

The Festival of the Annunciation of our Lord
St. Luke 1:26-38
March 25th, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Lord is With Thee

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said, "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord *is* with thee."

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.

The angel Gabriel is sent by the Lord God to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, who was of the house and lineage of King David, to announce to her that she would give birth to the Savior of the whole world. When the angel greets her, he tells her that the Lord is with her. This is a greater greeting than when we say, "The Lord be with you" and we respond, "And with thy spirit." This greeting of ours is the acknowledgement that the Minister is bringing the Lord + Jesus to us in His Word and Sacraments; through His means of grace. We acknowledge that we are receiving the Lord through means by the work of the Holy Ghost. But when the angel Gabriel says this to the Blessed Virgin Mary, he is implying so much more!

"The Lord is with thee" is a proclamation that the Lord Himself will take up residence in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. He will dwell within her physically. He will take of her flesh and be created as a man without sin, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost. The Blessed Virgin Mary will bear the Savior of the world in her womb. She will be His mother. She will bring forth the Lord God as a man out of her womb. This is the greeting that the Virgin Mary receives from the angel Gabriel. The Lord will be with her in a way that no one has, or ever will be with the Lord. She will bear the Lord + Jesus—the Lord God—in her womb.

This is a great blessing to her. And it is a sign of the grace that the Lord God bestows upon women. For it was by a woman that mankind was plunged into sin and death. Adam and Eve lived in peaceful harmony with the Lord God, their Creator and Maker. They were made in His image, free from sin and shame. They did not know death. They did not know pain. The Lord was truly with them in a relationship that we can only have by faith, and even then, in this sinful flesh, that relationship is marred and distorted. However, the Lord God will restore the image that we lost through the sin of Adam and Eve when we are given new and glorious bodies in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We lost that image of the Lord God; mankind had the Lord God taken away from them by the deception of the devil—the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The serpent was sent to the first woman, Eve, to deceive her. Indeed, the serpent was the devil himself, sent by himself to lead mankind into death. The evil serpent desire to kill mankind by taking the Lord God away from mankind. When Eve took of the tree from which they were forbidden to eat, and gave to her husband, Adam, who was with her, they lost the image of the Lord God. The Lord God was no longer with them. They exchanged eternal life with the Lord God, for death and loneliness. However, Adam and Eve were left with a promise. The promise was that a Son would be born out of the womb of a woman who would redeem mankind from this sin, and from all sins ever committed.

Eve thought that she had given birth to this Son Who would be Savior when she brought forth her firstborn son. The firstborn son of mankind, was not even close to being a redeemer and savior. Instead, he set the benchmark for the evil of mankind. Filled with jealous rage over his brother Abel's sacrifice, he killed his brother, and tried to deny the act until the Lord God convicted him of the sin. Such would be the case for all firstborn sons of mankind. They would be filled with sin and evil from the moment of their conception and birth. And not only the firstborn sons, but all the sons and daughters of mankind would be just like their first parents, and would follow in the footsteps of the firstborn son of Adam and Eve.

But mankind—we—still had the promise that a Savior and Redeemer would be born. He would restore the image of the Lord God which mankind lost through the prevarication of their first parents. Their sin separated the Lord God from mankind. But in the Lord + Jesus mankind would be reunited with the Lord God. The Lord God would be with mankind now through faith, because the Lord God in the Person of the Lord + Jesus would make His dwelling with mankind in our flesh. He would become man and be born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sin had come through a woman. Now grace would come through a woman who knew no man.

Therefore, to counteract the sending of the serpent in the Garden of Eden which led to mankind's fall, the angel Gabriel is sent in the six month after the conception of St. John the Baptist, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, who was of the house and lineage of King David. He greeted the Blessed Virgin Mary by proclaiming to her that she was highly favored, because Lord was with her. He was with her in her womb, but He was also with her as her Savior. For He bore the flesh of mankind in His Person for her, just as He bears the flesh of mankind for us and all mankind.

The firstborn son of Adam and Eve was a murderer, because he was really of his father the devil, who was a murderer and liar from the beginning. The Firstborn Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary was really the Son of His Father, the Lord God Almighty. The heavenly Father sent His Son, our Lord + Jesus, to face the death that our first parents earned for us. The serpent deceived Adam and Eve into death. The Son Who would be born to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Whose birth will take place nine months from now when we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, would face the death that we deserve on account of our manifold sins and trespasses.

In our Lord's suffering and death, we see that our Lord + Jesus is with us in a very special way. For He suffers and dies even as we do. But just as the greeting from the angel Gabriel of "The Lord be with thee" to the Blessed Virgin Mary, meant so much more than it does when we greet each other with the "The Lord be with you" and respond "And with thy spirit," our Lord's suffering and death is greater than our suffering and death. For when we suffer and die, especially when we die without faith, we receive the just rewards of our sin. But our Lord + Jesus was without sin, having perfectly fulfilled the Law of God—having perfectly obeyed the Law of God—therefore His innocent suffering and death, wins salvation for us and all mankind, especially for those who believe.

In His death He defeats once and for all the serpent—the devil—that led mankind into sin and

death; who caused us to be separated from our Lord God. By our Lord's death He pays the penalty of death that we owed. He defeated the devil, and He defeated death once and for all, so that all those who cling to Him in faith now have eternal life. By His death the Lord is once again with us. He has restored the image that we lost. He has paid for the sin which we committed. He has repaired the break that occurred between man and the Lord God, so that now we can truly say, "The Lord be with you." For the Lord God is with us, just as He was with the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was with her in the flesh, but He is also with us, only in His Blessed Word and Sacraments. He was veiled in the flesh of the Virgin's womb. Now He is with us veiled in the pure preaching of the Word of God, and in the administration of the Blessed Sacraments.

His Holy Ghost overshadowed the Blessed Virgin and conceived the Son of God in her womb, so that He might fulfill the Law and redeem us from sin and death. His Holy Ghost now works through the means of grace to create faith in us, so that we may cling to this precious gift that was in the womb of the Virgin Mary for nine months. He Who was the Lord God became a man in order to dwell with us His people, all so that He might restore to us the image that our first parents broke. He has come to be with us His people. By His death He defeated death and the devil. And by His resurrection from the dead, He shows that we too will now no longer die, but we will be united with Him for eternity in Heaven. We will be given new and glorious bodies. Bodies which are not plagued by sin, sickness, and death. The Lord will be with us forever and ever. And we will be with Him forever, too. 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 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!