

Midweek Lenten Vespers 4
St. John 6:36-51
March 30th, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I Will Raise Him Up at the Last Day

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, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

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

Our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, says in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John three times, "I will raise him up at the last day." This repetition serves to drive home the point. All those who believe on Him will be raised again from death on the Last Day. We will be rescued from death eternally. We will live with Him and all the other saints, and the angels in Heaven, forever. We shall never see nor taste death, as our Lord said last Wednesday. This is the promise that our Lord + Jesus makes for all those who believe on Him; who cling to Him in faith.

We are given this faith through the meal in which we eat His Body and drink His Blood. In this meal, in which our Lord gives Himself to us through the means of bread and wine, we are sustained in faith toward Him and in fervent love for one another. This meal bestows both faith and love to us poor, miserable sinners. This is why we eat this meal often for it is our spiritual food. It is our spiritual medicine that cleanses us from all of our sins and trespasses. We receive forgiveness and remission of our sins when we eat our Lord's Body and drink His Blood.

And this body full of sin needs this meal very often to drive out sin from us. When we forsake this Supper, we do our souls no good. For we are surrounded by sin and death. It is all around us in our daily lives, and it is inside of us corrupting our very nature. This meal restores our faith in the Christ, and drives us out of ourselves to trust in the Lord + Jesus and not in ourselves. On our own, by our own works and merits—to which many people in the world cling to—we will inherit only eternal pain and suffering. The way of works righteousness leads only into more sin and death.

St. Peter in his Second Epistle, the First Chapter, writes about this. Faith produces good works. Those who diligently strengthen their faith by receiving the means of grace in which the Holy Ghost creates and sustains in us faith, will add to that faith the other gifts that the Holy Ghost gives through these means of grace. St. Peter tells us that we will receive virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. All of these things are products of faith. They are all good works that are produced through faith. These are all given to us through our eating and drinking our Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine, as often as we can in remembrance of His suffering and death.

When we remember His suffering and death on our behalf; when we consider the things He

endured to rescue us from sin, death and the power of the devil, we cannot look at our own works and think that they will compare to our Lord's once and for all time sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross for us. He did what we are incapable of doing. He suffered and died for us as an innocent victim—an innocent and pure sacrifice—for us. We receive the benefits of this meal—the rewards He won for us by His death—whenever we gather at this altar to eat His Body and drink His Blood. In this meal He freely and abundantly gives to us forgiveness of our sins. He cleanses us of our sins through this meal. He covers over our sins through this meal. This is why we are exhorted every time we have the Lord's Supper to come to this holy altar and receive our Lord's forgiveness that He offers us in this meal. For forgiveness is freely given to all who participate in faith.

We receive forgiveness because on account of faith we believe that we do indeed receive our Lord's true and substantial Body and Blood in bread and wine. He gives us His Body and Blood, and through it we receive forgiveness of our sins. Wherever there is forgiveness of sins, there are also eternal life and salvation from our enemies. As our Lord said to the Jews in today's Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, whoever eats His flesh He will raise again at the Last Day. He is the Bread of Life. Whoever eats this bread shall not die.

In the wilderness, when Moses and the rest of the Israelites wandered for forty years they were fed with bread from Heaven; they were fed by the Lord God with manna from Heaven. Those who accepted the Lord's gift from Heaven, ate and did not die. They were physically sustained through the wandering in the wilderness for forty years. This manna, this bread from Heaven, was a foreshadowing of the true Bread from Heaven, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. He is the true Bread from Heaven. For His flesh is truly meat, and His blood is truly drink. He gave His flesh and blood on the tree of the holy cross for the life of the whole world. By His offering as a sacrifice His perfect, sinless flesh and blood He atones for the sins of the whole world.

The flesh and blood that He sacrificed on the tree of the holy cross for the atonement of the whole world, we remember and proclaim whenever we gather at this altar and eat His Body and Blood given in wine. We do not eat His flesh and drink His blood in a Capernaite way. We eat His Body and Blood in a sacramental way. The flesh and blood that our Lord talks about in this chapter of St. John is the flesh that He offers on the holy cross. Our meal is a remembrance of His sacrifice of His flesh and blood. We eat His Body and drink His Blood in bread and wine to receive the forgiveness that He won for us by His once and for all time sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross. All those who cling to Him and faith, and faithfully come to this altar to receive His Body and Blood, will be raised again on the Last Day.

For He who eats this Supper of our Lord does exactly as St. Peter exhorts in his Second Epistle. He is even more diligent to make his call and election sure. In other words, when we gather at this altar to receive our Bread of Life, we are strengthening our faith in Him. Therefore, we should not neglect its use when it is freely, and often, offered to us. For through this meal, we are supplied abundantly with an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ. All of us who kneel at this altar to receive our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine will be raised again on the Last Day on account of the faith in our Lord's sacrifice on our behalf which the Holy Ghost created in us through this holy meal.

Therefore, my dear friends, I exhort you to come to Supper of our Lord often, and receive His Body and Blood that removes your sins, and offers eternal life to you. For when we examine ourselves, we will find nothing in us but only sin and death in which we can in no wise free ourselves. But in the Lord + Jesus we find a means of eternal salvation. He will raise us again from death on the Last Day and give to all those who cling to Him in faith a new and glorious body. For in this bread, which is our Lord's Body, and in this wine, which is our Lord's Blood, we are given freely forgiveness, life and salvation. Our Lord + Jesus—the Bread of Life—came down from Heaven to our Savior. The manna in

the wilderness sustained the physical bodies of the Israelites. Our Lord + Jesus in His Body and Blood sustains all those who eat and drink them in bread and wine our spiritual bodies which He will raise again from death on the Last Day. Our Lord + Jesus repeated three times to His hearers in today's Gospel reading, so that we might hear it repeated and believe that what He said is true. For most assuredly he who clings to the promises of the Lord + Jesus will inherit eternal life in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!