

The Third Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 15:1-10
June 20th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Myrtle Beach, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

There Is Joy in the Presence of the Angels

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 Lord, strong to deliver and mighty to save, Who hast been the Refuge and Dwelling-place of Thy people in all generations, fulfill and perfect in us, we beseech Thee, the work of Thy grace, and be pleased to confirm us in every good purpose and deed, that, having been called into the way of righteousness, we may have power to continue steadfastly in the same until the day of Jesus Christ to Whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and praise, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Self-righteous people always think that their righteousness is better than other people's. They constantly look down on other people considering their own works to be far superior to most any other person. This is the danger of trusting in our good works; of thinking our keeping of the Ten Commandments somehow makes us worthy of praise. Most people seek praise for their good deeds from their fellow man; patting themselves on their backs for all the good things that they have done for other people. Even more people seek praise from the Lord God for their good works; for how righteous they are. These people err greatly. For our works do not merit us any praise from a perfect Lord God. Sinful man, no matter how glorious and grand his works are in this life, cannot expect praise from a perfect, holy and sinless Lord God.

The Pharisees and scribes were such men. They praised themselves, and each other, for how good they obeyed the Law of God. Those that did not live up to their standards—who did not perform the works of supererogation that they had established over and above what the Lord God had given them through Moses—were considered by them to be unworthy of any praise. So, in today's reading from the Evangelist St. Luke we see the Pharisees and scribes complaining against our Lord + Jesus because He had the nerve to receive sinners and eat with them.

This is the way of things, and it has not changed even in our day. The righteous, those who are so filled with how great of a person they are, have no need of the Lord + Jesus; they have no need of a Savior. Why would they? They have it in their minds that how they are living is worthy of the praise of both man and the Lord God. They do not see how fully sin has corrupted their flesh. They do not see that there is no good thing living in them. They do not see that their works avail for nothing toward their salvation. They are too busy looking down on other people and their failures to consider how much they need to repent of their self-righteousness.

On the other hand, the penitent, know how little they are able to keep the Law of God. While the Pharisees and scribes complained against the Lord + Jesus, the tax collectors and sinners draw near to the Lord. They come to Him because He preaches repentance toward the forgiveness of sins. That is, our Lord + Jesus tells us that those who repent of their sins; who turn away from their works and cling in faith to His works and merits will have exactly what they seek—the forgiveness of sins. The tax collectors and sinners drew near to the Lord + Jesus because after hearing His Word they realized that salvation was found in Him. There was forgiveness for all the sins which weighed them down found in Lord + Jesus.

The same is true for us today. Our works do not deserve the praise of mankind. They especially do not deserve the praise of the Lord God. But the perfect, sinless and holy works of the Lord + Jesus, Who perfectly fulfilled the Law of God, is alone worthy to receive all honor, glory, and praise from all creation. Those who are weighed down with guilt and shame over their sins, draw near to our Lord + Jesus to hear Him. They come to hear that forgiveness is found in His works and merits. We draw near to the Lord + Jesus to hear that He has forgiven our sins. He has suffered and died for us. He has taken upon Himself our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. He offers up His life as a ransom for us. We who live under the Law and the knowledge that we cannot redeem ourselves by the works of the Law, cling in faith to our Lord's works and merits. For in Him alone is salvation to be found.

Therefore, sinners and tax collectors draw near to our Lord + Jesus. He eats with them because of His great love and compassion for sinners. He eats with them because they repent of their sins. Make no mistake, our Lord + Jesus did not receive and eat with sinners to confirm them in their sinfulness. He did not ignore their sins. He received them and ate with them, because they desired to no longer be weighed down by their sins. They desired to be free from their sinfulness. In short, our Lord + Jesus received sinners and tax collectors, and ate with them, because they repented of their sins.

The self-righteous, seeing no need to repent of their sins because they believe their own works are worthy of praise, have no desire to receive or eat with those they consider to be "sinners." The Pharisees and scribes live in impenitence, and trust in their own works. The tax collectors and sinners are sorry for their sins and wish to live better lives trust in the Lord + Jesus and His works and merits. Those who trust in their own works are worthy of no praise, even though they often get it from their fellow man. Our Lord + Jesus tells us that those who repent of their sins are worthy of praise. In fact, there is joy in the presence of the angels of the Lord God over one sinner who repents.

When a sinner repents the whole host of Heaven sings in joyous chorus. There is more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. The Heavens praise those who repent. As we learn in the Small Catechism, repentance embraces two parts: the first is that we have contrition, that is, we are sorry for our sins. The second part is that we turn away from our works, and our trust in them, and cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus and His works and merits. The repentant—those who are sorry for their sins and cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus—are worthy of songs of praise from the angels who are in the presence of the Lord God. There is joy in the presence of the angels of the Lord God over us poor, miserable sinners, for we have humbled ourselves and confessed our sins. We who are sorry for our sins, find the angels of Heaven rejoicing over us. For through contrition and faith, we have been brought back into the sheep pen of the Lord God.

That which was lost has been found. The sheep that went astray, has been brought back into the fold of the Church. The precious coin that was lost, has been found. There is much cause for rejoicing over sinners who repent. This is why we gather in this place. We poor, miserable sinners gather in this place to rejoice with one another that we have been brought back into the sheepfold and have been placed back into the treasury of Heaven. We who have been lost to sin, have been found

and have been cleansed of all of our sins. We rejoice together in this place for like the tax collectors and sinners in today's Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke, we draw near in this place to hear our Lord + Jesus. We draw near to Him to hear how He has redeemed us by perfectly fulfilling the Law which we are unable to keep, and to hear from Him how He has sacrificed Himself to buy us back from sin, death and the power of the devil. In this place He guards and protects us from our enemies of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh by the working of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace.

He has gone out into the wilderness—this world filled with sin—and called us out of darkness into His marvelous light through the pure preaching of the Word of God. He has convicted us of our sins through the work of the Holy Ghost, and we have repented and we cling to Him in faith. He has swept the house of this world through the preaching of the Law and convicted us our many sins and transgressions. He has brought us—the penitent—into His sheepfold and placed us back into His treasury because on account of His great love and compassion He desires to receive such sinners as we are. He not only receives us and desires to preach forgiveness into our ears, but He also desires to eat with us.

Our Lord + Jesus ate with the sinners and tax collectors who He had received. He eats with us, too. He shares with us His true and substantial Body and Blood in bread and wine. We come to this altar and kneel in repentance and receive from Him forgiveness, life and salvation in this blessed meal. He desires to eat with us. He desires to forgive us of our sins. We cling to Him in faith and receive His meal and His forgiveness. Therefore, my dear friends, let us repent of our self-righteousness. Let us not be like the Pharisees and scribes who looked down on those who did not live the holy life that they thought they lived. Rather, let us in humble repentance, continue to cling in faith to our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ. For in Him is life and salvation.

Let us rejoice this day that we have been found, and that we have been forgiven. For even as we rejoice here on Earth this day, there is joy in the presence of the angels of the Lord God over all of us who repent. Thanks be to God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

O Gracious Lord Jesus Christ, Who camest into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, and art not ashamed of the company of sinners, we thank Thee for Thy goodness, and beseech Thee, grant that we may daily be found walking in sincere repentance, and there be joy in Heaven over every sinner that repenteth; for Thy Name's sake, Who livest and reignest with The Father 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!