

Oculi
St. Luke 11:14-28
March 15th, 2020
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Surely the Kingdom of God Has Come

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 sent Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh, that He might overcome the devil, and defend us poor sinners against the adversary: We give thanks unto Thee for Thy merciful help, and we beseech Thee to attend us with Thy grace in all temptations, to preserve us from carnal security, and by Thy Holy Spirit to keep us in Thy Word and Thy fear, that unto the end we may be delivered from the Enemy, and obtain eternal salvation, through the same, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, 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.

We are at war! The strong man—the devil—seeks to destroy the Kingdom of God, and all those who desire to dwell peaceably in it. The strong man rules his kingdom—the world—with an iron fist. Disease, pestilence, wars, bodily harm, hatred of man, poverty, marital strife, and the like plague mankind every day; driving us into despair, fear and causing us to lose hope and leading us into worry and strife of the soul. The attacks from the devil and the world cause our own sinful flesh to also rise up and attack us.

We see the sins in the world, we see the sins in our own flesh, and we despair and worry. When we see our sin, we realize what poor, miserable sinners we truly are, and how desperately we need someone outside of ourselves to rescue us from our sins. Or worse, our sinful flesh drives us into pride and hubris that causes us to think that we are really not that bad of a person. We begin to compare ourselves to our fellowman, checking the list of their sins and comparing it to ours and leading us to say, “Well, at least I am not as bad as that person.” Our sins always are small when compare our sins to other people, because that is how we are: we judge ourselves better than everyone else.

For this reason, the strong man, our enemy of old, has us bound up tightly in our sins and trespasses. We find ourselves living in the kingdom—this life and this earth—of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. The strong man guards his kingdom well, for he does not want it to fall. He wants all in his kingdom—all of us—to bow before him, and fall into the same eternal punishment that has been prepared for him and his demons.

Therefore, when we resist the strong man in his kingdom, he does everything in his power to bind us and defeat us. He sends all those slings and arrows that were listed before: disease, famine, poverty, bad government, and the like, to draw us out of the Kingdom of God into his kingdom of despair and shame. Or he leads us into pride and self-righteousness, causing us to not see the effect that sin has on us and the grip it has on our very lives. The strong man either openly attacks us with his slings and arrows meant to cause us to lose faith, or he subtly attacks us by causing us to not see the many

slings and arrows aimed directly at our heads. If we are not aware that we are under attack by the devil, he can easily defeat us for we do not see our great need for a Savior; for a Stronger Man to come and bind the devil hand and foot and rescue us.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ is the Stronger Man Who has come into the world—taken upon Himself our flesh and blood—so that He might rescue us from the strong man. The Lord + Jesus takes the fight to the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh into the very house of the devil—into the very stronghold where we have been defeated time and time again. The Lord + Jesus fights the strong man on the strong man's terms and in his palace.

When a Stronger Man than the devil comes and overtakes him, He strips him of his armor, and defeats him. This is good news for us, for if the Lord + Jesus has come into the kingdom of the devil—into his palace; this world—surely the Kingdom of God has come upon us. For our Lord + Jesus defeated sin, death and the devil on the holy cross. He took away the power of the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh by giving us His works and merits—His righteous acts of obeying the will and Law of God and suffering death in our place—as a means whereby we can lay claim to His righteousness and make it our own through faith in Him.

The Finger of God—the Holy Ghost—points us to the Christ. He points us to our Lord and Savior through the preaching of the Word and through the administration of the Blessed Sacraments. These are why we prize these treasures so adamantly. We cling to our Lord's Word and our Lord's Sacraments, for through these things we are freed from the bondage of this world. Through these means we are freed from our sins—our sins are no longer accounted to us, for we are credited with the works and merits of the Christ. Through these means the Finger of God drives back our enemies of the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh, and removes from us despair and pride, and causes us to see our Victor and King—the Conqueror of sin and death—our Lord + Jesus Christ.

When the Finger of God—the Holy Ghost—enters into us through the means of grace, we are shown that the battle is not lost, but rather, it is won by the Lord + Jesus. We see that our Lord and Savior has soundly defeated the devil in his kingdom. We see that our Lord + Jesus truly is a Mighty Fortress, a trusty shield and weapon against the devil and his kingdom. The strong man can no longer defeat us or have any power over us, for the Stronger Man—our Lord + Jesus—has bound him up forever, by suffering and dying on the cross as an innocent Man.

The Lord + Jesus has driven back the power of Satan from us. He has cast the devil out of us, for He has come into this world to divide and conquer the kingdom of the devil. We are no longer deaf and mute. We can now hear His holy Word, and sing His praise, and tell of all the good things that He has done for us; how He conquered sin, death and the devil for us and made us a child of God, and co-heirs with Him in His Kingdom. He has bound the strong man for us, so that he can no longer do us any harm.

He continues to drive back our enemies every day of our lives in this present time. He drives back our enemies with just His Finger. There is more power in the Finger of God than there is in the entire body of this world of the devil's kingdom. He is easily bound with the just the Finger of God—the Holy Ghost. Wherever the Holy Ghost is at work—in the waters of Holy Baptism, in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the Blessed Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine—the devil is easily defeated. This is why we should treasure these gifts daily and often and not forsake them, for they are our protection and defense in this kingdom of the devil.

This is also our comfort in all time of strife and turmoil, and in the midst of illness and pestilence. For our enemy desires us to despair and lose faith, for when we do, he knows that he can easily defeat us. This is why when the world seems to be going crazy, and the devil seems to be gaining the upper

hand, we need to look upon the Stronger Man—our Lord + Jesus. We need to look to the cross of our Lord + Jesus, for on the cross He bound our enemy—the devil—hands and feet, so that when we cling to our Lord's atoning sacrifice for us in faith, we have also gained the victory.

We are at war! When we focus on the evil in this world—the strife, disease, and anxiety of this world; when we focus on the sin in our lives—we are led into despair and worry. The devil wants us to think that we have lost the war; that he is winning the war. But, my dear friends, look upon the crucifix. For in our Lord's sacrifice for us we see that our Lord + Jesus has bound up the devil in his kingdom with His own hands and feet; The nails that pierced our Lord + Jesus are the means by which our Lord + Jesus bound and defeated the strong man—the devil—in his own kingdom. Our Lord suffers and dies, and wins for us an eternal victory. Therefore, do not despair or worry in this life of stress and full of our sin and the consequences of sin, for the Stronger Man—our Lord + Jesus—has come into our world and defeated the strong man once and for all.

Surely the Kingdom of God has come upon us. His Kingdom is with us through the preaching of the Gospel and through Holy Baptism and the Supper of our Lord. Cling with all earnestness to these treasures—these weapons and armor—for they will assure us of a victory through our Lord + Jesus Christ. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who hast sent Thy Son into the world to destroy the works of the devil, we beseech Thee, curb the tyranny of the wicked foe, and protect us against him, keep us from security, and graciously preserve us by Thy Holy Spirit in all temptations, that, being ever defended from the Evil One, we may until our end walk in Thy fear according to Thy Word, and finally obtain everlasting salvation; 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!