

The Festival of St. Michael and All Angels  
St. Matthew 18:1-11  
September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA (One-Year Anniversary)  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

### Little Child

*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 hast ordained Thy holy angels to protect Thy children on Earth against the assaults of Satan and the wickedness of the world: we beseech Thee, of Thy mercy, continually defend us by these ministering spirits, and so replenish us with Thy Holy Spirit that we may do Thy will on Earth as it is done in Heaven, and hereafter, with all the angels and the elect, may praise and glorify Thee; through Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, 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.

Not like a man with intellect and reason and experience, not like a seasoned veteran of war, not like a teacher with initials and degrees come down from the ivory tower, or even like a man who has run a business and shown a profit, but like a child, a little one, you must become. You must give up your airs, your status, your independence and control. You must be vulnerable. You must turn away from your sins and your hope in good works, be converted and risk all on the simple trust that the Lord God is good, that He knows best, and that He will take care of you both in this life and in the life to come. That, my dear friends, is faith.

It is in this way that greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven is measured differently than greatness in the kingdoms of men. For the greatest and most wonderful thing in the Kingdom of Heaven is the most despised and pitiable thing in the kingdoms of men, the unjust, brutal, and bloody execution of our Lord + Jesus. In Christ's kingdom, where grace rules, weakness is strength, poverty is riches, and dependence and vulnerability are virtues.

Child-like faith is not the exception. It is the rule. We should not be surprised that infants are capable of believing. For faith is not of the intellect, but of the heart. It lives and moves in the soul. No one is saved apart from faith in the Lord + Jesus Christ. No one enters the Kingdom without a vulnerable and dependent trust that risks all on His death and resurrection. Child-like faith does not mean innocent faith. It means asking and letting God wipe away the stinking filth from your sin-filled soul, confident that He will not only not hurt you or laugh at you, but that He will also cleanse you and keep you healthy just like a child trusts his parents to do all that is necessary for his life and well-being. Whoever humbles himself like a child, whoever is dependent and vulnerable and trusting in the mercy of the Father by way of the Son in the Holy Ghost, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

*“Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for”* our accuser *“has been thrown down.”* His accusations have been removed from us.

He, who accused us “day and night before our God” has been defeated, overcome by the sacrifice of the perfect Lamb, Who had no blemish, no guilt, Who went silent to the slaughter for the love of man that you words and angels cannot express, which the grave with all its terror could not hold. And, thus, it is that our Lord has conquered that foul tempter and accuser, that pretender, that demonic liar and seducer for you. How? *“By the Blood of the Lamb.”* By the death of the Innocent One for the guilty; by the intervention of the perfect, immaculately conceived and born One for the imperfect and corrupt sinners; by His resurrection from the dead, which confirms that the heavenly Father accepted the sacrifice of His Only-Begotten Son for you who believes like a little child. For there was war in Heaven. But that war is over, that dragon is done. It is only the last skirmishes, the flickering fights of a trounced enemy heading for Hell, that spark around us.

Angels long to look into this victory, this mystery: God became man, died in man’s place, satisfied His own holy wrath over man’s rebellion, that man would be free and belong again to Him! No angel, however mighty, pure, and loyal he might be, calls God, “Father” and His Son, “Brother and Kinsman.” But, you, weak, defiled, unfaithful rebel, you are bold, for you are a son or a daughter by Divine decree, by grace through faith in the Blood of the Lamb. You are pure. You belong in the Kingdom. It is yours. You have been bought and forgiven. You are His own little child, and your angels, hosts upon hosts of supernatural powerful beings, are always before the face of His, and your, Father in Heaven. Those angels pray for you. They serve you. And when your last hour comes, they shall bear you to your eternal home in Heaven.

The ladder in Jacob’s dream is not a ladder meant for man to climb up to Heaven. Instead it is the means by which angels cross back and forth from there to here and back again. Our Lord identifies Himself as that ladder. The angels ascend and descend through Him to serve man. That is to say, that by virtue of the Incarnation and the redemption of mankind, that which was a little lower than the angels, mankind, is now higher. In the great and happy exchange, where God took our sin into Himself and freely gave us all that is His: righteousness, holiness, innocence, purity, and Heaven; He also gave us the service of His holy angels. The Body and Blood of our Lord is placed into your mouth and you are mystically joined to Heaven, angels descend to serve you. For that which is placed into your mouth is the very flesh that was nailed to the cross, laid in the tomb, rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven. It is placed into your mouth for the forgiveness of your sins and to unite you to Him Who has loved you more than He loved His own life. He came down from Heaven to bring salvation to mankind. And, He comes to you in this bread and wine which is His very Body and Blood given and shed for you.

Woe to him who causes a little child to sin. Woe to him who causes *you* to sin. Through faith you are a little child who trusts his heavenly Father like a little child trusts in his parents. Who would dare to stand against you, God’s elect, marked with the watery cross of Holy Baptism? Who would accuse you—a trusting little child of God? There is no one. There is only Him Who was slain but Who lives, He Who loves you, a little child surrounded by His holy angels that pray for and serve you daily. Be comforted by this: the wars and troubles of Earth will not last, but the mercy of God endures forever, and His angels, who stand in His presence minister to you daily and throughout your life to protect you from the attacks of the devil, and guide you into your eternal home in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who hast ordained Thy holy angels to protect Thy children on Earth against the assaults of Satan and the wickedness of the world: we beseech Thee, of Thy mercy, continually defend us by these ministering spirits, and so replenish us with Thy Holy Spirit that we may do Thy will on Earth as it is done in Heaven, and hereafter, with all the angels and the elect, may praise and glorify Thee; 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!*