I learned a new word the other day, ultracrepidarian, which means: a person who criticizes, judges, or gives advice outside the area of his or her expertise. If you want an example of it, press pause on this broadcast and go to the social media of your choice and I guarantee that within seconds you will find an English major giving you nutritional advice, a cellist pontificating on macroeconomics, or clergy explaining the finer points of constitutional law (or just about anything else because clergy along with college professors are the worlds biggest ultracrepidarians). But setting aside the joy in making fun of clergy and college professors it seems to me that in many ways social media is foremost of the reasons why we live in the golden age of people giving advice outside of their area of expertise. I say this because in the old days when we wanted to ramble on with our ill informed opinions we had to find someone to listen to us and that took some time and a certain amount of skill because in order to keep them coming back we could not be obnoxious all the time because people would start avoiding us. But now with a couple of clicks anyone can regale the world with their jejune opinions and that is very unfortunate, because it makes the world a much more tedious place than it already is because we forget what we really do know and instead prattle on about things which we have no business prattling on about. Which of course raises the question of what do we really know?

There are the obvious answers like a drycleaner knows how to dry clean clothes; a farmer knows how to farm and with the exception of Brad Pitt and actor knows how to act. But I want to go a little more basic. What is it that we as Christians know? Well we get an answer today from Peter when we hear, “[Jesus] himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.”

You notice what Peter didn’t say that Jesus died for. He didn’t say that Jesus died so that we could tell the rest of the world what is wrong with it, or how other people need to fix themselves or just how much we hate this or that politician or political party. No he said what Jesus did allows us to live for righteousness, not other people, but us. That is the thing that people so often want to forget about Christianity that while Christ certainly died and rose again for all of creation it is worked out on an individual basis. It is worked out by us doing what is righteous, not by us telling other people to do what is righteous. If there is a pop quiz to get into heaven I am pretty sure that there will be no question concerning how often we shared our opinions on the wrongness of other peoples behaviors. It is going to be about how we lived into the promises of God, how we put on the full armor of God.

One of the major problems today is that people are trying to take the easy way out. It is so much easier to tell others what is wrong with them than it is to look inside ourselves and see what is not glorifying to God, to see what is not living in righteousness. And I stand up here today not as someone who has this fully worked out. I enjoy just as much as the next person making all my problems someone else’s fault. Dietrich Bonhoeffer called this cheap grace. He said, “Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession...Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.” Cheap grace is telling other people what to do but not changing ourselves. What we need to know and what we need to live like we know, is that Christ through his death and resurrection has allowed us to be righteous. This is not easy because it calls us to live as Jesus did blessing those who cursed and forgiving those who crucified, but it is ultimately the most beautiful and wonderful way to live because we are not weighed down by the burden of finding other peoples sin. So we need to remember what we know and start there, we need to remember that we ourselves are called to serve God in all things now and forevermore.