

Jubilate
St. John 16:16-23a
April 22nd, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I Go to the Father

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

In this life we are bound to suffer many things. It is not a question of *if* we are going to suffer cross and trial, but *when*. This is especially true for those of us who cling to our Lord + Jesus Christ in faith. We not only endure the suffering that is common to all people, because we live in a world that is riddled by sin and the consequences of sin, but, we also endure the slings and arrows of the devil, the world, and our own sinful conscience. They increase our suffering because we are their enemies. We are in Christ, and therefore, because they hate us violently, they do everything in their power to destroy that faith and draw us away from our Lord + Jesus Christ. So then, in this life we endure suffering, shame and cross; we endure sorrow, weeping and lament.

Our Lord prepares His disciples on the night of His betrayal and arrest for the suffering that they are about to endure. He is about to be betrayed by His friend and disciple, Judas. He will be arrested, put to a sham trial, mocked, beaten, spit upon by the ones in the Church—the ones that were supposed to be waiting for Him with eager expectation, and welcome Him when He comes. Then He is lead before the worldly judges, who treat Him the same, and give Him even more mocking, beating and scourging. Then He will be lead away to be crucified—to suffer the fate of the worst criminals—where He will suffer and die. For all this our Lord + Jesus prepares His disciples.

They, however, do not understand what is about to happen. Imagine it! They are enjoying a nice meal at the time of the narrative of our text. The Lord has instituted His Supper for them, and for us. They are celebrating; having a good time; enjoying each other's company. To them it must have felt like things were going great. It was a time of rejoicing and being happy and joyful. But, our Lord knows what is coming. He is the One Who chose the time of His betrayal and arrest. All things were ready and prepared for His sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He just needed to prepare His disciples one last time for His death.

In a little while the Lord would be leaving them. He was going to the cross to offer up His life as a ransom to the Father. He was going to the Father to present to Him the once and for all time sacrifice of His perfect obedience to the Law and suffer our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. Therefore, our Lord tells His disciples that He will be gone for them for a little while. He will be in the grave for three days. The Pharisees, scribes and the Jews will all be rejoicing that He is in the grave. They will feel like they have triumphed. The disciples, however, they will be sorrowful. They will weep and lament.

This is the cross that they must bear, in order for them to experience the joy and jubilation that our Lord's resurrection will bring them.

Just as the Lord will be gone from them for a little while, their sorrow will only last for a little while. On Friday they will experience great sorrow. On Sunday—two days later—they will experience great shock and joy. And their joy no one will be able to take away from them. For, the Lord would prove once and for all that He was the Messiah—the Lamb of God sent from the Father to redeem the world from their sin. The sight of our Lord + Jesus risen from the grave would give them great joy that could never be taken away from them. Even when they would endure suffering after this. And, they did endure suffering, all but St. John, the Evangelist, was martyred for their faith in the Lord and even St. John spent the last days of his life in exile. Their joy could not be taken from them, on account of their faith in the Lord + Jesus and what He had done for them.

The Lord + Jesus Christ is also our comfort in times of sorrow. He has ascended into Heaven, to sit at the right hand of God the Father and will come again to judge both the quick and the dead. When we suffer trial and tribulation in this life; when we endure crosses from this world, it is easy to think that the Lord is far from us; that He has no concern for us when we weep and lament the troubles of this life. But, He is always with us in this life.

He is with us by His holy Word. Through the preaching of the Gospel, He dispels our sorrow, for He reminds us that He endured the greatest cross that any man has ever endured. And He did it all for us; so that we might be redeemed from our sins. He also promises us through His Word that after this life is ended He will take us to be at home with Him for all eternity. There we will join with all of our loved ones who have died in the faith. There will be no more weeping. There will be no more sorrow or lament. There will only be joy, and He will wipe away the tears of joy from our faces, and we will have a joy that no one will be able to take away from us. It will be a joy that lasts forever—for all eternity.

But while we live in this life of tears, He has given us means by which we can endure the crosses of this life. He has given us Holy Baptism. This is not just some event that happened many years ago. It is a washing that needed to be done only once but is something that washes us clean from sin every day. It makes us a new creation who clings to our Lord + Jesus in faith for what He has promised to do for us every day. We need only rejoice in our Holy Baptism every day and believe that our Lord washes away our sin through its eternal waters every day.

This is what the Paschal candle is supposed to represent—the eternal and undying effect of Holy Baptism. This is why it is lit during baptisms, and a candle is lit from its flame and given to the newly baptized, to show that the light that now dwells within the newly baptized is a light that they carry with them throughout their life. We too, carry that light of Christ with us in our daily lives, so that when the darkness of this life closes around us, we need only look to that light and know that our Lord is with us, even in the darkest of days. His light shines greater than any darkness and we know that His promise to lead us out of sorrow into joy will be fulfilled. He will lead us into eternal life with Him in Heaven.

Until that time when He appears to us, He has given us a meal to enjoy. It is the same meal that the disciples were enjoying on the night of our Lord's betrayal and arrest. It is a meal that we eat in the midst of the suffering, trial and tribulation of this life. We eat it in the midst of sorrow, but this meal gives us joy, for by it our sins are forgiveness us, we are given eternal life and salvation. It is one more means by which the Lord + Jesus shows that even though He sits at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven, He is still present with us in this life. He is here with us whenever we eat His Body and drink His Blood in bread and wine. He is present in the bread and wine. He is with you. He is there for you. He is feeding you and sustaining you. He is giving you a reason to celebrate amidst the sorrows of your life.

These means are real and tangible. You can touch and see them. They are your physical and visible proof that the Lord is with you, even when you are hurting, and bearing a heavy cross. He is there in these physical means to assure you that He has not forsaken you, and He assures you that your suffering will last only a little while. He has reconciled the heavenly Father to you. You are at peace with the Father. Through His Word and His Sacraments, we are granted peace; we are granted joy. For, He lifts the veil from off our eyes to see Him. He lifts us out of the darkness of pain and toil and sets us on the solid ground of His promises that He will always be with us and will never leave us in sorrow.

Our Lord + Jesus even gives us each other, fellow Christians who live in this same valley of tears; who share the same sorrows and trials that we do, to comfort one another with the Word of God when we are struggling in this life from the weight of it. We can encourage and comfort each other by reminding each other that the pain is only present for a little while. Joy will return. We can also comfort one another with the promise of our eternal reward in Heaven. The Lord + Jesus has gone to the Father to prepare a place for us in Heaven. He will be our Lamb of sacrifice, and we will receive the benefits of His sacrifice for all eternity.

He prepared His disciples for His departure on the night of His betrayal. He does the same thing for us every year, when we hear this Gospel. We are in the time of the little while, when our Lord is ascended into Heaven, but our sorrow from this life, also only lasts a little while. For, while we bear our crosses in this life, our Lord sets before us His cross which He endured for us in order that He might bring us joy; joy that no one can ever take away from us. For we have seen with the eyes of faith what our Lord has done and continues to do for us so that we might have joy everlasting. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo gloria!