

Cantate
St. John 16:5-15
May 2nd, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

But Now I Go Away

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 God, the Father of Lights, from Whom cometh down every good and perfect gift, and Who art Thyself the only satisfying portion of the souls which Thou hast made. Grant us grace we beseech Thee, to raise our thoughts and affections from Earth to Heaven and to desire continually Thy presence, that so, in the midst of all worldly vanity and change, our hearts may surely there be fixed where alone are to be found true joys and everlasting peace; through Jesus Christ, 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.

Our enemies—the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh—never stop attacking us. They are constantly seeking our demise. They want to either corrupt our faith, or take it from us completely. The devil uses the world and our sinful flesh to lead us into either self-righteous pride, like the Pharisees, or into hopeless despair, like with Judas Iscariot. The devil has been doing this to mankind ever since he confronted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He deceived Eve into thinking that the fruit from the forbidden tree would be to her benefit—she would know good and evil—and her husband, Adam, who was with her, did nothing to stop her, but joined her in sin willingly. These attacks of our enemies have continued through the centuries, and we are still being attacked daily in this life and world.

This is shown us by the history of the Church. One of the first things to happen in the Church that shows that our enemies are always around us seeking our demise, is that within the Church, false teachings began to appear. Some of the first corruptions of teaching that occurred are revealed in holy Scriptures. There were the Judaizing Christians, who taught that in order for a person to be a true Christian he needed to keep the Jewish laws and practices. The one that was put forth the most was the practice of circumcision. There were false teachers who taught that in order for someone to be a true Christian, he needed to be circumcised. The Church countered this by teaching the truth that Holy Baptism is the fulfillment of circumcision, and therefore it is no longer necessary for salvation.

One of the false teachers that arose in the Church, and is considered by the Early Church to be the first heretic, was Simon Magus. He was a magician who became a Christian, but clearly, he was a false Christian, for when he observed St. Peter performing a miracle, he thought he could purchase this gift of the Holy Ghost with money. He was not really concerned about helping those who needed help, but was driven more by greed for power and fame. St. Peter saw through his deception and rebuked him and his falsehood.

The false teaching of the Judaizing Christians, and the actions of false teacher Simon Magus, were shown to be false by the working of the Holy Ghost through the pure Word of God. That the

Church remained pure in her teaching was a guidance of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. He is the One Who leads the Church into all truth. He is the One Who leads us into all truth. The Holy Ghost is the One Who shows us daily the lies and deceptions of our enemies. He points out the ways and means which the devil uses the world and our sinful flesh to deceive us and mislead us into great sin and shame. This has been the task of the Holy Ghost from the beginning.

It is because we are constantly under attack by our enemies—and our Lord + Jesus knew this would be the case—that He sent His Holy Ghost, His Comforter, to us to guide us into all truth. In the Upper Room on the night of His betrayal and arrest; the night before His suffering, crucifixion and death, our Lord + Jesus tells His Apostles that He would send them a Comforter. He is looking out for His Bride, the Church, even as He prepares for His own death. It is how He prepares for His death, by helping His Church in the midst of her enemies.

The Church would know much sorrow. The Apostles would be filled with sorrow over their Lord's death and burial. The Holy Ghost is sent to us so that our sorrow might be turned into joy. We can sing with joy in the midst of the trials and temptations of this world—where our enemies constantly seek our demise—because the Holy Ghost comforts us with the truth of the pure Gospel of our Lord + Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost instructs us in the truth. He shows us through the means of grace, that our Lord + Jesus may have gone away, but He has never truly left us. He continues to put before our eyes the means by which He saved us from sin, death and the power of the devil.

The Holy Ghost uses the pure preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments to show us that our Lord + Jesus accomplished all things for our salvation. He perfectly fulfilled the Law of God, and He paid the penalty of our sins on the tree trunk of the holy cross by offering up His innocent life as a ransom for us poor sinners. The Holy Ghost, our Comforter in all times of trial and temptation, continues to put the pure Gospel before us, so that we are not led into self-righteous pride like the Pharisees, or led into hopeless despair like Judas Iscariot, but by the pure preaching of the Word of God we are shown that our salvation is found in the works and merits of the Christ, our Lord + Jesus. We can rejoice and sing, because our sinful actions have been covered over by the works and merits of the Christ.

We bear the righteousness of the Christ. We are clothed with His righteousness through the waters of Holy Baptism. And we are declared righteous on account of the sufferings of the Christ when the pastor pronounces unto us that our sins are forgiven in the absolution. Our hunger and thirst for righteousness in this world full of sin, is satisfied by the Body and Blood of our Lord + Jesus in bread and wine. He feeds us and quenches our thirst for righteousness by taking us to His crucifixion and death whenever we gather around this altar and receive from Him forgiveness, life and salvation from His throne of grace. The Holy Ghost reminds us constantly through these means that our Lord + Jesus may have gone away into Heaven to sit on the right hand of the Father and will come again to judge the quick and the dead, but He has never left us. Our Lord + Jesus continues to be with us in the means through which His Holy Ghost works.

We find comfort from the Holy Ghost even from each other. Whenever two or three are gathered together in the Lord's Name, the Holy Ghost teaches us that the Church still exists, that our Lord still loves us, that He is with all of us who gather together today. Wherever a pastor and a hearer, or hearers, are gathered, we know that our enemies have not gained the victory over the Church. That we are gathered here today is proof that our enemies cannot defeat us. They may spread their false teachings in the world through their false teachers, but where two or three are gathered together around the pure preaching of the Gospel, and rightly administer the Blessed Sacraments according to our Lord's institution, there we know that the Church has not been defeated by her enemies. Here in this place, we know that the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh have not defeated us.

We may find ourselves bloodied and wounded on some days when our sinful flesh leads us into temptation. We may find ourselves wearied from the battle when we daily face the trials and tribulations of this life in this world. We may be led into the false deception that our Lord + Jesus has gone away from us for good. But, my dear friends, the Holy Ghost, our Comforter, opens up our ears to hear the promises of the Gospel, that our Lord + Jesus has never left us nor forsaken us. He is always with us. He is here with us in this place to give to us the gifts He won for us on the cross. That is why in this world in which we are surrounded by our enemies, it is vital that we come to this place to find strength and comfort through the working of the Holy Ghost. Here in this place the Holy Ghost strengthens and sustains our faith in the promises of our Lord + Jesus. It is in the place where we meet our Lord + Jesus, and we gather with other Christians to meet our Lord + Jesus and receive His gifts.

It is here in this place where we see that our enemies have been defeated by our Lord's sacrifice for His Bride, the Church, on the tree trunk of the holy cross. The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh have lost the war, we are victorious through our Lord + Jesus' works and merits. And because this is the truth that the Holy Ghost leads us into, we can rejoice and sing our Lord's praise. The Holy Ghost, our Comforter, fills our ears with the Gospel of our Lord + Jesus Christ, we give Him thanks and praise for our salvation through the prayers we offer up to Him, and through the Liturgy we sing of His glorious works and merits, and rejoice that these have been offered to us freely for His sake, for our redemption.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not listen to or fear the false teachings of those in this world who would lead men astray by their deceptive lies. For our Lord + Jesus knows that these enemies exist in our lives and in this world, and He has therefore sent to us His Holy Ghost to lead us into all truth. He has gone away into Heaven to prepare a place for us, but He has not left us alone. He has sent His Comforter, our Comforter, into the world to lead us into all truth, and keep us in the one, true faith, until our Lord + Jesus calls us into our eternal home in Heaven. There we will sing His praise for all eternity, as we rejoice that He has preserved us in the one, true faith by His Holy Ghost. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Send, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, Thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, that He may rule and direct us according to Thy will, comfort us in all our temptations and afflictions, defend us from all error, and lead us into all truth, that we, being steadfast in the faith, may increase in love and in all good works, and in the end obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, 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!