

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord
St. John 2:1-11
January 14th, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Third Day

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and Jesus also was bidden, and His disciples, to the marriage.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

We thank Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou didst hallow and adorn the holy estate of matrimony by Thy presence, and we humbly beseech Thee that Thou wouldst continually preserve and bless this holy ordinance, protect us from impurity and offenses, and evermore dwell in all Christian homes, relieving all their necessities in Thine own good time; O Thou, true God and faithful Friend of men, Who, having power over all things, livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

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

My dear friends, this is now the second Sunday in a row where the Evangelist makes mention of the events happening on the third day. In last Sunday’s Gospel reading from the second chapter of the Evangelist St. Luke, our Lord + Jesus, Who was twelve years old, is found by His parents on the third day of their search, in the temple both asking questions and giving answers. Today we hear from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John that this wedding in Cana of Galilee happens on the third day. The third day from what? This is the third day of our Lord’s ministry.

He was baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The next day, the first day of the Evangelist’s record of these events, He called His first Apostles. Two of the men who were disciples of St. John the Baptist, when he had pointed out that the Lord + Jesus was the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, left John and followed the Lord. We are told that one of these men was St. Andrew, the first of the Lord’s Apostles and the one whose festival day begins the Church’s year. When he realized Who the Lord + Jesus was, that He was the Christ, he went and told His brother Simon, who our Lord called “Peter.”

The second day, our Lord + Jesus found St. Philip. He was from Bethsaida of Galilee, the same place where Sts. Andrew and Peter lived. Like St. Andrew on the previous day, who went and told someone else (who told his brother, St. Peter), St. Philip also went and told another person. This was Nathanael, who our Lord saw under the fig tree before St. Philip had told him, and who had said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” He is also known as St. Bartholomew, the one who shares a name with our mission in Fort Myers, FL. The writer of the Gospel of St. John leaves out the name of the other Apostle who was with St. Andrew. He leaves out his own name, for the other disciple of St.

John the Baptist who followed the Lord was St. John. He had also told his brother, St. James, that they had found the Lord and Christ. These were the first ones called to be Apostles by the Lord + Jesus.

And so, it is on the third day after His baptism by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River, that our Lord and His first six Apostles were invited to attend a wedding in Cana of Galilee. The events of this third day would cause these men to “believe on Him,” to believe on the Lord + Jesus. For they would witness our Lord’s first miracle. They would witness the Lord + Jesus turn water in wine. How fitting this is for the first miracle of our Lord. For in His first miracle, we are presented with two elements that point to the Sacraments, the means by which our Lord + Jesus gives us those gifts He won by His death on the cross. In water we have the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. In wine we have the Sacrament of Holy Communion. And in water and wine we are reminded of our Lord’s sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross. For at His death the centurion took a spear and stabbed Him in the heart and from the wound blood and water flowed, proving that the Lord + Jesus, the Son of God, the Christ, was truly dead.

And this is a fitting reminder for us poor sinners. For both of the Sacraments take us to the cross and suffering of our Lord + Jesus; the means by which we have forgiveness from our sins, both point us to the sacrifice that won our forgiveness, life, and salvation. Both of these Sacraments give to us the gifts won for us on the tree of the cross of our Lord + Jesus.

In Holy Baptism, we are buried with Christ in His death. We are drowned and killed so that all that is evil and sinful within us may be drowned and killed and that a new man may arise clothed in the white robes of the righteousness of our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ. We can lay claim to this righteousness whenever we remember, and cling to in faith, the gifts that are bestowed upon us through Holy Baptism. We are admonished in the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther to rise each morning and go to bed each evening making the sign of the holy cross; to remind ourselves morning and evening that we poor, miserable sinners have had our sins washed away by the waters of Holy Baptism.

In the waters of Holy Baptism, we are washed and covered with the blood of the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world. In Holy Baptism, we are joined together with our Lord’s death, Who on the third day rose again from the dead. Just as He rose again on the third day, we too rise again to new life through the waters of Holy Baptism, whenever we lay claim to the benefits given in this precious bath through faith. That the six waterpots that were filled with water to the brim, and held two or three firkins apiece, were used in the purification rites of the Jews is not an insignificant fact. For the purification rite was specifically tied to the washing away of sins; the purification rite was for the cleansing away symbolically of sin. We now have a cleansing, a washing, a baptism, that is not just a symbolic washing away of sins, but actually washes away and covers over our many sins and transgressions.

All these things are also true of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. This meal of bread and wine that we eat and drink is our remembrance and thanksgiving for the sacrifice and death of our Lord + Jesus. It is the Body and Blood that was offered for us on the tree of the holy cross of which we eat and drink sacramentally for the remission of sins. We are connected to our Lord’s cross. We are connected to the sacrifice that takes away the sin of the world. In bread and wine, we have forgiveness of our sins, for our Lord has offered up His innocent life as a ransom for ours. He shed His Blood and offered His Body for us to win salvation for us. He won forgiveness for our sins by His death. He rescued us from sin and death and the power of the devil so that when we eat this meal we are reminded by bread and wine that our Lord’s Body and Blood paid the price of our sins.

Just as we were dead in our trespasses and sins, our Lord died on the tree of the cross to pay for those sins and trespasses. And just as He did not stay dead, but on the third day rose again from the dead. We are also raised with Him from the dead and given this meal as a testament to our

possession of eternal life in Him. We have the gifts He won for us on the tree of the cross when we receive this meal in faith, firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven.

Thus, we are reminded by our Lord's first miracle of the gifts that He bestows upon us. In water and wine, we have the means that impart to us forgiveness of sins, eternal life in Heaven, and salvation from our enemies of sin, death, and the devil. In this first miracle we have a reminder that water and blood flowed from our Savior's side to give us life in His death. And we have in this first miracle a reminder that His Apostles believed on Him through this miracle of turning water into wine.

These Apostles who accompanied our Lord + Jesus to the wedding in Cana of Galilee at St. Mary's invitation, would go into all the world and preach these truths to all who would hear and believe. They would baptize and teach all those who heard their preaching and believed on the Lord + Jesus. They would give the Sacrament of the Altar to all who were baptized and believed that in this bread and wine the Lord's Body and Blood are truly given. For on the third day, they saw and believed that the Lord + Jesus had truly risen from the dead. He who died on the cross, was raised again on the third day. This was one of His last and the greatest miracle that He did on the third day.

And here on the third day of His earthly ministry, He performs His first miracle which points to the miracles in which we participate every day. Whenever we make the sign of the holy cross and remember that we are baptized with His blood in the waters of Holy Baptism we drown the Old Adam so that a new man may arise; we can cling to the miracle of a daily resurrection from the dead. When we come to this holy altar and receive our Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine, we remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His Blood for the remission of our sins. For in His death, he paid the penalty of our sins. So that we can now join with all the saints and angels of Heaven as they join us in eternity around this altar and feast with us in Heaven.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not forsake the daily remembrance of our Holy Baptism, rising each morning and going to bed each night with the Name which has been placed upon us that proclaims us to be a child of the Lord God, the Name which proclaims that our sins have been washed away. And let us not forsake the gathering together in this house of our Lord God, for in this sanctuary, we receive from Him His very Body and Blood in bread and wine to give to us remission of all our sins. He declares us free and absolved of sins by His ministers, those whom He has sent out into this world to proclaim the good things that He has done for us. Let us therefore cling to Him and His works in faith and rejoice that by Him we have life and forgiveness. 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!