

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 9:1-8
October 23rd, 2022
All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Pawleys Island, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Your Sins Are Forgiven You

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 and Everlasting God, Who, by Thy Son, hast promised us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life: we beseech Thee so to rule and govern our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit that in our daily need, and especially in all times of temptation, we may seek help from Him, and by a true and lively faith in Thy Word obtain the same; through 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.

Our Lord + Jesus had just been rejected by the Gergesenes. He had just driven out the demons from two demon-possessed men. He had sent them into a herd of swine, and the swine ran violently down into a steep place and fell into the sea. When the men of the city came out to see these events, they begged the Lord + Jesus to depart from them. So, He got into a boat and went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to His own home; to Capernaum. There He is surrounded by large crowds we are told in another Gospel. They had come to hear His preaching. Where He was rejected by the Gergesenes, He was embraced in faith by those who came to hear His preaching. Indeed, we are told by the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew that some of this crowd had brought to our Lord a man suffering from paralysis.

We are told in another Gospel that the place was so crowded that they could not get to the Lord + Jesus. So, they opened up a hole in the roof to let the man down in front of the Lord, as is pictured on the bulletin cover. This man's infirmity is plain to see by all. He is paralytic. He is unable to walk. He is unable to carry his own bed. He can only lay where he is placed by his friends. Anyone witnessing this scene would know exactly what kind of healing this man needs. He needs to have his ability to walk restored to him. But what does our Lord + Jesus say to this man? "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

Our Lord + Jesus sees this man's greater need. He sees the paralysis of this man's heart. Our Lord sees the crippled heart of this man from the weight of sin. This is in fact this man's greatest need. He needs the healing of absolution before he needs the healing of his paralysis. This man needs the healing of his soul before he needs the healing of his body. Our Lord sees this man's great need and heals his soul by declaring to him that his sins are forgiven.

The same is true of us. Our greatest need is the healing of our soul. No matter what physical ailments may attack us in this life; no matter how much our body may war against us with its increasing limitations, the greatest need we will ever have is the healing of our soul. Our greatest need is to hear, and believe, that our sins are forgiven. Even if our body would be afflicted with the same paralysis that this man had, our greatest need would be for the forgiveness of our sins. Our soul requires more healing than our body.

Consider the two demon-possessed men that our Lord + Jesus encountered in the land of the Gergesenes. They clearly needed a healing of the soul. They needed their souls cleansed of the demons possessing them. Sin had so enveloped them that they were afflicted by demons. When the people of that land saw it, they begged the Lord to depart their land. They wanted no part in being cleansed from sin. Such is the case with many people today. They want to cling onto their sinful behavior. They do not want someone taking their sin away. They revel in it; they laud their sin. And when someone points out their sinful behavior, that person is ostracized by them; he is begged to stop preaching the Law into their hearts. They want no part in the healing of their soul, for they refuse to believe in grace.

Even here in our Lord's own home in Capernaum, when He forgives this man's sins, there are some scribes who said within themselves, "This man blasphemes!" Blasphemy means either to speak against the Lord God—say bad things about Him, or to place yourself in the position of the Lord God—to make yourself be the Triune Lord God. Only the Lord God could forgive sins in the minds of the scribes. How can this man + Jesus say to this man lying there with paralysis that his sins are forgiven? He can forgive sins, because He is the Lord God. He is both God and man. He is the Lord God in our flesh. He is a man just like us, but without sin, because He is the holy and righteous Lord God, too.

And because the Lord God has come down from Heaven to take upon Himself our flesh, He is able to give the gift of forgiveness of sins to mankind. He has given this gift to the Church. The Church forgives sins through the called and ordained ministers of the Word. They absolve us of our sins in the Absolution during the Liturgy, and they absolve us of our sins when we come before them in Private confession to confess the specific sins that weigh upon us. The called and ordained ministers of the Word forgive the sins of the penitent, as long as they repent of their sins, and retain the sins of those who refuse to repent of their sins and amend their sinful behavior.

Forgiveness truly happens when we believe that our sins are forgiven; when we believe that for the sake of the works and merits of the Christ, we have forgiveness. When we hear that our sins are forgiven by the minister, we can either believe it or not. We can either believe that what he declares is true or not. The minister of the Word means what he says when he declares that our sins are forgiven. Therefore, we should also believe that when he absolves us of our sins, that our sins are truly forgiven for he speaks on behalf of the Lord + Jesus.

The scribes in the Gospel reading for today, did not believe that such forgiveness could be given by the Lord + Jesus. They believed He made Himself out to be the Lord God; that He blasphemed. But our Lord + Jesus is the Lord God; He is the Lord God made flesh; He is the incarnate Lord God. What He says is true, so this man's sins are forgiven. The paralysis of his heart is cleansed; the crippling caused by sin is healed. And to prove that He can truly forgive sins, and to prove that such power has been given to mankind, our Lord + Jesus says to the man with paralysis, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." He arose and went to his house. He believed that his sins were forgiven; that his soul was healed, and he also believed that his body would also be healed, and his strength was restored.

Our Lord + Jesus also heals our greatest need; our need for our soul to be healed of the affliction of sin by forgiving our sins through the mouth of the minister. The pastor heals our souls by declaring to us that our sins are forgiven on account of what our Lord + Jesus did for us by fulfilling the Law and suffering our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. The minister declares to you that your sins are forgiven you, and they are forgiven. We cling in faith to this absolution, knowing that by it our sins are truly forgiven.

But our Lord + Jesus also gave this authority to forgive sins to one another. When someone sins against us we also can declare forgiveness to them. We can absolve them of the sins which they have

committed against us. This is how we show love and mutual concern for each other and our fellowman.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us rejoice that our Lord + Jesus delivers us out of all our troubles of both body and soul. For He says to our soul, "I AM your salvation." He declares to our souls through our forgiveness of one another, and through the absolution of the minister that our sins are forgiven. He heals us of our greatest need; the healing that our souls require. For when we cry out from the depths of our sinful woe, our Lord + Jesus hears us and cleanses us of all our sins. Thanks be to our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ for giving ear to our troubles and healing all our iniquities that cripple our hearts weighed down with sin, that we may arise and walk before Him as a new creation; fully clothed in His righteousness and free from sin. 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!