

Whit-Monday
St. John 3:16-21
May 20th, 2024
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Pawleys Island, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

For God So Loved the World

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, Who, of Thy tender love toward us sinners, hast given us Thy Son, that, believing on Him, we might have everlasting life: grant us, we beseech Thee, Thy Holy Spirit that we may continue steadfast in this faith to the end, and may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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

My dear friends, in this Octave of the Feast of Pentecost our Lord + Jesus preaches into our ears the very purpose for which the Holy Ghost has been sent to us by Him. The Holy Ghost has come to fill our ears with the promise of eternal life. Eternal life comes to us because we have received the forgiveness of our sins. The forgiveness of our sins has been gifted to us because we have hated the darkness of this world and our sin, and have clung in faith to the light of this world: our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. It is the Holy Ghost who has opened our ears, and hearts, to believe on the Lord + Jesus. Through the pure preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments the Holy Ghost has revealed to us what our Lord + Jesus has done for us poor, miserable sinners.

He has brought us out of darkness into the marvelous light of salvation. The light of faith sees and believes what the holy Scriptures reveal: that our Lord + Jesus came down from Heaven to be a man. He was made man just like us. He has taken upon Himself our flesh, but without sin. Faith reveals to us that He has come to be our Savior, to redeem us in our flesh, to suffer and die for us on the tree of the holy cross after He has perfectly fulfilled the Law of God. Faith also reveals that through His suffering and death He has paid the penalty of our sins. Faith reveals that His resurrection from the dead has defeated death and the grave, and has opened up for us the way into eternal life.

All this the Holy Ghost reveals to us by opening up our ears to hear what our Lord + Jesus has done for us. By this revelation we hear that we have a life after death. We hear that we have an eternal life after death. The Holy Ghost leads us into our eternal home in Heaven by continuing to strengthen and create in us the faith that clings to this promise of an everlasting life. This is how our Lord God loves us. This is how the Lord God loves the world. He loves the world so much that He sent His Only-Begotten Son into the world to be its Redeemer and Savior.

This world, however, has for the most part rejected its Redeemer and Savior. It has chosen to remain in darkness. It has shunned the light. By this rejection of the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, as the

Savior and Redeemer of mankind, this world has not only chosen to remain in darkness; to remain in sin, but it has chosen to be judged and condemned by the Lord God. This is what our Lord + Jesus tells Nicodemus in the Gospel reading for today from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. The Lord + Jesus did not come to judge the world. He will do that on the Last Day when He judges both the quick and the dead. But He did not come down from Heaven and take upon Himself our flesh in order to judge the world. He came to redeem it! He came to set it free from the bonds of sin and death, to open up the way into the eternal gates of Heaven and life everlasting. This is why He came: to give life, not death.

But the world has rejected the Lord + Jesus has their Savior, and therefore, they have judged themselves. They have chosen to remain in the bonds of sin and death. They have chosen to remain trapped in the prison of eternal damnation. They have chosen to be judged and condemned. They have rejected the love of the Lord God.

How sad it is that the world has such a great promise and rejects it. For God did so love the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him might have eternal life. This is great news for those who cling in faith to the One Who the Lord God, heavenly Father has sent into this world to redeem the world. This is comforting news to those who cling in faith the Lord + Jesus as their Redeemer and Savior. For the Lord God, our Creator, and His Son, our Redeemer, loves us enough to save us from eternal destruction even though we sin daily and much.

So that we might remain steadfast in this faith, the Father and the Son have sent unto us poor, miserable sinners, the Holy Ghost. He leads us into all the truth. He leads us into hearing and believing that we have a Triune Lord God Who loves us enough to save us by taking our place. He loves us enough to do what we are unable to do. All so that we may be welcomed into the heavenly realms, and that we may not be destroyed eternally in the fires of Hell.

This is why we strive to do the work that the Lord + Jesus has given us to do. We continue to do the work of the Church. We endeavor to preach the Word of God in all of its truth and purity, not being ashamed of it when the Word of God counters and contradicts this evil and unbelieving world. We also strive to administer the Sacraments according to the way that our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ intended them to be administered and given. For through the Word and the Sacraments the Holy Ghost is given to us. The Holy Ghost through these means of grace gives Himself freely to us. And by giving Himself to us freely, He fills our hearts with faith to cling to the promise of eternal life.

For this is why our Lord + Jesus came down from Heaven to do. He came to give eternal life to all who believe on His Name. All those who receive the Holy Ghost in the means of grace, and do not reject Him, are freed from the bonds of sin and death. They are brought out of the darkness into the light of salvation. They are delivered from death and the grave, and possess the hope of an eternal life in Heaven with all the saints who have gone before us, and with all the angels who attend to us during our earthly lives.

This is the hope to which we cling. We cling in faith and hope to receive the crown of everlasting life. For we know the works that we do every single day. We know that our works are not good enough to win for us salvation. Our works only condemn us. This evil and unbelieving world clings to its works. It tries to justify their works by clinging to scrap of evidence that their works merit some good thing. Mankind is quick to pat itself on its back when it does what it considers to be a good work. The world praises the works of mankind. Of course, it praises the works that it sees as good works, not the actual good works that are demanded of the Law of the Lord God. It shuns those good works and makes up its own system of works worthy of praise. This is why the world continues to remain in darkness, for it does not want to give up its useless and vain works.

We, however, know that our works merit us nothing. Yes, we strive to do the works of the Law, and we desire to do them. But when we fail, and we fail often, we do not despair at our failure. Nor do we do like the world and make up our own good works which are easy for us to fulfill in our own minds, and do them instead. Rather, we cling at all times in faith to the works and merits of the Christ. For He has been sent by the heavenly Father, out of His great love for mankind, to do the works of the Law which we are unable to do and fulfill perfectly.

He does them for us—He has come down from Heaven to take upon our flesh—so that the love of the heavenly Father may be seen in His works. He has come to redeem us from sin and death by His own suffering and death. All this He does so that we might have eternal life in Heaven with Him. The Holy Ghost Who has been gifted to us teaches us this truth. We cling to this truth in faith, for we know that we have been trapped in the darkness of sin and death, and He has led us into the light of salvation. Therefore, we no longer desire to be trapped in the prison of death and Hell, but we desire to walk in the eternal realms of Heaven.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us cling in faith the Lord + Jesus and His works and merits. Let us listen to the Holy Ghost when He speaks into our ears the comforting Gospel of our Lord + Jesus, for He desires to give to us the reward of eternal life in Heaven. This reward is a free gift, for we have done nothing to earn. But our heavenly Father has loved us so much that He has sent to us His Beloved Son, that He might do what we could not, and open up the way to everlasting life. Thanks be to our loving Lord God. 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!