

The Feast of the Holy Trinity

St. John 3:1-15

May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC

Simpsonville, SC

Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Ye Must Be Born Anew

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

“Marvel not that I said unto thee, ‘Ye must be born anew.’ The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Almighty and Everlasting God Who hast taught us to know and to confess in true faith that in three Persons of equal power and glory Thou art One True and Everlasting God and to be worshiped as such: We beseech Thee, keep us at all times steadfast in this faith against whatsoever may assail us, O Thou, Who livest and reignest, ever, One True God, 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, the Triune Lord God created man and woman in the beginning to be in His image. We were created to be perfect and holy just as He is perfect and holy—without sin. He gave us hearts of flesh; hearts that sought to do His will and obey His commandments. But we did not remain obedient to His will. We sought our own will and our own way. We desired to be like the Triune Lord God knowing good and evil. We only learned, however, that our disobedience to the Lord’s will made us the evil. We were no longer the good creation that our Triune Lord God made. Our hearts of flesh became hearts of stone. Stone hearts shut out the Law of God. They shut out the council and aid of the Lord God. Stone hearts are unfeeling and unloving. The Law had been written on our hearts of flesh at the creation. But our stoney hearts destroyed the written Law on our hearts so that we could no longer fulfill them.

The Prophet Moses was sent to receive the Law of God for His people. The Ten Commandments were written on stone tablets to reflect the stone hearts that we now possess. The Law had to be written in stone, written in ink, because our hearts rejected the Law of God with which we were created. The image of the Lord God and His Law and will were destroyed when we fell into sin. Now our fleshly hearts only crave to do what is contrary to the Law of God.

This is what our Lord + Jesus tells Nicodemus in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John when he came to the Lord at night. That which is flesh remains flesh. It cannot be made spirit. We cannot change our fleshly hearts to hearts of spirit because our every inclination since the fall of Adam into sin has been one of rebellion against the Triune Lord God. Every inclination of our hearts is to do what seems right in our own eyes.

On account of this even our so-called good works do not merit anything for us. For they proceed

from an evil and corrupt heart of stoney flesh. Our good works proceed from a heart which does not seek to do the Lord's will but its own will. Therefore, we are not credited with doing a good work, even when we do what is required of the Law. For flesh can only be flesh. It cannot be spirit. In order for us to have works worthy of the praise of the Lord God is to have a heart of spirit.

No amount of urging our stoney hearts is going to change our fleshly hearts into hearts of spirit. We cannot choose to transform them from flesh into spirit. This can only be accomplished through the work of the Holy Ghost. And this is why our Lord + Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born anew. He, and all of mankind including us, have been born with hearts of flesh, that is, with hearts full of sin and shame; hearts of rebellion towards the Triune Lord God. This is why the Triune Lord God Who made us perfect and holy in the beginning also re-creates us to be a new creation.

The heavenly Father sends His Only-Begotten and Beloved Son, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, to come down and be made man, so that He in our flesh, but without our sin, could fulfill the Law which we have broken. He fixes what we broke by taking the work upon Himself. He even endures the punishment that we deserve to bear on account of our manifold sins and trespasses, by offering up His innocent and holy life as a ransom for ours. He suffers and dies on the tree of the holy cross in our stead so that He might defeat death. He goes into our grave, so that death and the grave may no longer hold any of us.

Having fulfilled the heavenly Father's will, the Lord + Jesus, His Son, and the Father sent to us the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost works on our flesh into spirit. The Holy Ghost does this through means, but the means that is spoken of in the Gospel of St. John is the means of Holy Baptism. This is a washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost. The Triune Lord God places His Divine Name upon us. We have been baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. All three Persons of the Holy Trinity claim us as their own new creation. The One God in Three Persons claims us poor, miserable sinners as His own new creation.

In doing so we no longer possess hearts of stone. We no longer are flesh, but we are spirit. Through the waters of Holy Baptism, we have become a new creation. We are born anew. This is not done by entering into the womb of our mothers a second time. It is done solely by the Word of God. For with the Word of God—the Divine Triune Name—the water becomes a gracious water of life. Indeed, this water is a river of life. It flows through us like a river flows through a valley. It washes away all dirt and grime of sin and cleanses us thoroughly and completely. We become a new creation. We are thoroughly born anew.

This river of life that flows through us now is really the Holy Ghost. The water of life that flows through us and makes us a new creation, makes us no longer flesh but spirit is the Holy Ghost. He is the One through the Word of the Triune Lord God which makes us born anew. For this river always flows to the source of our salvation, the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. The Word of God always takes us to the source of our salvation. It takes us to our Redeemer and Savior, Who was sent by the heavenly Father to redeem and save us. The Father sent the Son to us, Who in turn with the Father sent to us the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost takes us by the works and merits of the Christ back to the heavenly Father.

For the Triune Lord God Who created us perfect and holy desires that we be born anew. The One God in Three Persons desires that all mankind which have been born with stoney and fleshly hearts be born anew with hearts of spirit; hearts that seek after the Lord God and desire to do His will. The Holy Ghost by the Word of God makes this change in us. He is the One Who changes our fleshy hearts into new spiritual hearts. He makes us a new creation. For the Living Water flows through us by the Word of God to make us a new creation.

This is why we can rejoice daily in our Holy Baptism. For it is a washing of renewal and regeneration of our stony hearts into hearts of flesh as they were at creation. The Old Adam in us is daily drowned and killed by the Word of God connected to and comprehended in the waters of Holy Baptism. The Old Adam in us by daily contrition is replaced by the Triune Lord God with a New Adam. The New Adam is the Christ, the Son of the heavenly Father. We put on the New Adam each new day when we arise and make the sign of the holy cross, and say the Name which was given to us in Holy Baptism. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. The same Name with which the minister blessed us at the beginning of the Divine Service. It is the same Name with which we rise and with which we bless ourselves before we lay down to go to sleep at night. It is our daily reminder that we have been born anew; that we are a new creation having put on the works and righteousness of the Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us give thanks and rejoice on this Feast Day of the Holy Trinity, for the Law, which was written on our hearts at creation, and was written on stone tablets on account of our sinfulness, has once again been written on our hearts. For the Lord + Jesus has fulfilled the Law of God by His innocent suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross, and has sent to us His Holy Ghost to make us a new creation by the Word of God. Ye must be born anew, and by the work of the Triune Lord God Who created us, ye have been born anew by water and the Word and given forgiveness, life, and salvation through the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. 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!*