

Midweek Lenten Vespers 3
St. John 6:36-51
April 3rd, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

For the Life of the World

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.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ gives His life for the life of the world. This shows His love for us, His creation. This also shows the love that the Father has for us, for the Lord + Jesus does the will of the heavenly Father, Who sent Him into the world to redeem us from sin, death and the devil. All those who believe on the Lord + Jesus—who cling to Him and His promises in faith—have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. For our Lord + Jesus wins forgiveness, life and salvation for us on the tree of the holy cross. His life is given in exchange for our life. He gives His life for the life of the world.

The Jews in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John do not believe in the Lord + Jesus. The Lord comes for their salvation. He does the will of the Father for their salvation. But, they refuse to believe on Him. They only see the man—the son of Joseph, whose mother and father they all knew. They cannot get past His humanity. Our Lord references His works in the beginning of this Gospel from the Evangelist St. John. For He says that they have seen Him, but still did not believe Him. This seeing refers to the signs and wonders that our Lord has done; it refers to His preaching of the Word of God.

They had the signs and wonders—all the miracles of our Lord + Jesus—but still they did not believe. Our Lord, we are told from various places in the Gospels, that He healed the sick and lepers, He cast out demons, He raised the dead, He restored the sight to the blind, and He gave hearing to the deaf. Through all of this the Jews still refused to believe.

Moreover, remember the context of this Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. For, what happens at the beginning of this sixth chapter of St. John? It is the events that we heard about this past Sunday—the feeding of the five thousand men, plus women and children. Our Lord + Jesus had just completed a miraculous feeding of a large crowd of the Jews, much like Moses did for the Jews in the wilderness when the Lord God fed them with the bread of Heaven, manna. And, in between the feeding of the five thousand and the pericope from today, our Lord + Jesus had walked on the water to His disciples in the middle of the night. Which caused the Jews to wonder how He got to the other side when they had witnessed that He did not leave with the disciples, and that there was only one boat that had come across the water.

But even after these signs and wonders they refuse to believe. They still can only see the man,

the son of Joseph and Mary. They refuse to acknowledge that He had been sent by God the Father. Such unbelief has plagued mankind for the past two thousand years. Even today, there are many who only view our Lord + Jesus as a man Who said a lot of good things; Who taught many good axioms. But, they still refuse to see Him for Who He is—the Lord and Savior of the world. He is the One Who gave His life for them. He gave His life for us. He gave His life for the life of the whole world. And the world rejects Him.

The Lord + Jesus came into the world to give His life for us. He came to give us His flesh to eat. For, He is the true Bread from Heaven. The Lord God fed the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years with the bread from Heaven called manna. In our Gospel reading, just the day before, the Lord + Jesus had fed the large crowd with bread and fish in a miraculous way. But both of these feedings with bread were just a symbol and foreshadowing of the true bread; the true bread from Heaven—our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine, which He gives for the life of the world.

We eat His Body and drink His Blood, and thereby receive the gifts that He won for us on the tree of the holy cross. We receive the gifts for which He gave up His life. This promise is for us. We grasp onto this promise through faith. Our faith clings to the promises of our Lord. For we are aware of our lost condition. We know that we have broken the Ten Commandments. We know that we deserve only God's punishment and wrath on account of our sins.

We have spent the last four weeks of Lent examining ourselves according to the Ten Commandments, and we have confirmed that we do not hold up to the standards set by the Law of God. We do not keep them perfectly, and if we fail in one small point, we have broken it all. When we examine our lives in relation to the Ten Commandments, we see that we deserve nothing but God's eternal displeasure, and this leads us into despair over our sins and contrition. We are sorrow for our sins, and wish to do better. And even when we try to do better at not breaking certain Commandments, we find that we just keep on breaking them.

It was for this reason, that we are unable to keep the Commandments perfectly in the way that our Lord God would have us, that the heavenly Father sent His Only-Begotten Beloved Son into the world to bring us life. We deserve death eternally. And our creator sends to us a means to obtain life. The Lord + Jesus offers up His life on the tree of the holy cross, so that we might have life and have it eternally. He fulfills the Law perfectly. He does what we are unable and unwilling to do.

He then sends us His Holy Ghost to point our eyes to His signs and wonders—to His fulfilling of the Law perfectly for us, and His sacrifice for us—so that we might cling to Him in faith and receive the eternal life that He suffered and died for.

This is His great love for us, His creation. This is His great love for the world, even though they reject Him. The Jews in the Gospel reading could not get past His humanity. Many people today cannot get past His humanity (if they believe He existed at all). But, our Lord + Jesus still shows His love for the unbelieving Jews, and the unbelievers today, in that He suffers and dies for their sins, too. He has atoned for the sins of the whole world. He though they refuse to believe and are condemned for it. Those who cling to the Lord + Jesus in faith; who cling to His signs and wonders in His life and in His death, have the gifts that He won for them: forgiveness, life and salvation.

We have spent the last few weeks examining ourselves according to the Ten Commandments. This coming Sunday our focus will now be shifted to our Lord's passion for us; His suffering and death on the cross for us. As we hear once again of our Lord's suffering, let us reflect upon how it is our sins that are nailed to the tree with Him. Let us reflect upon our Lord's love for us; that He gives up His life for our life and the life of the whole world. And let us remember that as we eat His Body and drink His Blood in bread and wine, we have the forgiveness that He won for us on the tree of the holy cross. He

gives us His life out of His great love for us. For, He is the true Bread from Heaven, which feeds us and all who believe on Him, and He gives us the treasures of Heaven: forgiveness, life and salvation. Therefore, do not doubt His grace, even though your sins be great, and trouble you often, for the Lord + Jesus loves you so much that He paid the price of your sins with His very own life. 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!