

Midweek Advent Vespers 2
St. Luke 1:26-35
December 9th, 2020
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

You Have Found Favor with God

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.

Man's sinfulness occurred when the devil in the form of a serpent came to a woman, Eve, who was deceived by the spirit of pride; of wanting to be the Lord God and like the Lord God. Moreover, the devil once he had deceived our first parents, Adam and Eve, stripped mankind of the glory of immortality. Instead of life immortal in the Garden of Eden, mankind was gifted with death, sin, and enslavement under the power of the devil. Death came because of the deception of Eve, and because death made its entrance through a woman, it was fitting that life should return through a woman. The one, seduced by the devil through the serpent, brought man the taste of death. The other, instructed by the Lord God through the angel Gabriel, brought forth for the world the Author of salvation, our Lord + Jesus Christ.

Through one man, Adam, death entered into the race of mankind. Through the second Man, our Lord + Jesus, life was restored. Adam was given life when he was created by the Lord God from the dust of the Earth, and gained death when He sinned by eating from the tree of which the Lord God had forbidden him and Eve to eat. His descendant, our Lord + Jesus, gave His life into death on the tree of the holy cross, so that all those who believe on Him might have life in Him alone. He died and rose again into life, so that we might no longer taste death.

Eve received her name because she was the mother of all the living. Through her womb all mankind received their life. But her womb was a womb of death, for all her children which she brought forth were born in death. We too, having been born of our mother Eve, will die and sleep in the grave.

The angel Gabriel came to one who was born from Eve. He came to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mary had found favor with the Lord God. She was highly favored of the Lord God, and was truly and rightly called blessed among all women. For she was to bear the Life of the world. Through her womb would come the life of mankind. Through her would be born man's salvation from sin, death and the power of the devil. Through her womb would come our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ, who by His perfect fulfilling of the Law, and His sacrifice on our behalf would win for us forgiveness of our sins, eternal life with Him and all the saints and angels, and He would redeem and save us from the pains of sin and death.

For this reason, the Blessed Virgin Mary is rightly called blessed among women. She is rightly called highly favored. For she has found grace with the Lord God. This is also why the Blessed Virgin Mary prefigures the Church. For just as in her womb she brought forth the Life of the world; the One Who would bring life to all those who believe on the Him, holy Mother Church brings forth all those who cling to the Lord + Jesus into the promise of eternal life. Holy Mother Church gives birth to those who have been delivered from sin, death and the power of the devil through faith in the Lord + Jesus.

Those who are born of Mother Church, also are overshadowed by the Holy Ghost when He quickens us and creates faith in us by the pure preaching of the holy Gospel and the right administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. We who are born of Mother Church, are rescued from the death into which we have been born through our first mother, Eve. The Holy Ghost, through our Mother Church, proclaims that we have found favor with the Lord God. The Holy Ghost through the means of grace declares that our sins are forgiven on account of the works and merits of the Christ, and thereby we are rightly called "blessed." In holy Mother Church, we have been given grace from our Lord God. For our Lord + Jesus came down from Heaven and took upon Himself our flesh, so that that which was destroyed by the deception of Eve, might be restored through the faithfulness of our Mother Church.

The Church declares to us the same words that the angel Gabriel declares to the Blessed Virgin Mary: "The Lord be with you." For just as the Lord God is with Virgin Mary, He also is with us. The Lord God is with the Virgin Mary, not only in the flesh and in her womb, but He is with the Virgin Mary in His grace and mercy. The Lord God—our Lord + Jesus—is with us in His flesh, too, when He comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood under the bread and the wine. When we come to this altar to receive our Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine, we are kneeling before our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. He is truly and substantially present among us when we gather around this altar to receive Him and His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. The Lord God is with us in this moment in His grace and mercy, just like He was when the angel Gabriel came to announce to the Blessed Virgin that she would bring forth the Life of the world.

Our Lord + Jesus comes to us who are trapped in the sin and shame that leads to our death, and rescues us from sin and death, so that we might have eternal life with Him. On account of His love for us, we have truly found favor with the Lord God.

The death of mankind began shortly after he was given life by the Lord God. The Triune Lord God created mankind from the dust of the Earth with His very own hands. We are the only part of creation that was not created out of nothing by just His Word. We were created by His very hands; man, from the dust of the Earth and woman from the rib of the first man, Adam. We were created to enjoy immortality in the Garden of Eden. Through our first parents, however, we exchanged life and immortality for sin and death.

Our Lord + Jesus—the Lord God—Who created us with His hands in a personal way, also planned our salvation before the foundations of the world to be a personal salvation. He would come down from Heaven and take upon Himself our flesh through the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and He would dwell in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that being born of a virgin, He might offer up His life as a perfect sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross. By His death He declares that we are highly favored, and that we have found favor with Him. For He died for us all, so that He might restore to us the life and immortality that our first parents lost through their transgression.

He continues to restore to us life and immortality as we reside in the womb of Holy Mother Church. In the womb of the Church, He cares and nurtures us in the one, true faith. He sustains and strengthens our faith through the work of the Holy Ghost. He guards and protects us from the trials and temptations of the devil, our first and oldest enemy. He rescues us from the lies and deceptions of that

serpent of old, by placing into our hands and preaching into our ears the wonderful promises that He has proclaimed to us, and won for us by His taking upon our flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Rejoice, you highly favored ones, for the Lord is with you, and you are truly blessed with the grace and mercy of the Lord God, who has come to you to rescue you from sin and death, and give you life and immortality with Him. How can this be? Because He is called + “Jesus” and He will save His people from their sins, even us poor, miserable sinners. And of His Kingdom, there will be no end, for we will live with Him and all the saints, all those who were born of holy Mother Church. We will live eternally with the angel Gabriel and all the angels. For He has come down from Heaven to be born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and become man, for our salvation. Thank be to God! 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!