

Quasimodogeniti
St. John 20:19-31
April 28th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

If You Forgive the Sins of Any

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.

When we greet each other with the words, "*Peace be with you,*" we are offering Christ to one another. For where there is peace, there also is the Christ. Therefore, when the Lord + Jesus appears to His disciples in the upper room, behind locked doors, what is the first thing that He says to them? He declares to them to have peace. He is offering Himself to them. He is giving Himself to them. Where there is peace, there is tranquility of the soul. Where there is the Christ—our Redeemer from sin, death and the devil—there is tranquility of the soul. If we have the Christ, we have peace; we have peace in our soul.

For when we have the Christ, we also have all the benefits that He brings. We have the forgiveness of our sins. We have the promise of an eternal life with our Redeemer and Savior. And, we have deliverance and salvation from sin, death and the power of the devil. These gifts bring to our soul peace. The proclamation of peace takes our minds away from the battle with our enemies in this life, and within our souls. It reminds us that our Lord + Jesus Christ defeated our enemies on the tree of the holy cross, so that they have no more power over us. When we proclaim peace to one another, we are reminding each other that the battle with sin, death and the devil is over. The victory has been secured by the Lord + Jesus through His suffering and death on the cross.

This is why immediately after appearing to His disciples through the locked doors, and declaring to them "*Peace,*" He shows them His wounds from the cross. They are the physical witness in His body that the battle has been fought and won by Him. His wounds are the physical witness that He is indeed the Christ—the Lord + Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee, Who fulfilled the Law perfectly on our behalf and suffered and died our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. His wounds are the physical witness to the fact that we now have peace with the Lord God.

Our Lord + Jesus is declaring that the peace that He was sent here to obtain by the heavenly Father has been secured through His suffering and death. And having obtained the victory over sin, death and devil; after defeating the power that the devil, the world, and our flesh has over us, He gives us His peace. He gives us the tranquility of the soul that comes with the knowledge that our sins have been forgiven. He even goes a step further. For after appearing to His disciples in the locked upper

room on the night of His resurrection from the dead, and after saying, *“Peace be with you,”* and showing them His hands and side, He does one more thing for them. He breathes on them, and says, *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”*

Now, this is test time to see if you have been paying attention to my preaching and instruction. What does the Holy Ghost do? What is His work? We will hear more about this as we go through the season of Easter, since the Holy Ghost becomes front and center in many of the Gospel readings from the last half of the Easter season leading up into Pentecost, but what is it that the Holy Ghost does for you? He creates and sustains faith in you through the pure preaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments. The Holy Ghost brings faith to you.

Therefore, when our Lord + Jesus breathes on His disciples and says to them to *“Receive the Holy Spirit”* He is offering to them both the Holy Ghost and faith. He is offering them the faith to believe that He is the Lord + Jesus that they had spent the last three years with learning from Him the Holy Scriptures. He is the Lord + Jesus Who instituted the Lord’s Supper for them just a few nights ago (from their perspective). He is the Lord + Jesus Who was from Nazareth and was born of the Virgin Mary, and whose guardian father was Joseph. He is giving them faith to believe that He is the Lord + Jesus Who suffered and died on the cross and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. This is not some ghost or specter. He is not some vision or shared dream. This Lord + Jesus standing before them in the locked upper room is the man Who was crucified, dead and buried for them, and for us, and for the atonement of the whole world.

He imparts the Holy Ghost to them, so that they might believe that He is the Christ risen from the dead. He imparts the Holy Ghost to them so that they might not be unbelieving, but be believing that He is the Christ, sent into this world to redeem mankind from their sins, and defeat once and for all the power of the devil, and the power of death.

So then, our Lord + Jesus has given His disciples peace, He has given them the Holy Ghost, and now He connects those things in His next words. *“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them.”* When peace is offered to us, we are given the Holy Ghost and thereby we are given faith to cling to the promise of peace offered. This peace is just a synonym for forgiveness. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also peace; there is tranquility of the soul for those who believe that the peace offered is truly for them.

Therefore, our Lord + Jesus is charging His disciples with the task of proclaiming peace to the entire world through the preaching of the forgiveness of sins. The ministers of the Lord continue to preach peace to the world; they continue to preach peace and forgiveness into your ears, so that you might not be unbelieving, but be believing that your sins are truly forgiven on account of the works and merits of the Christ, and not because of any work that you have done.

We can believe that our sins are truly forgiven when the ministers of Christ preach peace to us, for they have been charged to bring the peace that He first brought in this locked upper room to His disciples. Your sins are forgiven, because I say so, because the Lord + Jesus told me to say so. Believe that when I say your sins are forgiven, they are forgiven, for the Lord + Jesus has declared that your sins are forgiven on account of His wounds, and has declared that His peace be with you.

This message is so wonderful, and there are times when we believe that our sins are so great, that we will be like St. Thomas who did not believe that the Lord + Jesus had appeared to the other disciples. This is why the crucifix is prominent in our church. For it shows us the suffering and death—the wounds that our Lord + Jesus endured—for our salvation. St. Thomas needed to see and touch the Lord’s wounds. The Lord + Jesus appeared the following Sunday evening (today by our calendar) and gave St. Thomas the proof that He needed. We have the same proof with the crucifix. We can both see

and touch the object that represents our Lord and His suffering and death for us; the symbol that represents our sins being defeated and our redemption from sin and death being won.

The Lord + Jesus appeared to His disciples in the locked upper room and declared to them peace. He gave them the Holy Ghost and faith, and sent them to forgive sins, and to retain sins of those who refuse to repent. He commissioned His apostles to do the same thing for all those who would hear the Gospel. His ministers continue to forgive and retain sins of those who repent and those who do not repent. Therefore, when we share with one another the peace of the Lord, we are sharing forgiveness with one another, for we are sharing the Christ with one another. Wherever the Christ is offered, through faith there is also forgiveness being offered. *"Peace be with you."* Your sins are forgiven. 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!