

The Third Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 15:1-10
July 7th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

This Man Receives Sinners

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, we all like sheep have gone astray, having suffered ourselves to be led away from the right path by Satan and our own sinful flesh: We beseech Thee graciously to forgive us all our sins for the sake of Thy Son, Jesus Christ; and quicken our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may abide in Thy word, and in true repentance and a steadfast faith continue in Thy Church unto the end, and obtain eternal salvation, 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.

When the Evangelist St. Luke records that the tax collectors and sinners drew near to the Lord + Jesus, he was referring to people who were open and manifest sinners. People whose lives were ruled by sin, and did not care if they sinned or not. They had no use for the rules and commandments. Tax collectors were especially hated by everyone because they were the ones who collected the taxes for the hated Roman government. They were, however, not just content to collect the taxes that were required, but often would collect more money than was owed so that they could pocket the difference. They acted out of their greed, and so they were especially open and manifest sinners.

So, when these tax collectors and other open and manifest sinners are drawn to the preaching of the Lord + Jesus, it would be natural for the Pharisees and scribes to complain, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." This Man was supposed to be the Messiah. In the minds of the Pharisees and scribes the Messiah was supposed to be like them; hating these tax collectors and sinners and not receiving them and eating with them. The Messiah was supposed to send these open and manifest sinners away, just as they would have done. They had no use for open and manifest sinners.

Open and manifest sinners should be marked and avoided. Them and the sins they commit should be called to repentance. Their sins should not be ignored out of a misguided concept that says love is love. Their pride should be condemned and not tolerated. So then, why does our Lord + Jesus receive the tax collectors and open sinners? He receives them because they have repented. They have forsaken their past sins. In contrition they have put them away before the Lord and seek to do better. In a sense, they are no longer sinful tax collectors and manifest sinners, for they have put their old sins away.

This is the point of the parable that our Lord + Jesus tells to the Pharisees and scribes. The righteous have no need of a Savior. The scribes and Pharisees thought themselves righteous in their

own eyes, and because of this they had no use for the Messiah. A person who does not believe he is sick or injured has no need of a doctor. A person who thinks he is rich has no need of support from anyone else. A person who believes he is well-fed has no need of food offered to him. These scribes and Pharisees who were righteous in their own eyes because they had the temple sacrifices given to them by Moses had no need for the true Temple, the Body of the Lord + Jesus Whose once and for all time sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross paid the sins of the whole world, so that those who believe on the Lord + Jesus are justified and made righteous before the Triune Lord God.

The one sheep who is lost, however, needs the Shepherd to go and search for him. The other ninety-nine are already safe, because they are already covered in the blood of the Lamb of God; their sins have already been paid for through their contrition and faith, and they are safe within the pasture of the holy Church, where they feed on the green pastures of the Word of God, and drink from the cool waters of the preaching of the Word of God. The sheep who is outside of the pasture, the Shepherd must seek out. For, as St. Peter describes in the Epistle reading, the “adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” The lost sheep in the wilderness is under constant threat of being devoured by Satan; his sins may consume him, so that he is lost forever in Hell.

The Lord + Jesus, the Christ, seeks after the lost sheep through His preaching. In the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark we are told what the Lord + Jesus preached. He preached repentance toward the forgiveness of sins. In other words, He called tax collectors and open sinners into repentance—to turn away from their sinfulness in contrition and in faith cling to Him and His works and merits. These tax collectors and sinners heard the promise of the Gospel and clung to the Lord + Jesus in faith. The Lord + Jesus is still calling sinners into sorrow over their sin and faith in Him alone, through the means of grace; through preaching of the Gospel; Holy Baptism; Holy Absolution; the Holy Supper of our Lord; and through the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren. The Lord + Jesus seeks us through these means in this wilderness world, in order that He might bring us into the pasture of His Church.

Having found us poor, miserable sinners, He lifts us upon His shoulders, in the same way that He lifted up the whole world onto His shoulders when He atoned for their sins on the tree of the holy cross. Through the holy cross He carries all those who believe on Him into the pasture of the holy Church. Having brought us into the Church He calls all of His friends and neighbors—all the angels of Heaven, and all of the saints of God—to celebrate and rejoice that the lost sheep—the lost sinner—has been found safe, and has been rescued from the jaws of the roaring lion the devil. There is much joy in Heaven among the angels that all of us have been rescued from the soul-crushing jaws of the devil, and that we now have our home and citizenship in Heaven.

The same is true of the woman who loses a drachma—a silver coin of the Romans which equaled one day’s pay. The woman represents the Church. The Lord + Jesus in His life called tax collectors and sinners into repentance through His preaching, and after His ascension the Church has taken up His mantle and calls open and manifest sinners into repentance. The Church lights the lamp of the Gospel—the Light of Christ and His perfect obedience to the Law for us, and His suffering and dying on the cross as a payment for our sins. When the lamp of the Gospel is lit through preaching and the Sacraments the darkness of sin in men’s souls is illuminated, and in contrition it is cast out into the darkness, so that we are filled with the light of the Christ.

The Church also uses the broom of the Law and the Gospel to sweep away the dirt and dust of sin, and cleanse us with the hope of what our Lord + Jesus has done for us. We are thoroughly cleaned through the Word and Sacraments. The Law cleans out our dirty sinful misdeeds, and the Gospel scrubs away our sins, so that we stand before the Lord + Jesus a new, clean creations.

The lost sheep and the lost coin are precious in the sight of the Lord God. One sheep out of a

hundred is still valuable to the Lord God. He would not let one sheep be destroyed even though He has ninety-nine other sheep. One coin out of ten—one tenth out of a hundred—is just as important. The Lord would not let one coin be lost, even though He has nine more drachmas. This is how precious you are in the sight of the Lord. This is how precious everyone in creation is to the Lord. He does not want anyone to perish; anyone to be devoured by the roaring lion of the devil. He desires all men to be saved. And so, He searches diligently until they are found.

He searched diligently, through the means of grace, to find us, and having found us places us in His holy Church where He feeds and cleans us. In this holy Church all of the Lord's friends and neighbors are called to rejoice over the lost sheep and the lost coin having been found. We can rejoice that we have been found by the Gospel and the Sacraments and have been brought into the holy Church, where we are nurtured by the Holy Ghost through the means of grace to stay in the one, true faith. We can also rejoice with the angels of Heaven and with all the saints in Heaven and on Earth, when one open and manifest sinner repents, for he has been rescued from the jaws of the devil, and now has an eternal home in the Church.

The Pharisees and scribes should have rejoiced that sinners have stopped their sinning ways, but because they were righteous in their own eyes and had no need of a Messiah or Savior, they complained against the Lord + Jesus and His preaching. This is why we must daily acknowledge and confess our sins to God. We are rife with sin. The temptation for us in the Church is to think that because we do not commit open and manifest sins—because we do not murder, steal, commit adultery and the like—that we are not that sinful. Because we do not commit the big sins, we forget to consider our small sins that we do every day, most times not even realizing them as sin. For these sins we must daily repent, and daily must we look to the cross and the work that our Lord + Jesus accomplished on that tree for us. He lifted us, and the whole world, onto His shoulders on the cross so that He might redeem us from sin, death and the jaws of the devil.

Let us daily give thanks to the Lord + Jesus and rejoice daily with our friends and neighbors in the Church—even the ones who are in Heaven; the angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven. For our Lord + Jesus has come into the wilderness of the world to find us poor, miserable lost sheep and has swept the house of the world until He has found us and restored us to the place of glory. We pray that the Lord would continue to search this world diligently for all lost sheep and coins, and by His grace and mercy bring them into this holy sanctuary where we may rejoice over them until we rejoice eternally in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

O Gracious Lord Jesus Christ, Who came'st into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, and art not ashamed of the company of sinners, we thank Thee for Thy goodness, and beseech Thee, grant that we may daily be found walking in sincere repentance, and there be joy in Heaven over every sinner that repenteth; for Thy Name's sake, Who livest and reignest with the Father 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!