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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
May 22, 2016  
Trinity Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 6:1-8, Matthew 28:18-20

Hymns: 541; 23; 243; 644 (248:1-3)

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

Sermon Text: 1 Peter 1:1-9

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup>elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

<sup>3</sup>Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

<sup>6</sup>In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup>that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup>receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

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

In Christ Jesus, God my Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Why Trinity Sunday?

When asked, “Do you believe in God?” we expect that most people will answer in the affirmative. Although we know that there is a good percentage of people in the world that no longer think it’s necessary to believe in God most will acquiesce and confess that they believe that there is a superior being out there somewhere.

For many in the world today that is regarded as more than sufficient for life and salvation. But the gods of this world are not real. The Lord reveals Himself to us in His Word so that we **“might know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent”** (John 17:3). We need to know the only true God, including the divine mystery of the Holy Trinity, for this is the God of salvation, the God who brings salvation to all the world.

Since the early days of the New Testament Church many have attempted to explain away the mystery of the Trinity. Some presented God as having different modes of expression fitting God’s different activities. Some have denied the divinity of Jesus. Others have diminished the mystery by teaching this as being nothing more than different personalities which we observe in God as He interacts with the world. While these may be appealing to reason, they are not true presentations of the God of our salvation.

Today we are going to be reminded of the glorious grace that is extended to us from the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as He, the **one** God works out our salvation. We often confess that Jesus is my Savior and that is most certainly true, but it is also necessary for us to understand and confess that God the Father is my Savior, and the Holy Spirit is my Savior.

So it is that with the opening verses of Peter’s first epistle the Spirit of all truth shall guide us in knowing this truth about --

**THEME: The Triune God – The God of our Salvation.**

Peter's opening greeting tells us more than the names of some regions of Asia Minor that had Christian congregations in them. It sets forth some very basic truth about God and His desire for the salvation of a fallen mankind.

**1 Peter 1:1-2** “To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup>elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”

Peter addresses the believers as pilgrims. He reminds believers that we are simply travelers here, sojourners whose goal destination is another homeland, a heavenly homeland. He also refers to them as members of the dispersion. Christians were scattered abroad throughout the world. While Peter mentions specific regions of the world he makes it clear that these are not the only places in which believers reside. This was a sampling of Christian congregations that was in need of spiritual encouragement because of the trials of persecution and tribulations of life that afflicted them either because of their faith, or in spite of their faith in God.

These are important truths we need to capture for ourselves impacting how we perceive ourselves and our place in this life as children of God. We also are merely pilgrims who need to remember that heaven is our home, not this temporal world. We also need to keep in mind that we are members of the great dispersion of believers who are scattered throughout all the world, in keeping with the will of God not only for our salvation, but for the salvation of sinners of every tongue and nationality. Finally, Peter extends to us a glorious truth that comes to us through our knowledge of God: **grace and peace is multiplied** to us from God, the God of our salvation. So let us consider the statements made in our text that reveal the glorious grace that comes to us from the Father and from the Son, and from the Holy Spirit.

First Peter reminds us that --

### **I. God the Father Elected Us.**

Peter addresses these believers as “**elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.**” They are not alone in this

blessing of God's grace. We also stand in this grace of salvation. The doctrine of election is often found to be troubling and mysterious to many. Far too many people attempt to draw negative conclusions from a very wondrous positive. This isn't about those who are lost. This is about those who are being saved. It isn't an accident, and certainly not an accident of birth that you are a child of God who knows of the grace and salvation which God desires for the whole world. It is part of the gracious working of God the Father for your salvation. According to the foreknowledge of God you were chosen by God the Father to be the recipient of His grace unto everlasting life. God the Father knew you from before the world began, and in His love you were chosen, elected according to His grace to be delivered from sin and death to the glories of eternal life in heaven.

Remembering that this was according to grace and not of works reminds us that it is not because God saw something good in us that we were chosen. What He saw was our sin. What He saw was our need for salvation. Seeing this God had compassion and you were elected to be His own and made an heir according to the will of God. Your salvation is secure because of this grace which is **multiplied** unto you. Listen how Peter describes this grace in the next verses.

**1 Peter 1:3-4** “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”

It was according to His abundant mercy that you were the beneficiary of the grace of God that comes to us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. It is the Triune God who is the God of our salvation. It was God the Father who loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

## **II. God the Son Shed His Blood for Us.**

We would not have salvation but for the “**sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**” (v.2). That expression from our text may sound a

bit foreign to us, but it was an essential element of Old Testament worship that was depicted in the sacrifices. The writer to the Hebrews made it clear that **“without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins”** (Hebrews 9:22). And the blood of beasts could never do that. It had to be far more precious than that. So it is that we have come to know that Jesus was not simply another man, albeit a good man. He was **“holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners”** who **did not need to make a sacrifice for His own sins** (Hebrews 7:26, 27). He was the only begotten Son of God who took on our flesh and blood that He might take our place under the law, and yet have that divine nature which made His blood so precious that He could be the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It is this blood of the Jesus that cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). We too are sprinkled by the blood of Son of God who came down to earth to bear our sin AND its curse. He died and rose again that we might delivered from sin and death. He rose again that we might know the reality of resurrection, and the ascension to glory gives us the real and living hope of everlasting life.

God lends His power to this message of salvation so that faith comes by hearing the message preached as --

### **III. God the Holy Spirit Sanctified Us.**

Again this is a word that is so important, but often our understanding is so limited. The third person of the Triune God is intimately involved in our salvation **“in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience”** (v.2).

A basic definition for sanctification could be to set apart for a holy purpose. Sometimes we simply say **“to make holy.”** The word “saint” is derived from the same root idea. The Holy Spirit works His wonder of grace beginning in our hearts. We are regenerated, or born again by the Spirit as He brings us to faith. We who **once were darkness are made light in the Lord** (Ephesians 5:8). He gives us the faith that takes hold of the sacrifice that Jesus, the eternal Son, made for us upon the cross. The Spirit gives us the faith that takes hold of the righteousness of Christ, a righteousness which God credits to us according to grace through that Spirit created faith. So of course we see once again that God is the only source of our salvation.

Not only has the Spirit separated us from the guilt of our sin, but He has separated us from the world, making us God's own special people so that we will be ready for true obedience of faith. We will walk in the ways of the Lord showing forth the glory of God in all our ways.

But that brings us right back to why Peter wrote this epistle in the first place. He wrote to encourage these early Christians in the faith because they were suffering for Christ's name sake. They were enduring difficult trials and much tribulation. But in all this the power of God the Holy Spirit was with them. Our Savior God would use the furnace of tribulation to purify the faith of these children of God so that they might see --

**1 Peter 1:7-9** “that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup>receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.”

Even the most difficult of times in our lives are not without hope, not without comfort. The Holy Spirit continues to abide with and in us through the Word. The Spirit renews us in our hope of glory. He reminds us of what is real and permanent and what is false and passing away. The glory of this world and all that is in it will pass away, but we are secure unto the hope of everlasting life.

The result is that we are messengers of this grace and glory of salvation to the world. Even in our most trying hour the **joy** and the hope that the Spirit brings us goes beyond the gloom of life. We possess a joy in our salvation that is inexpressible and full of glory for we know that we possess a firm hold on life everlasting by the powerful working of the God our Salvation, the Triune God, Father Son and Holy Spirit.

**AMEN.**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)