

# INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
November 29, 2020  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 64:1-8, Mark 13:32-37

Hymns: 55; 65:1-4; 370; 399:3

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

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup>even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, <sup>7</sup>so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

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

In Christ Jesus, our coming Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Another Advent Season begins!

What does that mean for us? Well, I think all of us right away think of the coming of Christmas. Advent is about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The key celebration of that coming this time of year is the celebration of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. The world

sings that this is the most wonderful time of the year, but they don't really know why that is. We do! The joy and rejoicing that we feel isn't superficial, or simply emotional. It is spiritual.

However, Advent focuses on more than Jesus coming down to earth as our Savior. It also has a very special spiritual component that is about Jesus entering into our hearts by faith. And it ultimately directs our attention forward to the last day when Jesus comes again in glory. Our text this morning ties all three of these Advent messages together reminding us of how important each of these truths are to our Christian faith. The message of Advent for us is not only that these things are central to our faith, but that we are spiritually prepared to receive the Lord and celebrate our salvation in a rich and meaningful way. So it is that the Holy Spirit teaches us of --

### **THEME: True Advent Preparation – It's All Grace.**

The first objective of Advent preparation is --

#### **I. Confidence of Faith.**

And yes, the Spirit shows us how that important characteristic of true faith comes to us by grace. Our text begins with words that are very familiar to all of you, words you have heard me recite as a blessing for the congregation at the beginning of each sermon for many years. You heard these same words proclaimed for your blessing by the pastors who served you before I came. "*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" (v.3) You have heard these words so often, but we have only talked about the wonder of truth found in these words maybe a couple of times in all those years. There is a reason that pastors introduce the sermon portion of our worship service with these words of Scripture. As you hear the Word of Truth which comes to us from God this is what God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ convey to you: *grace* and *peace*.

With grace we are reminded of the underserved kindness of God. the word "peace" means exactly what you think. Peace, but this peace is coming to us from God. Let's put these two words in their full context. Grace and peace come to us from God the Father, God **our** Father, the God against whom we have sinned. With our sin

we fall under the curse of the law. We know that sin brings death. Sin brings the wrath of God upon all those who transgress the law! That is what we deserve, and God would be not only within His rights to condemn us; it would be both just and fair! And yet the Spirit of God proclaims **grace** and **peace** that comes to us from God the Father. It comes to us from God, who loved the world and sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life through faith in Jesus' name, that we might have peace restored in our relationship with God.

This grace and peace come to us from God the Father **and** from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord. He is God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, redeemed us from the curse of the law and so in His grace, in the greatest underserved kindness ever to happen in the history of the world, He secured peace, established peace for us with God. This is what advent is all about! This is the message of the gospel of Christ and why He came into the world and took on our flesh and blood. This is why He has come into our hearts by faith and created a new man within us. This Jesus will come again in glory to fulfill the promise of this grace and peace by receiving us to Himself in heaven.

That's the truth! Now you have heard it again. It's good for you to hear it again. This part of the sermon is about **confidence** of faith. Paul was emphasizing the importance of such confidence of faith to the Corinthian Christians. In our text he spells out how this confidence comes to us and takes possession of our hearts, and, oh yes, it is by grace!

**1 Corinthians 1:4-7a** "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup> even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, <sup>7</sup> so that you come short in no gift."

Paul reminds us to thank God concerning this grace that has come to us. How did it come to you? It came through your being enriched in all utterance and knowledge. Utterance, we don't use that word very much. It's talking, teaching, preaching, but not just a preacher prattling on about whatever is on his mind, but rather a

faithful and true presentation of the Word of God. Confidence of faith is about sound doctrine. Sound Doctrine comes to us in the Word of God and faithful preaching and teaching of that Word of God. That was a blessing of God's grace for the Corinthian Christians some two thousand years ago, and it remains a blessing of God's grace for us today. We are enriched in our faith by hearing the **truth** of God's Word. The Spirit strengthens our faith by hearing "the testimony of Jesus Christ." (v.6) We have the truth of Christ, our crucified, risen, and exalted Lord, **confirmed** in us so that we don't miss out on any necessary spiritual gift. And so our hearts are prepared for the coming of the Lord by the grace and power of God who grants us His peace.

We are --

## **II. Confirmed to the End.**

You are confirmed by the grace of God, so that you are –

**1 Corinthians 1:7b-9** "eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

First of all, it is quite amazing that we are **eagerly** waiting for the revelation or reappearing our Lord Jesus Christ. That is amazing because by nature one would be **dreading** the appearing of the Lord in glory. We are sinners and He is holy. But wait, what the Lord has done for us, and what we are assured of is that we will be found **blameless** at the time of Jesus' coming on the Last day. That is an absolute truth confirmed by the Lord. We have this faith established in our hearts. Now our text takes this truth of being confirmed in our faith now, to being confirmed in true faith until that Day when we shall see the Lord Jesus with our own eyes! Then we will stand before Him and be found **blameless** by His merits through faith. It is all by grace.

Are you ready for that? That is what Advent preparation is about. We need to be ready for that. Well, that all depends on the grace of God. If it depended on me all would be lost because I am weak. Even in my best state it is as we read in our Old Testament lesson

*“All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags,”* (Isaiah 64:6) disgusting filthy rags. But it isn’t dependent upon me and finding certainty of salvation in anything that I have done. It is all God who has dealt with me according to His grace. And our text declares that we will be confirmed to the end, that is until the end of this world. We lean on Jesus’ name. We know that it is on Christ that we must stand. And God keeps that conviction of faith in our hearts.

Paul also expressed this same confidence of faith to the Philippians to whom Paul wrote; *“He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* (Philippians 1:6)

As much as I mess up and fall into temptations, I have this assurance given me here in our text, “God is faithful” (v.9) When the Lord says He will do something you can be assured that it will be done. He doesn’t go back on His word. He doesn’t begin, and then grow tired of it all, and just leave things undone. The Lord called you to faith. By doing this God called you into fellowship with His Son, your Lord, your Redeemer. You have a close relationship with Jesus. God brought you into this relationship, and God will keep you in this relationship unto your end, unto the day of Christ’s return.

You ask, “Can’t I mess this up by deliberate sin, or by walking away from the Word, and so also from the Lord.” Yes, you still have the power to undo what God has done in His grace. However, it is by the power of God that we are kept in faith unto everlasting life. Stay in the Word, and He will keep you in fellowship with His Son until that that Day when you hear Christ say, *“Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the earth.”* (Matthew 25:34)

So you see Advent preparation is a gracious work of God from beginning to end. In His grace God provided for our salvation by sending His Son to be born of the Virgin Mary that Jesus might redeem us. In His grace the Lord opened our hearts to believe, that Jesus would dwell in our hearts. In His grace God confirms us in the blessing of salvation until He graciously finds us blameless in the Day of Christ’s appearing. What a blessing we are given in Advent Preparation.

**AMEN.**

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