is set. Who do you live for. What motivates you.

Blessed is the person who lives for The Lord and walks His path. David put it like this:

***“But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God;
I trust in the loving-kindness of God forever and ever. “ (Psalm 52:8)***

Dear Daugavietes, dear congregation, may God grant that we would be like David and that we could confess: But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the loving-kindness of God forever and ever. Amen.

Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.