

“Call Upon the Name of the Lord”

Jeremiah 23:16–29

Last week, I couldn't help beginning a discussion on the religion of Humanism. As we send our children off to be educated, especially those who are going off to college, we need to equip them to defend themselves. They will be challenged by many self-proclaimed “experts” on science and history who have a religious agenda. These are the modern day false prophets.

The religion of Humanism confesses the creeds of Atheism and Agnosticism and, as I said last week, the chief sacrament of that religion is macro-evolution. And anyone who does not drink from that cup will be ridiculed, ostracized, and pressured into joining their confession of faith.

When I was a pastor at Pana, one of my members went to Illinois State and she endured persecution from a professor and hatred from her fellow classmates that rivaled the pressures of the Spanish Inquisition. I was very proud of her that she remained grounded in the faith of her Baptism.

Just like in the days of Jeremiah, there are those who claim to have knowledge that only belongs to God. And since they have this knowledge and can impart it to you, there is no need for you to call on the name of the Lord. You only need to listen to them. Through science and philosophy, they have all the answers, or, at least, good enough answers so that God is not necessary. The prophets of Baal offered a similar message.

But as I told you last week, even the most ardent supporters of the theory of the Big Bang say that it only had a 1 in 1 quintillionth chance of

working – to where it would either spread out too fast or collapse back in on itself. If you remember, this means that it is about 30 times more likely that you would win the Powerball jackpot two times in a row than for this ridiculous beginning of the universe to be real. And these odds are without even taking into account that the material of the universe first had to spawn out of nothing.

We live in a religiously fanatical world that is working very hard to make you forget the name of God. This is why we confess the Nicene Creed each week. This is why Luther encouraged everyone to begin and end each day making the sign of the cross, speaking the invocation “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” and then saying the Apostle’s Creed. Each day, call upon the name of the Lord.

The world outside these walls wants you to forget who God is and to forget His name. But how could you forget the name “God”? When you forget that using His name outside of prayer and praise is blasphemy, you have forgotten who He is. When you use His name in vain, you treat that name as being cheap and common.

When hearing the Word of God and receiving the gifts offered is something that you do occasionally or enough to keep up appearances or because I have to, you have forgotten what this is. This is the Word of God. This is the body and blood of the Son of God given and shed for you.

Call upon the name of the Lord. Confess your faith: “I believe in one God . . .I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church . . . and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.” Even within Christian circles, there are those who say “real Christians” focus on “deeds not creeds.” I am a big fan of deeds, but call on the name of the

Lord. Do not forget His name. Satan wants you to forget, or at least diminish His name. This is nothing new. This has been going on since the days of Adam. Satan has never let the people of God find rest.

We find our rest in Christ, in the message of the Gospel and the promise of the resurrection. We are a people of faith. As we heard in our Epistle reading, we live by faith. Just like last week's reading also from Hebrews 11, it is "by faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God." I do not have any more empirical evidence to offer than the religious fanatics who say that the Big Bang started it all – even though it only had a 1 in 1 quintillionth chance of working "But we KNOW it did." I don't have any better evidence I can show you in my hand. Everyone who has pondered life has done so with faith.

And if you want proof that Humanists are religious fanatics and not simply stoic scientists in search of the truth and willing to acknowledge the truth – even if the answer comes from God; observe the reaction that you get when you point out the obvious inconsistencies of their theories. They tend to get angry. They are emotionally attached to their beliefs. And, ironically, they will curse you with the name of God.

In the academic world, many college professors, and even some school teachers (I have read), are allowed to punish those who do not give up their belief in a creating God or at least publicly confess that they no longer hold to that belief. I have even heard of anecdotal evidence of teachers who will punish a student for saying "God bless you" after someone sneezed. Think Spanish Inquisition.

If you don't know about the Spanish Inquisition, starting in the 15th Century, it was a means by which the Roman Catholic Church could arrest

and put on trial anyone who was not adhering to their teaching and about 3000-5000 people were convicted and executed. Some estimate the number as being higher, but the reality is that most of them were burned at the stake.

The way in which those who practice the religion of Humanism, and demand an atheist-evolutionist confession of faith within society (within schools in particular), the way they are abusing their position within the scientific community in the same way that the Spanish Inquisition abused its position within Christ's Church.

It is necessary to warn, especially our youth, and prepare them for the attacks on God's name from those abusing their position within the good institution that is the academic world. Just like the true Church was not the problem in the Middle Ages, education is not the problem today. Abuse of power within the institution is the problem. However, how can we expect those outside of Christ's Church to honor God's name when so many within Christ's Church treat His name as being cheap or common?

How can we expect those outside of the church to honor and revere God's Word and the body and blood of Christ when those inside the church forget what it is that is actually being received? You are hearing the voice of the living God spoken in His Word. You are invited to participate in a miracle as Christ Himself comes to you under the form of bread and wine.

There is nothing cheap or common about His name, His Word, or His gifts to you. Never forget who He is and what He has done for you. And call upon the name of the Lord. Amen.