

The Festival of St. Olaf II of Norway, Enlightener of Norway
St. John 10:1-9
July 29th, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I AM the Door of the Sheep

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.

There is only one way into Heaven, and that is through the Door. Our Lord + Jesus Christ tells His disciples that He is the Door of the sheep. Our Lord + Jesus is the only way into Heaven. It is only through the Door that the sheep can enter into Heaven. It is only through His works and merits, and not through any work or merit we may think we have within ourselves that we gain access to Heaven. Our Lord + Jesus provided the Door into Heaven through His perfect obedience to the Law and His suffering and death upon the tree of the holy cross. Through His Blood sprinkled on the doorposts and lintel of the gates of Heaven, we gain access into Heaven. Our heavenly Father sees the Blood that His Son shed for us and accepts His Only-Begotten Son's sacrifice for us. We therefore, have an entrance into Heaven.

This is the Gospel message that St. Olaf II of Norway, the Enlightener of Norway brought to the people of Norway. He brought the true Gospel of salvation through our Lord's works and merits alone. He did not bring a false gospel of salvation through works. This is why Norway was one of the first countries, besides Germany, to embrace the Lutheran Reformation and the renewed teaching of justification by faith. Norway even continued to be one the countries that maintained its Lutheran heritage and embraced its teachings among its whole nation.

However, today Norway, like so many countries that have Lutheranism as their official religion, have embraced liberalism and its anti-Christian tenets. They have abandoned what St. Olaf II of Norway taught them, and what they embraced during the Reformation.

It is easy for us to sit back and point a finger at those who have forsaken their heritage. It is easy for us to become puffed up in our own virtuousness. However, those who have fallen away from the One, True faith should stand to serve as a stark warning to us. It should drive us to repentance. It should drive us to the Door of Heaven—our Lord + Jesus Christ and His works and merits on our behalf. For the wolf—the devil—desires to devour the sheep of our Lord. He has already devoured all those who have forsaken Holy Scripture and our Lord's teachings and have adopted as their teachings the ways and thoughts of the world.

Our Lord + Jesus has opened the gates of Heaven to all those who believe on Him and His works, and amazingly the people of the world refuse to enter in. They stand around outside the gates

of Heaven waiting to be consumed by the wolf; by the devil. They would rather be eaten than enter in through the Door of the sheep—our Lord + Jesus Christ—into Heaven.

My dear friends, cling onto the Lord + Jesus in faith and enter in through Him into Heaven. He has fulfilled the Law perfectly for you. So, your daily breaking of the Law has been covered over by His daily fulfilling the Law during His earthly life. He has paid the penalty that you owed on account of your manifold sins by His death on the tree of the holy cross. When we cling to Him and His works and merits in faith, we are clothed with His righteousness—the righteousness that He won through the cross. And being clothed in His righteousness, we therefore receive the rewards that are His through His work on the cross—forgiveness of our sins, eternal life in Heaven, and salvation from sin, death and the power of the devil.

We receive this faith through the work of the Holy Ghost, Who works through the preaching of the Word of God, and the administration of the sacraments to create faith in us. This is why it is so very important for us to daily be remembering our Holy Baptism. Daily must we drown the Old Adam—daily repent of our sins; daily consider the Ten Commandments and how much we break them and look not to our ability to overcome sin or keep the Law, but to daily look to the cross; to our Lord + Jesus Christ hanging on that tree and suffering for you, so that your sin may be paid for. Your sins are paid for on the tree of the holy cross, and when we daily remember that in the cross our sins are forgiven, we then cling even more to our Lord in faith to rescue and save us. We cling to Him to open the gates of Heaven for us poor, miserable sinners, so that we may enter in and receive with rejoicing the reward of His labor.

But, daily remembering our sins leaves us hungry and thirsty. Therefore, our Lord + Jesus has provided a meal for us so that we might eat and drink salvation. The Door of the sheep prepares a table for us in this wilderness of the world. In the midst of our enemies—the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh—the Lord + Jesus prepares a table for us, and invites us to eat with Him in Heaven. Through our Lord's Body and Blood we enter into Heaven and commune with Him and all the saints of Heaven. It is truly a foretaste of the feast to come. For, we get to commune with the whole company of Heaven right here in this place and at this time. Everyone who has proceeded us into Heaven, joins us here at this altar, and we enjoy the forgiveness that our Lord won for us on the cross.

This is good news for us, and it was good news for the people of Norway. Through the work of King Olaf II, his subjects received the Gospel; they received a way into Heaven. St. Olaf II of Norway pointed the people of Norway to the Door of the sheep—he pointed them to the Lord + Jesus Christ.

The faithful ministers of our Lord continue to point the Lord's people to the Lord + Jesus and His works for them. Let us continue to hear those who have been appointed over us and shepherds who have been charged with watching over our souls. Listen to them. Heed their warnings. For they greatly desire to bring you into Heaven through the Door of the sheep; they greatly desire to lead you to the Lord + Jesus Christ and His works and merits on your behalf. Through their faithful words, they defend you against the wolf, and lead you into good pasture that feeds your soul and gives you sustenance for all eternity. Through their voice may we continue to hear the voice of the One, True Shepherd—the Lord + Jesus Christ—Who calls us to enter in through Him—the Door—into Heaven. 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!