

## Sermon for July 10,2022 – The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

This is one of those weeks when the words of my seminary professor ring in my ears. He would say to us often and sometimes scream at us “Preach the text, guys. Preach the text.” So, on a week like this when we search for something from the text nifty to preach to you, what we have to give you is really the text from Holy Scriptures. And the text is always and forever more than enough.

From Romans 8: 18-23 the apostle Paul speaks. And I should mention that it was Christ who sent Paul, one of the leaders of the Jews who persecuted early Christians – knocking him off the back of a horse and blinding him in order to stop him in his tracks. Christ taught Paul and sent him to the Gentiles(us) to preach and teach the law and the gospel.

So, it was Paul in our text who wrote to the Romans who were for the most part pagan, that the sufferings that he endured as a result of preaching and teaching the Gospel – things like beatings and jailings and cursing and mocking and hunger and thirst – those sort of things Paul considered not even worthy to be compared to the glory to come when God reveals His Glory in us. You see, all of creation awaits the day when God reveals his Glory in us and that we are His sons. Even the creation is subject to the results of sin which are death and destruction. But, even the creation is not subjected to death and destruction in futility and despair but are subjected in hope by the one who subjected it, even Christ Jesus our Lord. Our Resurrected Lord is the hope of all creation. Even and all of creation will be released from the bondage that the whole world is in because of the fall into sin.

Even and all of creation will be delivered from its fallen state into the “*glorious liberty of the children of God.*” Even creation has this hope. We see evidence of this now as “*the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs until now.*” We see creation straining at God's bits to break from its bonds and come into God's perfection as we experience storms and earthquakes and tidal waves and sinkholes and pandemics and all sorts of catastrophic events.

And not only creation groans, but we groan and yearn for the day when our bodies and souls live in perfection in God's new world to come. We groan and moan with pains of the body such as polio and covid and muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis and all sorts of physical failures. We suffer maladies of the soul such as depression and failures of the mind. We groan within ourselves over these things and wait for the days when our body and soul, having been redeemed by Christ will work in eternal perfection.

And now we go from the student , Paul, to the teacher, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who says:  
*36 Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.*

And how are we to be merciful?

*37 “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”*

For our Lord has forgiven us all things. He has forgiven us every sin and blasphemy. He has redeemed us from sin, death, and destruction “*not with gold or silver but with His Holy precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death.* “ God has done this forgiving in generous fashion, not stingily. He has poured out His love and forgiveness in overflowing fashion, not withholding anything. His Son has redeemed the world. His Son has authority to forgive all sin. And He forgives all who come to Him in faith seeking forgiveness.

And so what are we to do? We are to give and forgive in the same manner. Do not judge or condemn but forgive. When one confesses sin, we are to forgive. We are to even love our enemies. We are to forgive their sins. We are to be generous and kind.

But,we are not to look for sin in our brothers, meaning those in our lives. Would we “pick at” some small sin in someone else when we have sins in our lives that are even more pronounced. Just because our sin is “behind closed doors” doesn't mean that God does not know about it. Would we pick at the speck in our brother's eye when we have a plank in our eye? Surely not. God knows all. Forgive, love, be generous, and be kind as God has been to us.

So, there you have it for this week. Paul says that the Lord has sent his shepherds to tend you to give you faith by the power of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament. The Lord says all sins have been atoned for and forgiveness has been poured out on the world. So don't judge or condemn others (because God hasn't don't that), lest you yourself be judged and condemned. You have been given faith to believe that God's Son has redeemed the world and that those who believe in Him will be saved when He comes again. The faithful will go with Christ and His angels to heaven forever.

It has been done to you and for you. You have done nothing to earn it or deserve it. It has been “*pressed down, shaken together, and running over into you bosom.*” God has done it. So don't judge and don't condemn. God will do His work in his people. Forgive and give and love - be kind. That is what we are to do. Amen.

