

Exaudi
St. John 15:26—16:4
May 29th, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Will Testify of 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:

Almighty God, Who hast given us commandment to pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost, most heartily we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Advocate, to grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may quicken our hearts by Thy saving Word, and lead us into all truth, that He may guide, instruct, enlighten, govern, comfort, and sanctify us unto everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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

Today marks the last Sunday of the Easter season. We have celebrated the Festival of the Ascension of the Lord on this past Thursday. Next Sunday we will celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. This Sunday which lies between these two festivals can almost seem like an afterthought; it can easily be looked over by some. However, Exaudi Sunday is an important step in our journey to the Feast of Pentecost and the gifting of the Holy Ghost. Remember that it was said at the beginning of the Easter season that the Gospel readings are the words of our Lord on the night of His arrest and trial. He was preparing His Apostles for His suffering and death. Part of this preparation was the promise that He would send to them the Comforter—the Helper—the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost would lead them into all truth. The Holy Ghost would testify of the Lord + Jesus; He would declare who and what truth is, by pointing all those who hear the Word of God, that the Lord + Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Exaudi Sunday is all about hearing. That is what Exaudi means, “to hear.” It does not, however, embrace a command. We are not given a command in the Propers to hear. We are rather led to express our desire that we should be able to hear. We want to hear what the Lord God would have us hear. We want to hear what the Holy Ghost would testify to us about. We want to hear that the Lord + Jesus is our Savior from sin and death. He suffered and died to atone for our sins on the tree of the holy cross. We want to hear all about what our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ has done for us.

We learn on this day between the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord, when our Lord + Jesus ascended into Heaven to take His throne upon which He intercedes for us to the heavenly Father, and upon which He will judge the quick and the dead on the Last Day, and between the Feast of Pentecost, where the Father and the Son, send forth to the Church—to us—the Holy Ghost, who will guide us into all truth, that even though the Lord + Jesus has ascended into Heaven, He has not abandoned us. He has promised that He will not leave us orphans, as we sang in the Gradual. He will return to us, and then our hearts will rejoice for our Savior will be there to take us to our eternal home in Heaven.

Exaudi Sunday is an important day, even though it gets lost between the two festivals. For on this day, we learn that we are not abandoned. On the Sunday between our Lord’s Ascension, and the Sunday when the Holy Ghost is gifted to us, we find ourselves in the same holding pattern that the

Apostles were in at the time of these events. They did as the Lord + Jesus commanded them to do. They waited in Jerusalem. They waited in the Upper Room, and daily met for prayer. They prayed that the Lord might hear them; might hear their cry for the Comforter, for the Helper, for the Holy Ghost, even as we sang in the Introit. We also want the Lord God to hear our cry for help. For our help, like the Apostles, is the Helper, the Holy Ghost. He is our Helper, because He opens our ears to hear the Word of God. He is our Comforter, because He comforts our troubled hearts with the promises that have been won by our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ.

He does this by opening our ears to hear the pure preaching of the Gospel. He testifies of the Lord + Jesus, so that we may believe on Him, and rejoice in our Savior from sin, death and the power of the devil. The promise of our Lord to send the Holy Ghost, the Helper, which He gave to the Apostles, is also a promise to the Church, to us. For where the Holy Ghost is, He is there working through the means of grace to enlighten our hearts. He is working through the means of grace to open our deaf ears, so that we might hear the good news of salvation found in our Lord + Jesus alone.

We are here today, because we want to hear. We have not come because of some demand, or command. We have come here in faith, knowing that this is the place where we can receive the gifts of the Lord God. We are here because we know that the means of grace are found in this place. There is no other way to receive the gifts of the Lord God. Only through the means of grace are we given the gifts which our Lord + Jesus won on the tree of the holy cross. Forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation are given to us through the means of grace. These are given to us through the working of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, the Helper and Comforter, guides, instructs, enlightens, governs, comforts, and sanctifies us through the means of grace.

These gifts can only be obtained here in this place. They can only be gifted where two or three are gathered together in the Lord's Name. We cannot obtain these gifts at home by ourselves. This is why Church is, and always has been, a community. It is a communion of saints, a community of believers gathered around Word and Sacrament to receive the gifts of the Lord + Jesus. A person cannot be a community by himself. We cannot be a part of a community if we are here where the community gathers. Now certainly, we have some unique situations that present challenges to gathering together as a community, but wherever the Word of God is located, and where at least two or three are gathered together in the Lord's Name, there is the Church. And where the Church is located, there is also the Helper, the Holy Ghost, to enlighten us with faith, and to strengthen our faith so that we might not despair over our sins, or be puffed up with pride over our righteousness.

We are led away from despair and pride because the Holy Ghost testifies of our Lord + Jesus. The Helper helps us by pointing out to us that our sins have been atoned for by the Lord + Jesus on the tree of the cross. He has forgiven us of all our sins by our participation in the means of grace, wherein we are declared righteous not for sake of our works, but solely for the works of the Christ. We learn from the Holy Ghost, that there is no righteousness in us, that can earn us merit enough to be considered righteous in and of ourselves.

Our righteousness is a gift from our Lord + Jesus, through the work of the Holy Ghost. He has testified of our Lord's works, that they are for us, that His work won for us forgiveness, life and salvation. This is of what our Helper testifies to us. The testimony of the Holy Ghost regarding our Lord and Savior also leads us to testify of our Lord and Savior, too.

The Lord + Jesus promised His Apostles on the night of His arrest and trial, that not only would the Spirit of Truth—the Holy Ghost—testify of Him, but they also would testify of the Lord + Jesus. They would be eyewitnesses of His death, resurrection, and ascension. They would be eyewitnesses of the gifting of the Holy Ghost. They would tell the whole world about what they had seen and heard. Many would believe and cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus. Today, we also continue to testify of the Lord +

Jesus, just as the Apostles did. For we have the same Holy Ghost, the same Helper and Comforter, that they had. We have the same means of grace that the Lord + Jesus instituted with His Apostles, and which they continued to use and teach to all those whom they brought into the holy, Christian and Apostolic Church.

This is why we continue to gather in this place. It is why we continue to gather in our Lord's Name in groups of as little as two or three, for the promise of the Lord + Jesus is that where two or three are gathered together in His Name, He is there in the midst of them. He is there, because His Holy Ghost is there handing out His means of grace; handing out forgiveness and life. This is our assurance that our Lord + Jesus has not left us as orphans; that He will return on the Last Day, and give us an eternal home in Heaven. When He comes again, our hearts will be filled with joy and rejoicing.

Until that day we are serious and watchful in our prayers that we might be filled with love for our fellow sinners. For we all cling in faith to our Lord + Jesus. We all struggle with sin daily, and daily to we desire be free from this body of sin. We desire daily that we might hear the Gospel—the healing balm to our sin-wearied souls—so that we might be strengthened in our faith. This is why, my dear friends, we should never neglect the gathering together in this place to hear the Word of God, for gathered together in our Lord's Name—in the Name that was placed upon us at our Holy Baptism—we can comfort one another with what our Lord + Jesus has done for us. We can testify of our Lord + Jesus, because the Holy Ghost has testified of Him to us through the means of grace.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us rejoice that we have heard about our Lord's salvation for us on the tree of the holy cross. May we continue to desire to hear that good news; that the Lord God would hear our cries to open our ears to hear His holy Word, wherein we are comforted and enlightened with all that our Lord + Jesus has done for us out of His great love for us. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee 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!