

Exaudi  
St. John 15:26—16:4  
May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## You Also Will Bear Witness

*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 made us stewards of Thy manifold gifts, and alone givest ability for every duty, we beseech Thee, forgive us all that we have done amiss, and govern us by Thy Holy Spirit, that our love may be fervent, and we may faithfully minister our gifts one to another, and continually increase in temperance and godliness, to the end that in all things Thou mayest be glorified, and we may obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one 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.

The Gospel readings for the last half of the season of Easter all deal with our Lord's leaving the Earth—His ascension—and the coming of the Holy Ghost. That will conclude next Sunday on the Feast of Pentecost, where the Holy Ghost will be poured out upon the Apostles, and be gifted to the Church in order that He may, as the Apostle and Evangelist St. John writes, “testify of Me,” that is, our Lord + Jesus. He will bear witness of all the wonderful things our Lord + Jesus has done on our behalf. He will show all those who hear that our Lord + Jesus is the One and Only Savior of the world; that He alone has atoned for the sins of the whole world, so that all those who believe on Him might be justified before the heavenly Father.

The Holy Ghost first spoke through the Apostles, as we will see next Sunday when St. Peter addressed the crowds in Jerusalem with the deeds of the Lord + Jesus, and three thousand men were added to the number of the Church. The Holy Ghost continues to speak through the called ministers of the Christ today. Just as the Holy Ghost bore witness of the Lord + Jesus through the lips and tongues of the Apostles, even today the Holy Ghost works through the ministers that have been called by the Lord God and have received the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands. The called ministers of the Lord + Jesus also bear witness of the works of the Lord + Jesus.

This is how one can tell a false preacher from a pure preacher of the Word of the Lord. If minister is preaching about you—how to better yourself, putting the focus on your works, making your salvation dependent upon how good of a person you are—than that minister is a false preacher. The pure preacher of the Word of God always directs our faith away from our works to the works and merits of the Christ. He is the only One Who has perfectly fulfilled the Law of God. Even when we try our best; even when we succeed in keeping the Law of God, it is not enough. We are still filled with the sin of Adam—the original sin—that inheres in our nature and has fully corrupted us so that no amount of good works can atone for it. For this reason, we deserve the Lord God's eternal wrath and displeasure. We are indeed worthy of all the bad things that happen to us in this life.

When someone asks, “Why is this happening to me?”, referring to some traumatic thing

happening in his life, the answer is always because of sin. He has both committed abundant sins through his thoughts, his words, and his actions, and he is filled with original sin; the sin that not only corrupts him, but the entire world. It is backwards to think that we do not deserve the bad things in our life. It is those things that we deserve, and the good things in life are what we truly do not deserve. We are worthy of none of the things which we possess. That bad things happen to us is not an example of the Lord God's neglect of us. It should rather surprise us daily that the Lord God grants to us to have any good thing. This is an example of His grace and mercy toward us. He does not treat us the way we deserve and gives us abundantly of His gifts out of His great love for us, even though we sin daily and often.

This is why the minister of the Lord + Jesus is tasked with pointing us to the Christ. The pure preacher of the Word of God shows us our sin, that we are unable to save ourselves by our own works. Any preaching of the Gospel which includes mankind's works—which includes our works—is no Gospel at all. For any Gospel which does not give us only the Lord + Jesus is no Gospel at all. It is only through the Christ, our Lord + Jesus that we have salvation. Even those who credit salvation to the Lord + Jesus, and then add our works to that have destroyed the Gospel. Our works do not merit salvation. To say that Christ saves, and then to say that we must complete that somehow with our works has destroyed the Gospel, for it leaves us to doubt whether or not we have done enough works to finish our salvation. This will only lead us into despair, for we feel like we can never achieve a perfect Christian life, or it will drive us into pride, because we are deceived into thinking that we are living a perfect Christian life. Such things deny the corruption that fills us on account of the original sin of Adam that inheres in our very nature.

This is why it is important for us to know when to close our mouths, stop speaking, and open our ears, and hear what the Lord + Jesus has to say to us. This is why the minister preaches a sermon. We are to open our ears to hear what has to say intently, because he is speaking on behalf of the Lord + Jesus. He is proclaiming what the Lord + Jesus wants us to hear. It is the ideal time for us to close our mouths and open our ears to hear what the Lord + Jesus would have us hear. For the minister is bearing witness of the things which the Lord + Jesus has done for us poor sinners. The minister may ask questions during the sermon, but those questions are rhetorical questions, they are meant to evoke a response in our minds, but not one with our mouths. That is what this whole Sunday is about: hearing.

The name of this Sunday is called Exaudi. It is from the first word of the Introit antiphon, "Hear O Lord, when I cry with my voice." This may make it seem at first like we are to beg the Lord God to hear us, but the second verse answers the first. For in the second verse, it was the Lord God Who began the conversation. He says, "Seek My face." He is telling us to look to Him; to find salvation in Him. He is telling us to look away from our works to the things that He has done on our behalf. When we seek His face, we are seeking to be in His presence. We are seeking to be with Him and receive His wonderful gifts.

The verse continues with the Psalmist saying that his heart instructed him to seek the Lord's face. The heart is full of corruption, so how can it tell us to seek the Lord's face? This is speaking about faith. The heart is the place where faith resides. Faith removes the corruption of the heart, for it seeks not its own favors or grace through its own strivings, but rather it seeks the grace of the Lord + Jesus, and His works and merits. Our heart of faith tells us to seek the Lord + Jesus; to look to His works and merits, and not to our own. Our heart of faith bears witness to the salvation found in the Lord + Jesus alone. The faith in our hearts desires to find salvation in the Lord + Jesus alone. Filled with faith the heart can then say, "Hear O Lord, when I cry with my voice" for it has already heard the Lord speak to it. We can only respond with faith, after our Lord God has called us by the Gospel. Only after the Holy Ghost has convicted our hearts of our sinfulness can we rejoice in what our Lord + Jesus has done for us. For if we continue to cling to our works in any small way, we cannot fully trust and rely on the works of the Christ; we have replaced Him even in a small way.

This is why today the Lord God calls us to close our mouths and open our ears, and to hear. He calls us to hear the one who bears witness of Him and Him alone; the one who tells us that salvation is not found in what we do or say or think, neither is our punishment found in what we say or do or think, for our punishment was meted out upon the Lord + Jesus. He fulfilled the Law perfectly for us, and then offered up His innocent life as a ransom for us on the tree of the holy cross. He bore our punishment in His flesh. He suffered and died so that we will never taste death. He calls us to hear this wonderful news through His Holy Ghost Who was sent to bear witness to us of the works that our Lord + Jesus did on our behalf.

The Holy Ghost also bears witness that just as our Lord + Jesus ascended into Heaven to prepare a place for us, we will one day be called into that eternal home which He has prepared for us. Until that day we have an advocate with the heavenly Father. For our Lord + Jesus intercedes on our behalf to the heavenly Father showing Him that He has completed all things necessary for our salvation, so that when we fail in our keeping of the Law, the works and merits of the Christ stand in our place. This is why we need to daily heed the voice of the Holy Ghost who convicts us of our sins, and leads us into contrition, so that in faith we may repent and turn rather to the sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus on our behalf. He opens our ears to hear daily that our Lord + Jesus has won for us salvation. Let us therefore, my dear friends, seek His face daily, for in Him is life and salvation, and He hears our cries for mercy and grants it to us abundantly. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, Who hast given us commandment to pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost, most heartily we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Advocate, to grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may quicken our hearts by Thy saving Word, and lead us into all truth, that He may guide, instruct, enlighten, govern, comfort, and sanctify us unto everlasting life; through the same, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*