

Jubilate

St. John 16:16-23a

May 8th, 2022

Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC

Simpsonville, SC

St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC

Augusta, GA

Pastor Jerald Dulas

Your Sorrow Will Be Turned into Joy

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Merciful God, faithful Father, who chastenest all whom Thou lovest, that they may not be condemned with the wicked, we beseech Thee, Thou wouldst comfort us in our afflictions with Thy Word and Holy Spirit, that by patience we may overcome the miseries of this present world, in the firm and joyful hope that Thou wilt speedily turn our sorrow into joy and glory everlasting; for the sake of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, 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.

That bad things will happen to us in this life is without doubt. Many of us experience, or have experienced the trials and tribulations that this life places before us. The question that gets asked of the Church by the unbelieving world—and it is not really meant as a question, but as an accusation against the Lord God—is “If there is a loving God, why do bad things happen?” Many people are very adept at placing the blame on someone, or something, other than themselves. It must be all the other bad people out there causing a person grief. Or, it is because someone else is aggravating a person’s “mental health.” The excuses of the world, and sometimes sadly even ourselves, direct people away from the true problem. The problem is sin. Sin that exists in the world and corrupts the world and those in it is the problem. Sin that exists in us, and is the reason for the corruption that inheres in us is the problem.

It is easy to blame the Lord God, or other people, but the problem is because of who and what we are: we are poor, miserable sinners. When we understand that we are indeed poor, miserable sinners, we can readily see and understand that we deserve any trial or tribulation that comes our way. Indeed, we deserve so much more. That is what makes our Lord God such a loving and merciful God: He does not treat us the way that we deserve. He treated His Only-Begotten Son, our Lord + Jesus Christ, the way that we deserve to be treated. He suffered the pangs of Hell of which He was unworthy, and of which we so rightly deserved.

Therefore, my dear friends, when we endure trial and tribulation in this life, we ought to remember that we have earned such things by our sinful thoughts, words, and deeds; by what we think, say and do. We ought to remember that when things are the worst for us, that we deserve so much more than we are enduring at the moment. Unlike the unbelieving world that wants to blame the Lord God; wants to blame everything outside themselves, and drives them further away from the love and mercy of the Lord God, such things should drive us closer to Him. This is the purpose of such trials and tribulations. They are meant to lead us first into humility, which is a result of us realizing that our sins,

and sin in this world, is the root cause of all trial and tribulation. Trial and tribulation are meant to lead us into repentance.

The same is true of when we hear the Law of God preached into our ears. Many people bristle at the law. Nobody likes to be told they are in the wrong; that they are to blame. We are very quick to make the reason for our tribulation the fault of someone, or something, else. When we are confronted with our sin, we really can have only two responses. We can either ignore it, or confess it. Most people want to paint themselves in the best light possible. They want people to see them as the best person that can be. They especially bristle when the law is preached; when they are told that they are not the best person; that they are filled with sin and corruption.

The same is true of those who are the opposite; those who revel in their sinfulness; who love sin and sinning, especially when it is a particular sin in which they rejoice in flaunting before the world as something they want to be viewed as virtuous. They do not care that people see them in the best light. They are “rebels” (just like everyone else), and see their rebellion as virtuous. People who do not want to admit that they are sinners, will always cling to their sin as something virtuous. Many people will either make themselves look better than they are, or they will blame all the other people who will not accept them as the sinfully corrupt persons they are. Both groups lack humility. Both of them are rarely sorry for their sins. And even if they are driven into remorse by trial and tribulation, the moment passes quickly. They blame the Lord God, or us miserable Christians, and justify themselves in their own eyes.

This is not the way among us. We know we are sinners. We know we deserve the Lord God's righteous wrath and displeasure. We know that any trials or tribulations we endure in this life we deserve, and we know that we deserve so much more. Our greatest trial in this life and world of sin is being apart from our Lord and Savior. The greatest suffering us poor, miserable sinners must endure is same suffering that the Apostles would have to endure.

Our Lord + Jesus tells His Apostles on the night of His arrest and trial—the night in which these words from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John are recorded—that in a little while they would not see Him. Indeed, the next day He would suffer and die on the tree of the holy cross, and be dead and buried for three days. They would mourn His death; the One Who they believed to be the Messiah, the One sent from the Lord God to redeem His people. Their sorrow was turned into joy when He rose from the dead on the third day. He had conquered sin, death and the power of the devil, and showed all those who cling to Him in faith that there is life and salvation found in Him. There is eternal life and resurrection from the dead found in Him, for He has atoned for all of our sins, and the sins of the whole world. So that all those who believe on Him might have forgiveness, life and salvation.

Our Lord + Jesus on this night in the Upper Room with His Apostles the last time before His arrest, trial, suffering and death, prepares them for the upcoming events. These words of our Lord + Jesus are not read in the life of the Church prior to His death, however. We hear these words, and this exchange with the Lord and His Apostles continues for the next few Sundays, in the time before our Lord's Ascension to the right hand of the Father, and the time before He sends to us the Holy Ghost to be our Comforter and Guide in this life and world of sin. The Church hears these words as preparation for the time after our Lord's Ascension.

In a little while, the Apostles would see the Lord + Jesus ascend into Heaven, and they would not see Him again until they were called to their eternal home. These words are the promise of our Lord + Jesus that He has not forsaken us in this world filled with sin and corruption. These words are the promise of our Lord + Jesus that He is always with us, even to the end of the age. We may weep and lament, because we are separated from our Lord + Jesus. He is gone from us for only a little while, however. He will come again on the Last Day, and take us to our eternal home. He will call us out of our graves, and give us new and glorious bodies to live with Him and all the company of Heaven for all

eternity.

In this life we only get a foretaste of the joy that we will have when we get to Heaven. Only in this place—in the Church—do we get this foretaste. This is why we gather together as the Communion of Saints, as the Body of the Christ. We gather to share with one another the sorrows and laments to which this world, and our sinfulness, has subjected us. This world may cause us to weep and lament, but here in this place where we receive the gifts and promises of the Lord God, our sorrow is turned into joy. In this place we are reminded that all our sins have been paid for, and that through the means of grace we are given the gifts that the Lord + Jesus won for us. Through the means of grace which we receive in the Church the Holy Ghost grants to us forgiveness, life and salvation.

When sin and corruption in ourselves and in this world drive us to weep and lament; when we are driven into sorrow. Here where the promises and gifts of the Lord + Jesus are given to us cause us to rejoice and make a joyful shout to the Lord God, and sing out the honor of His Name. The consequences of sin—the trials and tribulations of this life—drive us into humility. When we humbly confess our sins, and seek the Lord God's forgiveness, He is there with His means of grace to grant us the forgiveness that we seek. This forgiveness fills us with joy, and dispels our sorrow.

Best of all, in this place, we hear the promise that the woes and sorrows of this life are only for a little while. Our Lord + Jesus will come again with power and great might, and call us to join Him in the heavenly realm which He has gone to in order to prepare for us an eternal home with Him in Heaven. There we will join with the whole company of Heaven, and sing His praise for all eternity. For He has redeemed us from sin and death; He has redeemed us from the power of the devil, and made us heirs of eternal life, and citizens of Heaven. Therefore, my dear friends, let our sorrows be turned into joy, for our Lord and Savior has redeemed us from our sins, by His own suffering and death on our behalf. Thanks be to God! 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 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!