

The Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. John 4:46b-54
October 24th, 2021
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Myrtle Beach, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

There Was a Certain Nobleman

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty and most merciful God, whose name is a strong tower, into which the righteous runneth and is safe, lift up the standard of Thy Spirit, we beseech Thee, against the power of the enemy coming in upon us like a flood, and clothe us with the full armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, that we may be able to fight manfully the good fight of faith, and so finish our course with joy, in the great day when Christ, the righteous Judge, shall appear, 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.

Last week we heard from our Lord + Jesus in the last week before His death and resurrection. This week we hear from our Lord + Jesus just after He began His earthly mission. The events from the Gospel of the Apostle and Evangelist St. John are the second miracle that our Lord + Jesus performed on Earth. The first being the turning of water into wine at the Wedding of Cana. These events are the first instances of faith in our Lord + Jesus being seen among those who witness the miracles of our Lord + Jesus. The main theme of this Gospel reading is faith. In the instance of the certain nobleman, he and his whole household believed when they saw that the Lord + Jesus healed his dying son just by His word.

Faith is an important thing for all Christians. It is through faith that we are justified, that is, made right with the Lord God. We are prone to think that having and maintaining faith is an easy thing. However, this Gospel reading shows us an example of how our faith can be challenged. In the Epistle reading for today, St. Paul in his Epistle to the Church at Ephesus encourages them to “put on the whole armor of God.” Why do Christians need armor? When is armor typically used? Armor is used to protect against physical assaults. The armor protects one’s body from physical attacks. The attacks that Christians receive, however, are spiritual attacks. We are attacked relentlessly by the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. We are attacked constantly by our enemies. Their main objective is to attack our faith. They do not want us clinging in faith and trust to the Lord God. They want us either filled with despair over our lot in life, or puffed up with pride in our own abilities to conquer the trials that come our way.

This is why we need to constantly to be clothed with our protective armor. Our armor is spiritual. This means that it is placed upon us—is worn by us—through spiritual means. When we are engaged continuously in prayer and study of God’s Word, when we are diligent in attending the house of the Lord God to gather with other Christians to hear the Word of the Lord God, especially the promises that are preached from the pulpit which proclaim that we have forgiveness, life and salvation in the works and merits of the Lord + Jesus, we are preparing for the battle by putting on our armor. As St. Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus, our battle is not against earthly kings and princes, but our battle is

against all the spiritual evils in this world. And all those spiritual evils are constantly surrounding us in order to take away from us the one thing that justifies us before the heavenly Father: our faith.

The Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John gives us an example of this battle with the evil spiritual powers in this certain nobleman. This man's son is sick and is at the point of death. His faith in the Lord God is challenged by this. Then he hears of a man from Nazareth named + Jesus Who had miraculously turned water into wine in Cana. In this he finds hope, and he goes to the Lord + Jesus and implores Him to come down and heal his son so that he might live. Our Lord, seeing this man's struggle with his faith in the Lord God, rescues him from his unbelief. Our Lord tells him that men only believe when they see signs and wonders. What our Lord + Jesus is really telling this certain nobleman, is not to trust in the signs and wonders, but in the One Who is doing them.

The nobleman's response of "Sir, come down before my child dies!" is an acknowledgement that he is placing his trust in the Lord + Jesus and not just some miracle. Our Lord + Jesus then confirms this man's faith by declaring to him the promise of life for his son. Our Lord has given this man something in which he can grasp onto with faith. He has given him the promise of healing for his son. He believes the promise of the Lord + Jesus and goes home and finds it just as the Lord + Jesus promised. His son was healed at the very hour when the Lord + Jesus declared that his son lives. Now he not only had the promise of life for his son, but he had his living son as a testimony to the promise of the Lord + Jesus. He and his whole household now clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus. They could see His works and merits accomplished in the son that now lives.

The evil spiritual powers had sought to throw him and his whole family into despair over the loss of his son. But our Lord + Jesus destroys the power of the evil spiritual realm by supplying the whole household with Someone in which they can cling to in faith. They now believed that the Lord God had power over death, and could restore life. They now possessed a firm belief in the resurrection of the dead. They now believed that the Lord + Jesus was the Lord of life, sent to conquer death and sin. This was all accomplished by the Word of the Lord + Jesus. This faith was strengthened by the promise of life from the lips of the Lord + Jesus.

We also have this same promise. Indeed, we have all the promises of our Lord + Jesus preached continuously into our ears. When the evil spiritual powers threaten to destroy our faith by either leading us into despair or pride, we have the Word of God as our armor and protection. This is why we need to constantly be attending to our armor, so that it does not fail. When we neglect prayer and study of the Lord God's Word, we are playing with fire. We are allowing our spiritual enemies a way to steal away our faith and trust in the promises of the Lord + Jesus. This is why we need to attend to our armor daily and often, because we are attacked daily and often by sin, death, and the devil. We are constantly being tempted with sin. This is why we pray daily and often in the Lord's Prayer that the Lord God would not allow us to fall into temptation. We pray, "Lead us not into temptation" so that we may not fall into temptation and succumb to the attacks of the evil spiritual powers.

Like the certain nobleman from the Gospel reading today who was given something to which he could cling to in faith, we too are given something to which our faith may cling. We are given the cross of our Lord + Jesus. The certain nobleman and his family would have a physical reminder of the promise of life and resurrection from the dead in the son that was delivered from his deathbed. We have the physical reminder of our Lord's crucifixion and death as the means by which our sins, and the sins of the whole world, have been atoned for. Those who cling in faith to the death of the Lord + Jesus—to His innocent suffering and death on our behalf—have the promise of forgiveness, life and salvation given to them on account to their faith. All those who believe on the Lord + Jesus are justified.

And just like the certain nobleman whose son was restored to him alive, the Only-Begotten Son of the heavenly Father is also restored to life from death after three days in the grave. Our faith can

cling to this work of our Lord + Jesus Who raised Himself from the dead, to give us all the promise of life eternal and the resurrection of the dead. This sign and wonder of our Lord's death and resurrection certainly gives us something in which to confirm our faith, but like the nobleman and his whole family, our faith clings to the One Who performed this great sign and wonder. We cling in faith the Man + Jesus, the very Son of God, Who has come into this world to redeem us poor, miserable sinners from the power of our enemies.

He has come to redeem us with His perfect life and willing sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross, and He has sent to us His Holy Ghost to keep us in the One, True faith in His holy, Christian Church. Here in this place, the Holy Ghost places upon us and preserves upon us the armor that protects our faith from the evil spirits who would have it destroyed. Through the Word of God, we are preserved in the One, True faith, so that we, and the whole household of the family of God—the Church, may believe on the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, and be saved. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty and everlasting God, who, by Thy Son, hast promised us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life: we beseech Thee so to rule and govern our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit that in our daily need, and especially in all time of temptation, we may seek help from Him, and by a true and lively faith in Thy Word obtain the same; through 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!