

Rogate
St. John 16:23b-30
May 26th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas+

You Will Ask in My Name

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who through Thy Son didst promise us that whatsoever we ask in His Name Thou wilt give us: We beseech Thee, keep us in Thy word, and grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may govern us according to Thy will; protect us from the power of the devil, from false doctrine and worship; also defend our lives against all danger; grant us Thy blessing and peace, that we may in all things perceive Thy merciful help, and both now and forever praise and glorify Thee as our gracious Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

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

The last two Sundays we have rejoiced in the Lord, and sang a new song in thanksgiving for the gift of the Comforter—the Holy Ghost. Today, we pray to the Father for the good gifts that our Lord + Jesus would have us have for the sake of His suffering and death on our behalf. In fact, the Church always prays in the week leading up to the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord. These four days before the Festival of the Ascension this coming Thursday are called the days of rogation—the days of prayer to our Father. In these days leading up to our Lord's Ascension, the Church prays diligently to the heavenly Father to grant us whatever we may ask.

And this is the promise of our Lord + Jesus in today's Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, that whatever we ask the heavenly Father in the Lord + Jesus' Name the Father will give to us. Therefore, we should ask the heavenly Father for all good things in our Lord's Name. So that our joy may be full.

But one might say that this cannot be true. For, there are many things that we pray for on a daily basis that we are not granted. There are times when our prayers seem to be unanswered. Does this mean that our Lord + Jesus is a liar? If there are things that we pray for to our heavenly Father in our Lord's Name and do not receive, does this mean that we *do not* receive whatever we ask for, as our Lord + Jesus says? For certain, our Lord + Jesus is not a liar. He is not giving us gifts with one hand and taking them away with the other when we are not looking. Our Lord is speaking here of praying for things that pertain to our eternal salvation.

We do not receive some things for which we ask, because they are not for our benefit. Our loving heavenly Father and our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ do not wish to give us things that will not lead to our eternal salvation. The Triune God desires that we live for all eternity with Him in Heaven. He desires that our sins be forgiven and covered over by the Lord's suffering and death. He desires that

we cling to Him in faith, and receive His holy Word and participate in His holy Sacraments. He desires that we receive help from the Comforter—the Holy Ghost—so that we might have salvation eternally. This is why we are not granted some things for which we pray, because they do not help our eternal salvation.

The holy Scriptures are full of examples. Take for instance St. Paul when he prayed diligently that the thorn in his flesh might be removed. Certainly, taking away his pain—the pain caused by this thorn in the flesh—would be a good and healthy thing. But St. Paul realizes (as he tells us) that his thorn in the flesh was there to keep him humble. It was there to keep him in the one, true faith. It was there to keep him in the Church and keep him close to the Lord God. His thorn in the flesh was to draw him closer to the Lord God. And so, the thorn in the flesh was not removed, even though St. Paul prayed to the heavenly Father in the Lord's Name because it was meant to keep him in the one, true faith.

We even have an example from our Lord + Jesus. For what was His prayer on the night of His betrayal and arrest? He prayed the heavenly Father that the cup of His suffering and death might be taken away. But, just as our Lord + Jesus tells us, this was not the will of the heavenly Father. Nor was it the Lord + Jesus' will. For He had to suffer and die for the atonement of the whole world. He had to suffer and die for our eternal salvation. Every petition made to the heavenly Father that does not benefit our eternal salvation is not granted.

St. Paul knew that the thorn in his flesh was for his eternal salvation. The Lord + Jesus knew that enduring the cup of the heavenly Father's wrath was for our eternal salvation. Therefore, the Lord's will was fulfilled and our joy was completed.

Our joy is filled when we ask the Father whatever we want in the Name of our Lord + Jesus, and it benefits us to our eternal salvation. We may indeed be given earthly blessings for which we ask, but even these gifts are meant to keep us in the one, true faith. When we are denied the things we ask, these things are also meant to keep us in the one, true faith—they are meant to draw us closer to the one, true Triune God.

Therefore, let us pray diligently to the heavenly Father in the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ for all those things that lead to our eternal salvation. Let us pray daily to remember our Holy Baptism; that our Old Adam would be drowned and killed, so that a new creation may arise each new day and live before our heavenly Father in innocence and purity and free from the sins that entrap us every day. And He will give you what you want in the Name of the Lord + Jesus for it is for your eternal salvation.

Let us pray diligently to the heavenly Father daily that He might forgive us our sins and trespasses. Let us daily confess that we are indeed poor, miserable sinners, and that without the aid and help of the heavenly Father we would remain in our sins and be burdened for the rest of our lives with sin and temptation. Let us go often to Private Confession and receive this blessed absolution of our sins from the lips of the pastor as if they were from very lips of the heavenly Father. And let us remember that when we endure temptation, and we keep falling headlong into the same sins over and over again, that our Lord allows this to happen so that we remain faithful to Him; that we might cling to Him more diligently and petition Him more fervently to remove the temptation from us.

This does not mean that we should go on sinning; that we should ignore the temptations, as if sinning was a part of God's will. When we keep on falling into the same sins, it means that we should pray even more diligently for our Lord God to remove the sin from us. But we should also rejoice for it shows our Father's love for us. For He is allowing this temptation to draw us closer to Himself. We continue to endure temptation so that our joy may be full when we have finally overcome the temptation by our Lord's grace and mercy.

Let us also, finally, pray to the heavenly Father through the Name of the Lord + Jesus that He might continue to provide for our remission of sins through His Body and Blood given in bread and wine. May He never remove this gift from us. And may we never forsake this gift but gladly participate in it and receive it gladly to our eternal benefit. For this meal is our spiritual food from which we should never fast or deny ourselves.

The Church prays in the days leading up the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord that He would finally fulfill the promise made to us that day: that He would come again and take us to our eternal home in Heaven. The Lord is coming soon. Let us continue to pray diligently for His quick return—for the little while to be fulfilled. For, in that day when our Lord returns our joy will be fulfilled as we spend all of eternity rejoicing, singing and praying with all of the saints the eternal liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom which has no end. May the heavenly Father grant this to us all as we pray to Him fervently in the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Lord God, our Heavenly Father, Who by Thy Son hast promised to give us whatsoever we shall ask in His Name, we beseech Thee, grant us the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may make known our requests unto Thee in faithful prayer, and desire of Thee that which is well-pleasing to Thee and profitable for us, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting, and being firmly assured that Thou wilt hear our prayer; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth, and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!