

Ember Wednesday within the Octave of the Feast of Pentecost

St. John 6:44-52

May 22nd, 2024

St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC

Fort Myers, FL

Pastor Jerald Dulas

They Shall All Be Taught of God

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“No man can come to Me, except the Father that sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me.”

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.

My dear friends, on this Ember Wednesday within the Octave of the Feast of Pentecost we hear our Lord + Jesus tell us that He has come down from Heaven—from the Father—to give us His flesh to eat. He is the Bread of Heaven, the Living Bread from Heaven. He does not mean by this that we eat His flesh in a cannibalistic way. As we teach in our Confessions, we do not support an Capernaite understanding of the Lord’s Supper, which is where this conversation between the Jews and our Lord + Jesus takes place in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. This conversation occurs in Capernaum after the feeding of the five thousand.

But our Lord is referring in this passage to Him being the means of salvation for all mankind. Whoever eats His flesh, that is, believes on Him as Redeemer and Savior, will have everlasting life. Like the manna that was given from Heaven in the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites, our Lord + Jesus has come down from Heaven to feed all those who cling to Him in faith with the Bread of Heaven. He comes to give us life and salvation. He is our sustenance and life. Without Him we will surely die.

It is no wonder that in this Octave of the Feast of Pentecost, that we get an allusion to a Sacrament by which the Holy Ghost performs His work. Indeed, we heard on Whit-Monday about another Sacrament by which the Holy Ghost enlightens all mankind. In the Gospel reading from the third chapter of St. John we hear our Lord + Jesus telling Nicodemus about Holy Baptism. We heard the second half of our Lord’s conversation with Him, when He tells us that this gift was all because the heavenly Father so loved the world. He gave us His Only-Beloved Son because He loved the world so much. He gave us Holy Baptism, and the work of the Holy Ghost because He loved the world so much.

Today, we hear about the other Sacrament, the Sacrament of the Altar. In this meal, we eat our Lord’s Body and drink His blood under bread and wine. By faith we eat the flesh of the Lord + Jesus. We sacramentally eat our Lord for the remission of our sins. By this sacramental eating the Holy Ghost creates faith and love in us. As our Lord + Jesus tells the men of Capernaum, it is written in the prophets

that they should all be taught of the Lord God. This is the work of the Holy Ghost. He teaches us through the Sacrament of the Altar that we have been given faith, that we have been forgiven of our sins, and by this we also have been given life and salvation. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation.

We are taught by the Holy Ghost that in eating our Lord's Body and Blood we have salvation, for we have the remission of our sins. We are taught by the Holy Ghost that our salvation is found only in the Lord + Jesus, only in His flesh and blood. We only have a Redeemer and Savior in the Lord + Jesus, in the One Who came down from Heaven by the sending of the heavenly Father. He alone is the Living Bread from Heaven. It is only the Lord + Jesus from which we can find life and salvation.

The same was true for the Israelites in the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. They only had life and salvation from the manna which the heavenly Father gave to them from Heaven. It was only through His work that they were kept alive. It was only by His working that they were given a Promised Land, an inheritance for their own. He provided for them all the fruits of the land. They did not receive anything in the land of Canaan without the Lord working it for them. They were given cities, and fields, and cattle. All that they needed for their earthly lives was given to them. But this gifting of earthly things by the Lord God served only as a precursor to the gifting of heavenly things.

Our Lord + Jesus reveals to us today that He is the source of all spiritual gifts that we receive. We receive them because He has sent to us His Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the One Who has washed us with the regenerating and renewing waters of life in Holy Baptism. We are born anew through the waters of Holy Baptism. That which was flesh, has now become spirit. Being a new creation means we are now gifted with the true Promised Land of Heaven.

The same is true of the Lord's Supper, the Sacrament of the Altar. We who have been baptized, who are now a new creation, can eat the Body and Blood of our Lord for the remission of our sins. We who cling in faith to Him can have our faith renewed and strengthened because the Living Bread of Heaven has come down to us to give us forgiveness of our sins. He has come to be our Redeemer and Savior. From Him we receive all of the spiritual gifts that are necessary for our salvation. He gives us faith to cling to Him. He gives us the remission of our sins. He gives us the promise of joining Him in the true Promised Land of Heaven. And He gives us the promise of being rescued and saved from our spiritual enemies, the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh.

All this the Holy Ghost teaches us. All this we cling to in faith because we have been taught by the Holy Ghost that these things are indeed true. The Holy Ghost teaches us about our Lord + Jesus. He teaches us about our Redeemer and Savior.

He has also taught us that we are poor, miserable sinners who could not have any salvation by our own works. Just as the Israelites in the wilderness would have starved if the Lord God had not sent them manna from Heaven, we would also spiritually starve if our Lord God had not drawn us to Him by the work of the Holy Ghost. We were dead in our sins and trespasses. A dead person cannot bring himself back to life. He cannot make a decision to choose the Lord + Jesus. No, we must be drawn to the heavenly Father through the work of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace. We are drawn to our heavenly Father, because through the work of the Holy Ghost our ears have heard and believed that through our Lord + Jesus we will have eternal life with Him. If we come to the heavenly Father, the Son will grant us eternal life. He will raise us from the dead on the Last Day.

This is why during this Octave of the Feast of Pentecost we give thanks for all that the Holy Ghost does for us poor sinners. For He baptizes us and washes us clean from sin. And He feeds us with the Living Bread from Heaven, our Lord + Jesus. By these means He enlightens our dark souls to step out of the darkness and into the marvelous light of salvation. He fills us with faith to believe that

we have forgiveness of all our sins. And where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation. Thanks be to 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!