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St Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th St. SW
Austin, MN, 55912-1749

Pastor Ted Barthels
sermon preached on-
May 26, 2013
Trinity Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Number 6:22-27; John 16:12-15

Hymns: 239; 243; 245; 377:10

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, The only Begotten of the Father Who sent the Spirit into our hearts, fellow Redeemed

INTRO: Trinity Sunday:

This Sunday is about Worshiping the One true and living God. There are so many different religions and gods in this world that one might be tempted to doubt that we worship the one true and living God. Indeed there are many people in the world today that would accuse us of spiritual arrogance for making such a claim, that we know and worship the only true God. It isn't arrogance, and it isn't a false claim. It is confident faith which leads us to boast, but not of ourselves or our wisdom, for we did not find God with our superior wisdom. We boast in God who in His grace and His wisdom revealed Himself to us through Christ Jesus, our Savior.

Many in the world are open to accepting many different gods, or see the many different religions of the world as simply being different expressions of worship for one divine being, or master of the universe, or the one life force which has integrated itself in all things. We know that in spite of the multitudes that follow these paths and bow to these gods, that the gods of this world are false idols. Among some in our society man himself has been exalted to being the highest authority and good. That is nothing more than expressing the idolatry of Eden when the devil promised Adam and Eve that they would be like gods, and then all humanity fell into the darkness of sin and death.

God in His grace and love for a fallen and spiritually blind mankind revealed Himself to us in Scripture as -

Theme: The Triune God -- the God of our Salvation.

The Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, desires our salvation, and a restoration of the peace with God which was known at the beginning. And so God reveals that we are

I. Justified by God the Father in Christ.

WE read in our text--

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

In spite of those who would deny the existence of God, there is a natural knowledge of God who is seen in the wonderful works of creation around us. What cannot be known from a study of nature is the grace of God that brings man spiritual life and salvation. That is known only by the revelation of God in His Word. This revelation of God is radically different from the natural religions of man which focus on earning merit with God for this life and as well as for any life which is to come. Whether it is called fate, or karma or good deeds, it all amounts to the same thing, that man can and indeed **must** attain his eternal fate by his own effort and attitude. Since man is self centered and corrupt, all the works of natural man are flawed by coming from a corrupt heart. God's conclusion in examining mankind was indeed very damning.

Psalms 14:1-3 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. 2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is **none** who does good, No, **not one**."

So then the pursuit of peace with God based upon the natural religion of man is an exercise in futility. Even if they admit that there is a God, they cannot please Him with their works. This futility is replaced with peace and hope and salvation when God intervenes and delivers us from the guilt and condemnation of our sin. **It is God who justifies!** It is within the power and grace of God alone, against whom we have all sinned, to free us of our many sins. He doesn't only free us from the punishment of sin by commuting our justly deserved death sentence. He justifies us. God declares us completely innocent of any and all guilt of sin. He laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53). He sent Jesus to the cross, bearing our sins, to endure our punishment that we might be delivered from the wrath to come. In place of

wrath and animosity, in place of enmity which filled our own hearts, with have PEACE!

God secured this peace for the whole world. In sending His Son to the cross God was reconciling the world to Himself not imputing their trespasses unto them. But the world was shrouded in darkness, and did not know God, and could not find God. And so the work of the Holy Spirit comes into the plan of our salvation. We are -

b. Called to Spirit Given Faith.

The Holy Spirit inspired the Holy Writers so that they were not “making up” their own spiritual fantasies in writing the Holy Scriptures.

2 Peter 1:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

So then in opening and reading the Scriptures we know that we have exactly what Jesus declared His Word to be, the “Truth,” divine, and holy, and absolute truth! And so in hearing the truth of the gospel of Christ the Holy Spirit has worked faith in our hearts. This is a work of God, for only the Spirit can turn our cold and stony hearts into hearts of flesh make them alive again. We were dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), and the Spirit made us alive together with Christ. By **faith** we understand, not only that the worlds were framed by the word of God, but that by the merits of Christ crucified we have peace.

This changes our entire relationship with God. Before, we were estranged. Without faith in Christ God did not hear our prayers. Without faith in Christ our prayers were nothing more than vain words spoken into the wind. Now we have –

c. Access by faith in the grace in which we stand.

Access is a big deal. Access to God is a special privilege. We are invited to come before the Lord with all our concerns, indeed even with our sins, and we are promised that we shall find grace to help in time of need. **We stand in the grace of**

God. That is our status or standing with God. He views us with kindness.

In our Old Testament lesson God communicated this standing of grace to His people in the blessing He entrusted to Aaron to deliver to His people. In the benediction with which we are blessed every Sunday God expresses again and again that we are the recipients of His love and peace. He brings us the kindness of His love. He looks upon us with favor. He does not turn away from us in hot displeasure, but rather His face shines upon us. He desires our good, and is willing to help in time of need. So the Lord invites us –

Psalm 50:15 “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”

This leads us to live with hope. Not simply because of platitudes that with time troubles pass, and that tomorrow will be a better day.

d. We live in the hope of our salvation.

We know the tribulations of this life will pass because the Lord has promised good to us. The Lord has promised an eternal salvation which shall be ours in Christ Jesus. He has promised us the glory of everlasting life in a new heavens and a new earth where there shall be no more pain. However living in hope is more than just putting up with the sufferings of this present time. Living in hope is comprehending the grace and salvation of a triune God, knowing He is there as a very present help in trouble. We are --

II. Equipped for Life with God’s Grace.

And so we **rejoice**, or speak freely and gladly, of the salvation we have in Christ Jesus. It is easy for us to boast about how great our God is when life is going great. What about when life isn’t so great? What about when life is difficult, and our circumstances in life are severe and trying? Then the world would press us to “curse God and die” as Job’s wife encouraged

Job to do when affliction came into his life. That is not faith's response.

Romans 5:3-5 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Through faith we are equipped to endure the challenges that this world may bring, that our God allows, and even directs into our lives. The Lord uses the distressing times of life to focus our lives on Him and the hope that we have in Him, not for perfection in this life, but to keep our eyes focused on Jesus who has gone before us into heaven (Hebrews 12:2).

Our text says we glory in tribulation. That doesn't mean that we find some personal merit in the sufferings we endure, but rather that in times of difficulty, especially when it is sufferings that come upon us because of our faith in Jesus, we continue to give confidently testimony in the certainty of our salvation in Christ Jesus. When we are hurting, and enduring the ridicule or even physical harm that the unbelieving world will throw at us, we go forward knowing that the Lord endured this and much more for us and our salvation, and that nothing can separate us from that love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39). We can rejoice that the Lord has found us worthy to suffer shame for His name!

The pressures which the world brings upon us drives us into the Word, through which the Holy Spirit builds our faith so that we endure, we persevere by His grace and power. It is this working of the Holy Spirit building this perseverance in the truth that is seen as Christian character by those around us. They see that we are not flighty in our faith, but that we cling to Christ and His cross. The fruit of this Christian character is **hope**. Christian hope is a precious gift. It is not a wish that perhaps with some luck things might work out for the best. It is the certainty that what God ordains is always for our good and blessing. It is the confidence that God has a plan for us, and that plan's ultimate goal is our eternal life with Him in heaven. We live in the

certainty that the day is coming when we shall behold the Lord face to face and shall receive His gracious invitation, “Come you blessed of My Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the earth” (Matthew 25:34). This is the faith which the Spirit of God has placed in our hearts in Christ Jesus, our crucified and exalted Lord. This is the truth of the **Triune God**, the one and only God, **the God of our salvation!**

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.