

Midweek Lenten Vespers #3
St. John 8:42-51
March 15th, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Is a Liar

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe Me not.”

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.

A person can truly have only one father; one responsible for giving birth to him; the one that he listens to and from whom he takes advice. In today’s Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, our Lord + Jesus tells us that we can truly only have one of two fathers. Either our father is the devil, or our Father is the Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. Either we are of our father the devil, the one who was a murderer and liar from the beginning, or we are of our Father in Heaven, Who is the Father of Truth and life. There can be no other options. Either we listen to our heavenly Father, or we listen to the father of lies. In our sinful nature, we listen readily to the father of lies, even as the Jews in the Gospel pericope listened to their lying father, the devil.

Our Lord + Jesus tells us that the devil was a murderer and liar from the beginning. He proved himself to be such when he first came to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He twisted the Word of God around, made Eve question what the command was. She even got it wrong in her explanation of what the Lord God had commanded, adding her own interpretation to the words of the Lord. Her husband, Adam, was also no help. He was with her, and yet did not offer correction or instruction on the command that the Lord God had given. He was just as swayed as Eve was by the deception and lies of the devil. The devil used his lies to complete the task that he had set out to do, and continues to do to this day: he sought to kill the Lord God’s beloved creation.

By his lies he led Adam and Eve into breaking the one command of the Lord God. They ate from the tree from which they had been forbidden to eat; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By this knowledge they knew that they had broken the Lord’s will, and for this reason were deserving of death. The devil had said that they would not surely die. They would not die instantly. But they did die after many years. The consequences of sin led to their death. Their sin infected all of their offspring. They would also die because of the sin that they inherited from their parents.

Worse, all of their offspring would now no longer be sons of God, but they were now sons of the devil. They acted like and became just like their father, the devil. He was a liar and murderer from the beginning. So too, did mankind become liars and murderers. It did not take long, either. The very first son of Adam and Eve became like his father the devil. In his jealousy, he killed his brother Abel. He murdered his brother, and when the Lord God inquired of him about the action, he lied to cover it up. He claimed he did not know where his brother was, even as his blood called out to the Lord God from the ground. Many others of the children of Adam and Eve were similarly evil; they were also like their father the devil.

The world became so filled with the lies and murdering of their father the devil, that the Lord God had to cleanse the world of its filth. He sent a flood—caused by forty days and forty nights—of rain upon the earth, to wash away all the evil of this world. He rescued one family—eight souls—and two of every animal upon the face of the earth; a male and female of every species.

He rescued them not because they were more special than other people. It was not because Noah and his family were without sin. They too were descendants of Adam and Eve. They also inherited the condition of the original sin. They too would die on account of their sins. They were not saved because of some work that they did that other did not. They were saved because of faith. They trusted in the Lord God. They trusted in Him because they heard His word, the word that had been passed down from father to son from generation to generation, and they believed the word. They clung in faith to the Lord God and to His promise that He would redeem the world.

The Lord God had promised that He would send into this world a Savior. A Savior that was born of a woman. A Savior that would be a part of creation. This Savior would be born of a virgin. Unlike the rest of mankind, He would not be conceived in sin and born in sin. He would rather be born of the Holy Ghost to a virgin. It was also revealed that this Savior would come from the house and lineage of a king. He would be born into the house and lineage of King David. Who also was a murderer, and an adulterer, and lied about both crimes. He killed Uriah with the sword of the Amorites, after he had slept with his wife, and got her pregnant. He killed him all so that he could cover up the crime of adultery.

But in His grace and mercy the Lord still promised to send a Savior born of the house of King David, because David repented in sackcloth and ashes. He rent his heart on account of the sin, and trusted in the Lord God's grace and mercy. On account of his faith in the promises of the Lord God David was spared. From his loins would come the Savior of the whole world. This same promise had been given to Abraham. His descendants would be as numerous as the sand on the seashore, and the stars in the sky. Abraham was promised that a Savior would come. He would bring life and light to this dark world. All those who cling to His Word—who cling to His promises of forgiveness and life, would receive these in abundance.

For all those who cling to Him in faith have as their Father the Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. They do not listen to the lies of the devil; they do not listen to the father of lies, like the rest of the world does, but they listen to the promises of the Father Who declares that in His Only-Begotten and Beloved Son + Jesus, the Christ, there is life and forgiveness. There is forgiveness of sins and eternal life in the works and merits of the Son of God—in the Lord + Jesus. All those who cling to Him in faith are claimed by the heavenly Father to be His children. He is their true and only Father.

The Jews in the Gospel reading from St. John, however, rejected the Lord + Jesus. They rejected Him our Lord tells us tonight because He spoke the truth. The truth that this world cannot save itself based upon its own righteousness, because it has no righteousness of its own accord. The Jews clung to their good works; they were proud of the made up good things they did, as is the case with many in our world today. Many people like to toot their own horn, and praise themselves for how good and worthy they are to deserve praise. But none of this matters one hill of beans if they do not possess faith

in the Lord God; if they do not place their faith and trust in His Word and promises; if they do not place their trust in His Only-Begotten Son, the Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

They are condemned because they believe their own lies, that they are righteous on account of their own works. This, of course, is the same lie the devil keeps telling this world. It's the same lie that Adam and Eve believed in the Garden of Eden, that they did not need the Lord God, they could be their own god. They can depend upon their own righteousness and be saved. This is the lie of their father which they believe and to which they cling.

We are of our Father in heaven. We hear His condemning Law and know that we cannot save ourselves by our own works. We need a Savior. Our loving heavenly Father sent us a Savior, born under the Law, born of a woman, born of the promise to be our King. He proclaims to us the truth. That He has come to redeem us, His people, from sin and death. He has come to fulfill that which we cannot; He has come to speak the truth, and destroy the lies of the devil by fulfilling the Law of God which we break every single day. He also preaches the truth that He has come to offer up His life as a ransom for ours on the tree of the holy cross. By His suffering and death, He has redeemed us from death and the grave. In faith we cling to this marvelous work of our Lord + Jesus, for in Him is life and salvation. In Him we have been promised an eternal life with Him and all the saints and angels.

There in eternity we will enjoy eternal happiness with our family—our heavenly, eternal family—who have as their Father the eternal heavenly Father, Maker of heaven and earth. Let us, therefore, my dear friends, cling in faith to Him. For He is the Father of truth. He speaks the truth to us that we have salvation in Him alone. Let all who have ears to hear, hear Him! For He has defeated the father of lies once and for all by shining the beacon of the Gospel of the true salvation found in His Beloved Son alone, into this dark world. May we remain ever steadfast to hearing and believing this truth from our true Father. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the 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!