

Midweek Lenten Vespers 5  
St. Matthew 10:32-42  
April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## He Who Receives Me

*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.

The words that our Lord + Jesus speaks to us tonight from the Gospel of the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew are addressed to His twelve Apostles. These words He speaks are part of a speech He gives before He sends them out in order to heal the people of Israel from unclean spirits, and all their sicknesses and diseases. They were also supposed to preach only to the lost house of Israel that “the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.” In preparing His twelve Apostles for this task, He explains to them that they will be treated just as He has been treated. If they called the Lord + Jesus “Beelzebub,” how much more will they be treated with contempt, for the student is not greater than his Teacher, and the servant is not greater than his Master.

He sends them out to learn to have faith and trust in Him. They were not supposed to bring anything with them; no money in their bag, no extra clothes or shoes. They were supposed to live off the graciousness of those who heard their preaching and believed on the Lord + Jesus. If they were brought before councils and synagogues by those who rejected the preaching, they were not supposed to worry or fret about what they should say, for the Holy Ghost would provide them with the necessary words to speak at the appropriate time. This was all done to teach them to trust in the Lord God, and to trust in the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord + Jesus.

Our Lord’s preparations for this sending out of His Apostles continues with today’s pericope. He assures them that even though the rejection of mankind would be directed at them, the rejection was ultimately aimed at our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. If they did not receive the Apostles, they did not receive the Lord + Jesus. If they did not receive the Son of God—the Lord + Jesus—they were also rejecting the heavenly Father. These are not soothing words for those who deny the Lord + Jesus—for unbelievers. They are, however, soothing and comforting words for us. For if we believe on the Lord + Jesus in our hearts, and confess with our mouths that He is the Lord, we receive the gifts that the Lord + Jesus gives that His Father in Heaven gave Him to give out. These words may have been spoken to the Apostles, but they are for the whole Christian Church—for all those who believe on the Lord + Jesus.

He who receives the Lord + Jesus, receives the One Who sent Him, the heavenly Father. A sword will be placed between those who receive the Lord + Jesus and those who deny Him. Our Lord does not bring peace but a sword. He brings the sword of the Word of God, which causes unbelievers

to deny Him, and believers to receive Him. Those who deny Him have no need of Him, because they dress themselves up in their own dead works. Those who receive Him rejoice that they are not judged according to their own poor, miserable, sinful works—their sinful thoughts, words and deeds—but they are judged according to the righteousness of the Son of the heavenly Father; they are judged according to His perfect fulfilling of the Law; they are judged according to the sacrifice that He made for them on the tree of the holy cross; they are judged according to the faith which clings to Him.

And make note, my dear friends, that the faith that is preached by our Lord + Jesus today, is not by some power in themselves—our faith is not something we have to drum up inside of ourselves in order to please the Lord God—no, faith is a gift of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace. The Holy Ghost gives to us faith, and continues to strengthen and preserve that faith through the preaching of the Word of God, and our reception of the Blessed Sacrament—through our daily living in our Holy Baptism, and our receiving of Absolution from the Pastor as from God Himself, and our reception of our Lord’s Body and Blood in bread and wine for the remission of our sins. Just as the Apostles needed not to worry about what they would say when they were hauled before councils and synagogues because the Holy Ghost would give them the words, the Holy Ghost also freely gives us the faith through the means of grace to believe on the Lord + Jesus.

This faith—this receiving of the Lord + Jesus—is not simply done in the heart, but it is also done with the mouth and lips and tongue. That which is in the heart is spoken with the mouth. One may wonder, “If I have faith in my heart, why do I need to speak it with my lips?” Just as the Lord + Jesus sent out the twelve Apostles in order to train them in faith toward Him—so that they might learn to trust Him solely—He wants to train us in faith, too. The hearts that learn to speak what is in them with their mouths are trained to boldly confess the Christ. The hearts that boldly confess the Christ, grows in abundant love and faith for the Lord + Jesus. When believers suffer for their confession, they are strengthened by the One Who suffered abundantly for all mankind. When we suffer as our Lord suffered, we are strengthened in the one, true, faith; we cling in faith to Him more fully, for we learn from the suffering that our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ is the only comfort and consolation in this world.

He is the soothing balm for poor, miserable sinners wracked with guilt and shame over their sins. They learn to receive Him in faith as the One Who fulfilled the Law on their behalf, covering over their damning sins. Those who receive Him with faith in the heart, and confess Him before men with their lips, know that any suffering they receive in this life does not compare even a little to the suffering that our Lord + Jesus endured on the tree of the holy cross, when He bore the Father’s wrath upon Him for the sins of all mankind for all of time. He endured our punishment so that we do not have to endure the pangs of Hell. When we suffer in this life, we feel a foretaste of the sufferings of Hell; only a shadow and part of what unbelievers endure for all of eternity. Our sufferings should drive us closer to our Lord, not only because we experience a part of His suffering, but because such sufferings remind us what is in store for all those who deny the Lord + Jesus.

The pangs of Hell should cause us to shudder with fear, it is only natural. Sadly, those who deny the Lord + Jesus do not shudder with fear at their eternal fate. This is why the Church has been sent out into the world, just like the Apostles were sent out to the lost house of Israel. We are sent out to the lost house of this world, and more specifically to the lost houses of those who live here and wherever we have planted a mission congregation. We are sent to proclaim the good news of what our Lord + Jesus has done for them, so that they might hear, repent of their denial, and believe on the Lord + Jesus in their hearts, and confess with their lips that the Lord + Jesus is the one, true Savior of the whole world, and especially of those who believe on Him. We are sent to proclaim the good news of our Lord so that people might learn to shudder with fear when they hear of the pangs of Hell.

The Church is also sent to remind people who shudder with fear over the sufferings of death and

Hell, that they need have no such fear. For our Lord + Jesus promises us today that we who have believed in our hearts by the gifting of the Holy Ghost, and who confess with the mouth through the working of the Holy Ghost, have received our Lord + Jesus as a Lord and Savior. He who receives the Lord + Jesus, has received the One Who sent Him. Those who have received our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ will surely never lose their reward. The reward that He has promised us is the forgiveness of our sins. He has promised us an eternal life with Him in Heaven. And He promises us that He will deliver and save us from all our spiritual enemies.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us rejoice in both our hearts and with our lips, and proclaim that the Lord + Jesus, Who fulfilled the Law which we broke, has suffered and died our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. Let us rejoice that we have been received by both our Lord and Savior, and by His heavenly Father, for our sins have been forgiven. The doors of Hell have been shut to us, and the gates of Heaven have been opened wide for us who cling to our Lord in faith. We who have the Lord + Jesus have no need to fear any trouble or woe, for our Lord + Jesus has already endured all trouble and woe on our behalf. Thanks be to God! 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!*