

The Festival of the Annunciation of our Lord
St. Luke 1:26-38
April 8th, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Thou Hast Found Favor with God

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And the angel said unto her, ‘Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.’”

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.

Hallelujah! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

My dear friends, the Festival which we celebrate this evening is usually two weeks prior to this date. When the Festival of the Annunciation of our Lord + Jesus Christ falls between Palm Sunday and the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord + Jesus Christ, it is transferred to the first free day—a free day is commonly called a “feria”—after the Octave of the Feast. That is why we celebrate this Festival today and not on the normal date of March 25th, which was Holy Monday this year. The significance of this Festival is that it occurs nine months prior to the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord + Jesus Christ. This is a Christmas festival that falls during the Easter cycle. What does that mean?

It means that our Lord’s birth is always connected with His suffering, death, burial, and resurrection. Our Lord’s birth is always connected, by this Festival, to the reason that He is born on Christmas Day. Our Lord is conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary nine months before His birth. He is conceived of the Holy Ghost, as we confess daily in Apostles’ Creed, nine months before His birth, just like any other baby boy born of a woman. What is significant about this is our Lord is conceived—He takes upon our flesh—in the same time frame as His suffering and death. He becomes man in the same month when He offers up His life as a ransom for ours. He becomes a man at the same time that He offers up His life as a ransom for mankind.

Our Lord’s birth is connected to His death. His conception is connected to His death. Our Lord’s whole purpose and will for becoming a man is to suffer and die for us poor, miserable sinners. This is why these two dates—March 25th and December 25th—are important for the Church. There are those who want to say that Christmas is formerly some pagan holiday. In truth, they want to say that about Easter as well, and pretty much every Christian holiday. The evil world wants to corrupt the hearts and

minds of unbelievers into believing a lie. And many fall for the lie. One cannot do a search on the internet for the history of Christmas, or Easter, and not find some nonsense about these Feasts being originally pagan festivals.

This is why the dates of Christmas, and this Festival of the Annunciation, are so important. They not only are nine months apart, but are intrinsically connected to the Passover—to the suffering and death of our Lord + Jesus. Our Lord was conceived in the same month that He would suffer and die. For this is the reason that our Lord + Jesus came down from Heaven and became man. He came to rescue us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He came to hang upon an accursed tree to atone for the sins of the whole world, so that all those who believe on Him might have eternal life in Him.

This is why the angel Gabriel tells the Blessed Virgin Mary that she has found favor with God. For she would give birth to the Savior of the whole world. The Blessed Virgin is a part of that world. She not only gives birth to the Savior, but to *her* Savior. She gives birth to our Savior.

The Magnificat, the Blessed Virgin Mary's song of praise at being chosen as the mother of God; the mother of our Lord and Savior does not occur in today's pericope. We get that narrative in connection to St. John the Baptist's birth. The Festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth falls on the eighth day—the day of his circumcision—after the birth of St. John the Baptist. But Mary's song of praise is fitting for today, because it is not only her song, but our song as well. All the things that are done for her, are also done for us. She certainly has a special role, carrying the Christ in her womb for nine months, but the reason for her being the mother of our Lord, also benefits us. For just as she is favored of the Lord God, we too are favored of the Lord God.

Our Lord + Jesus did not just come to be the Savior of the Blessed Virgin. He came to rescue and deliver all mankind from sin and death. He has come to be the Savior of us all. For unlike our Lord + Jesus, we are conceived and born in sin. We are born dead in our sins and trespasses. Our Lord + Jesus, the angel Gabriel tells the Blessed Virgin Mary, would be conceived of the Holy Ghost. She asks, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" This was not a question of doubt, but a question of how the mechanics were to work. Even the Blessed Virgin Mary understood that only a man and a woman together could make a baby. She understood the science of biology that it takes a man and a woman to create a child. Unlike the unbelieving world today which lives in a fantasy land which does not believe it needs to be this way.

The angel Gabriel's answer to St. Mary is telling for us. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." This conception of our Lord and Savior will be a work of creation done by the Lord God. He will create a baby in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. He will use her seed to create a perfect and sinless Baby Boy conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of her. Even more, He will be called the Son of God. The angel Gabriel makes two statements about who the father of this Child will be. He will not only be the Son of God. He will not only be the Only-Begotten Son of God fully Divine and fully the Lord God, but He will also be given the throne of His father King David. He will also be the Seed of King David. He will be the long-promised Messiah. He will be fully man as well as fully God. He will be born both as Man and God.

It is for this reason that His throne will last forever. A man who sits upon a throne will die, even if he lives for a very long time. He will eventually die. Even King David died, the one to whom the promise was given. Even Abraham died, the one to whom the promise was given before that. Even Adam and Eve died, the ones to whom the promise was originally given. King Solomon, the one who it was believed was the fulfillment of the prophecy given to King David, also died and was buried. Their sitting upon the throne did not last forever.

But our Lord + Jesus Who is both God and man, His throne will endure for ever and ever. For God has become man, and His Kingdom will last forever and ever. For He has taken His place upon the throne of the tree of the holy cross. He is a King, and it is for this reason that He has come to us. He has come to be a King and sit upon His throne forever and ever. By His death on the cross, He takes His place upon His throne, so that He might conquer sin, death, and the power of the devil.

He has now won a throne in Heaven. He now sits on the right hand of God the Father. He will come again to judge both the quick and the dead. All those who cling to Him in faith will live with Him in His Kingdom forever and ever. We will have eternal life with Him because of His suffering and death. Our graves have no power any longer because He has risen from the dead. It is because of His death that we now have life. This is why our Lord's birth and death are connected. It is why we celebrate this Festival of Christmas during the Easter season. For our Lord + Jesus was conceived and born for the purpose of suffering and dying for us on the tree of the holy cross. He does this so that He might fully atone for all our sins, and the sins of the whole world. Now just as He is risen from the dead; just as He lives and reigns for all eternity, we also will live and reign with Him forever and ever. 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!