

Quasi modo geniti
St. John 20:19-31
April 16th, 2023
St. Bartholomew Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Fort Myers, FL
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Peace Be unto You

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, "Peace *be* unto you."

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty and Ever-living God, Who hast given to them that believe exceeding great and precious promises, grant us to perfectly, and without doubt, to believe in Thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in Thy sight may never be reprov'd. Hear us, O Lord, through the same our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hallelujah! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! Our Lord + Jesus blesses His Apostles three times in this Gospel pericope from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. Three times He blesses them with the words, "Peace be unto you." He does this twice on the night of His resurrection from the dead, and once a week later when St. Thomas was with them in the Upper Room. The repetition of this phrase three times means that it is an important phrase. When things are repeated in the holy Scriptures, it tells us that this is important information for us. This is common in both the Hebrew and Greek languages. Both of these biblical languages use repetition of a word or phrase for emphasis. Therefore, it makes sense that the Holy Ghost Who chose these languages as the languages of the Word of God, would have St. John record our Lord's blessing three times to emphasize the importance of the phrase, "Peace be unto you."

Why then is it important? Our Lord + Jesus gives the explanation in today's Gospel reading. "When He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.'" The giving of peace—the blessing with which the Lord + Jesus blesses His Apostles—is the offer of forgiveness. True peace—not the peace that this world espouses—is to be reconciled with the Lord God. We are forgiven when we hear that proclamation of peace, and believe those words are true. We are justified by faith. Faith clings onto the declaration of peace; the declaration of forgiveness, and the soul has peace, because it knows that for the sake of the Christ's works and merits it has been reconciled to the Lord God. When we believe the words of the blessing of peace, we have what those words offer and declare, for the Lord God has appeased His wrath upon His Only-Begotten Son.

This is why this text shows up on this day in the Church's year! For last Sunday, and the preceding week before it, we heard all about how the Lord + Jesus procured our salvation. He bought us back from sin, death, and the power of the devil. By His innocent suffering and death, He defeated

death once and for all. He rose again from the grave for our justification. So that we know—we can believe—that His sacrifice was accepted by God the Father, and we can indeed cling to Him and His works in faith. This innocent suffering and death—our Lord’s pouring out of His blood as a ransom for us—won salvation for all mankind. The cross and tomb; the death and resurrection of our Lord + Jesus earned salvation for mankind. But it is not at the cross nor the tomb where forgiveness is given to those who cling in faith to the Lord. It is given where the means of grace are distributed by the Church. This is why the First Sunday after Easter, *Quasi modo geniti*, so us the way by which the rewards our Lord + Jesus won for us on Easter Sunday are given to the people.

We receive the gifts He won for us on the tree of the holy cross when the Holy Ghost is breathed on us by the offering of the means of grace. The death and resurrection of the Lord won the gifts, they are distributed by the Church, the one established by the Apostles. We receive peace from the Lord God through the means of grace. We receive these gifts wherever the Lord + Jesus breathes on us and saith unto us, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit!” We receive the Holy Spirit—the Holy Ghost—through the means of grace. Through the means of grace, we receive the forgiveness of our sins. Wherever the forgiveness of sins is offered, there too are eternal life and salvation. Wherever these things are offered we have peace with the Lord God.

This is why you all hear those words from my lips often. “Peace be unto you.” It is an offer and declaration to receive peace from the Lord God; it is an offer of forgiveness. When we share this greeting with one another—when we offer one another peace—we are declaring among ourselves that not only do we have peace and forgiveness, but that we should order and live our lives under the banner of forgiveness. We live as sinners who have been forgiven. We live at peace because our sins have been forgiven. And this means that we do not return back to our sinning and sinful ways. A slave who has been freed from the bondage of slavery, does not immediately desire to return to being a slave once again. This is how it is for those who have been forgiven, but choose not to amend their sinful lives. They continue to live as a slave, even though they have been freed from the slavery of sin and shame.

A freed slave, however, knows full well from what he has been freed. He knows that he is no longer in bondage to sin and death, but he now alive and free in the righteousness of the Christ. When we who are slaves to sin hear the declaration, “Peace be unto you!” we know that this is a declaration to be freed from the slavery of sin. It is a declaration to be not unbelieving as St. Thomas was when He first heard about the Lord’s resurrection from the dead, but believing as he did when he saw the Lord + Jesus in His crucified and risen flesh. This is why the proper response to “Peace be unto you!” is the same response that St. Thomas gave, “My Lord and my God!” That is, the proper response is to confess our belief that what was said is indeed true. In other words, when we hear “Peace be unto you!” we confess our faith that these words are true by saying that they are true with the word, “Amen.” “Peace be unto you!” “Amen.”

We lay hold onto the gift by declaring that this gift is indeed for us. This is why we say “Amen” when we remember our Holy Baptism at the beginning of the Service when the Pastor blesses us with the Triune Name into which we were baptized. We say, “Amen.” When we receive the Absolution from the Pastor firmly believing and not doubting that the forgiveness offered is from the Lord God Himself through the mouth of the minister, what do we say? We say, “Amen.” Yes, yes, it shall be so. My Lord and my God! I believe that what you have given me is truly for me. This is why we also say it after we receive the Body and Blood of our Lord + Jesus in bread and wine. “Take, eat; this is the true Body of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.” “Amen.” “Take, drink; this is the true Blood of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ, shed for the remission of your sins.” “Amen.”

And having received our Lord’s Body and Blood in bread and wine, we are dismissed with the offer of peace. The minister declares to us, “The true Body and Blood of our Lord + Jesus Christ

strengthen and preserve you in the true faith unto life everlasting. Depart in peace.” And we respond in belief, “Amen.” We can depart in peace because through faith in the works of the Christ, we believe that what our Lord + Jesus won for us on the cross has been delivered into our mouths. We have received the Holy Ghost. The Lord + Jesus has breathed on us through the means of grace. We have peace with the Lord God. We have been justified; made right with the Lord God. What the Lord won for us is now ours. “My Lord and my God!” “Amen.” This is why our Lord + Jesus did these works for us, so that believing on Him we might have life in His name everlastingly.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us cling in faith to the works of the Christ. Let us crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word of God, like newborn infants. For our Lord + Jesus establishes for us today in the Upper Room with His beloved Apostles the means by which the Church receives the rewards which He won for us on the tree of the holy cross. We receive the gifts He earned for us by His resurrection from the dead. Let us not return to the former slavery of sin into which we were bound, but let us with all faith and sincerity declare the faith that is in us—the forgiveness that has been offered to us—by declaring that faith with the word, “Amen” when we share with one another the peace that only comes from and through the Lord + Jesus. “Peace be unto you!” Amen.” Hallelujah! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! 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!