

The Second Sunday after the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord
St. Matthew 2:13-23
January 3rd, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Out of Egypt I Called My Son

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 God, heavenly Father, Who didst suffer Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, to become a stranger and a sojourner in Egypt for our sakes, and didst lead Him safely home to His fatherland: Mercifully grant that we poor sinners, who are strangers and sojourners in this perilous world, may soon be called home to our true fatherland, the Kingdom of Heaven, where we shall live in eternal joy and glory; through the merits of Thy 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.

St. Joseph, the guardian of our Lord + Jesus, takes the Child + Jesus and His mother out of the way of harm intended by King Herod to Egypt. In this way our Lord + Jesus is like His ancestors; He had to go and dwell in the land of Egypt. In that occasion there was another Joseph who also had dreams. He had dreamed that His brothers, and even his father and mother, would bow down before him. Like his descendant, our Lord + Jesus, there were also those who sought to take his life. His brothers hated him because their father, Jacob, loved Joseph the best of all of his brothers, on account of the love Jacob had for Joseph's mother, Rachel. Jacob showed special favors to Joseph; giving him a special garment made with many fabrics.

This angered his brothers so much, that they desired to kill him. Like King Herod, they were filled with jealousy for their brother Joseph. They had their chance, too. Joseph had been sent by his father, Jacob, to check on his brothers who were tending the flocks far away. In seeing their hated brother coming from afar they plotted to kill him. He was only saved because of the intercession of his oldest brother, Reuben, who desired to use the occasion to get back into the good graces of his father, after he slept with one of his father's concubines. He, however, did not get his chance for in his absence the other brothers seeing a group of Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt sold Joseph to them for twenty pieces of silver.

Joseph, who had been the pride and joy of his father Jacob, was now reduced to poverty and slavery. Through the deceitful actions of his master Potiphar's wife, he also found himself in prison. He remained there a long time. After this long time in prison, his brothers would also join him in Egypt on account of a severe famine. Their father Jacob had sent them into Egypt to buy food, because he had heard there was grain in Egypt. This was all on account of the providence of the Lord God, Who sent Joseph into Egypt to sustain Jacob and his family.

Israel and his children all joined Joseph in the land of Egypt and settled in the land of Goshen to raise their flocks of livestock. After the time of Joseph was passed, there arose a Pharaoh who forgot all the good deeds that Joseph had done for Egypt and subjected the Israelites into hard labor and

slavery. There they remained for four hundred and thirty years to the day that they arrived. In the same way that this Joseph protected his family by being in Egypt and arranging for them to have food during the famine, so too does the guardian of our Lord + Jesus Christ, St. Joseph, protect his family from the jealousies and hatred of King Herod by taking the Child and His mother into the land of Egypt.

Our Lord + Jesus follows the path of his ancestors. He too goes into the land of Egypt. They had to escape a famine. He has to escape the wrath of King Herod. Whose wrath we are made witness too by the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew. His wrath was so great that he murdered all the male babies, two years old and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding region. The devil's wrath is expressed in the destruction of the Holy Innocents (called innocent on account of suffering for a crime they did not commit, and not because they were without original sin). This malice of Satan towards all of the Lord God's people can also be seen in the people of Israel who were forced into slavery by the Egyptians.

The devil seeks to destroy the Lord + Jesus. If he cannot destroy Him, he will settle for the rest of mankind, especially those of the household of faith. The devil seeks to destroy us and all Christians. He seeks to undermine our faith in the Lord God. He works tirelessly to put into our lives and in our thoughts ways that lead us into shame, despair, and pride. He has been successful with many people in this world. In fact, the world with her lies and deceptions also seeks to destroy the faith and life of the Christian. In a spiritual sense, the Church is also in Egypt. We are bound in slavery to the devil, the world and even our own flesh rises up against us to drag us down into the pits of Hell.

Everything in this world is against the Christian. Everything in this world seeks to keep us in bonds and slavery. We are held in the bondage of sin and death. We cannot break free from these bonds. We spend this life in suffering and pain, plagued daily by the corruption of the world, and plagued daily by the corruption within ourselves which we just cannot seem to shake off no matter how hard we try. Like the Israelites we are trapped in slavery to the devil, the world and our flesh; there is no rescue or escape that we can enact that will save us.

This is why we cry out in our anguish like the nation of Israel. We cry daily in our sins for a Savior and Redeemer. We pray daily for deliverance from our sin. In contrition we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of the Lord God and pray for His deliverance.

The Lord God raised up Moses to be their deliverer. Through the Prophet Moses, the Lord God led His people out of the land of Egypt into the Promised Land of Canaan; the land flowing with milk and honey. Out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt the Lord God called His people—His children—to come and be with Him in the Promised Land. So too does the Lord God call us out of the slavery to sin and death—out of the spiritual Egypt—to dwell with Him in the Promised Land of Heaven. He provides for us an everlasting Kingdom; a Kingdom where we are free from slavery and enjoy the eternal flowing of milk and honey, and wine from heavenly grapes.

The Israelites before they could go into the Promised Land, had to dwell in the wilderness for forty years, on account of their sinfulness and rebellion; not wanting to go and take possession of the land when the Lord God gave them the opportunity. We also have to spend our lives in the wilderness of this world before we can obtain the joyous heavenly realms of the eternal Promised Land in Heaven.

We, however, are not left alone in this wilderness of the world. The Lord God continues to dwell with us. Just as He dwelt with the Israelites for forty years in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, our Lord God continues to dwell with us through the pure preaching of the Word of God and through the Blessed Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution. We have this gift because our Lord + Jesus has joined us in the wilderness of this world by coming down from Heaven and taking upon Himself our flesh, and dwelling with us. Just as we are daily attacked by the devil, the world and our sinful flesh, the Lord + Jesus is attacked by our enemies who use King Herod as their

instrument.

The Lord God protects the infant + Jesus by sending to Him a guardian to watch over and protect Him. St. Joseph is the guardian of our Lord + Jesus who takes the Child and His mother into the land of Egypt to be away from the destroying hand of King Herod. We are also sent guardians to watch over our souls: the ministers of the Church. The bishops, pastors and deacons guard and keep us by continuing to preach the promises of the Lord God into our ears. They are continually calling us out of Egypt; calling us out of the bondage of sin and death by telling us about the works and merits of the Christ, our Lord + Jesus.

St. Joseph brought our Lord + Jesus out of the land of Egypt and dwelt and raised Him in the city of Nazareth, where He was called a Nazarene. We have also through the means of grace been called out of the spiritual Egypt to dwell in the City of God—the holy Church. The world did not believe anything good could come from Nazareth, even as today the world does not believe that anything good can come from the Church or anyone claiming to be a Christian. Even though our Lord + Jesus was removed from immediate danger and taken to Egypt, even when He was settled in Nazareth daily was He witness to the sins and troubles of mankind in this world.

We too, even though we have been rescued from the spiritual Egypt by our Lord's suffering and death; even though we have been placed within the Church through the faith created by the Holy Ghost, our lives are nowhere near perfect. We still daily struggle with sin. We face death and corruption in this world continuously. But there is a Promised Land waiting for us; the Promised Land of Heaven. Just as the Lord God preserved His people Israel by sending before them into Egypt His servant Joseph to prepare the way for them and provide for them food, our Lord God continues to preserve His people, the Church, by providing for us His Blessed Word and Sacraments, which continually put before our eyes the promises of our Lord God. We are continually fed with the Gospel of the preached Word and with the Sacraments that fill our hunger for good things with the faith that trusts in the Lord God.

St. Joseph led the Child and His mother into Egypt to protect them there until it was safe to return to the Promised Land. Joseph was sent by the Lord God to protect Israel and his children and provide food and a land for their flocks until the day when the Lord God called them out of Egypt to the Promised Land given to them in the land of Canaan. We have also been gifted with one who shows us the way into the Promised Land of Heaven. This spiritual Joseph points us to the Christ—to our redemption won for us on the tree of the holy cross. This Lord + Jesus has called us out of the bondage of slavery to sin and death, and given us eternal life by His own death. In His cross we are called out of Egypt to dwell with Him for all eternity, for through the cross we have the forgiveness of sins won for us; the forgiveness which we so desperately need in this wilderness of life.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us heed the call to come out of Egypt, and dwell with our Lord + Jesus for all eternity in the Promised Land of Heaven. For He desires that we no longer be hounded by our enemies, but He desires that we live with Him in peace and safety for all eternity. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Gracious God and Father, in sincere humility we praise the wisdom of Thy ways, and with filial confidence yield ourselves to Thy fatherly guidance; hold us by Thy right hand, guide us with Thy counsel, and afterward receive us to glory; for the sake of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, 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!