

Midweek Lenten Vespers #3
St. John 8:42-51
March 26th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

If God Were Your Father

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Jesus said unto them, ‘If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of Myself, but He sent 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, our Lord + Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount that a person cannot serve two masters, either he will love the one or hate the other, or vice versa. He was talking about God and mammon, the pleasures of this world. There really are only two religions: the true religion of the worship of the One, True Triune God, and the false religion of the devil and the world. No one can be a part of both religions. Either a person will be faithful to the true religion or the false religion. No one can worship a true God and a false god at the same time. Especially considering that the Lord God is a jealous god. He does not tolerate His people chasing after false gods. He wants us to worship only Him.

He desires to be our heavenly Father. Like earthly fathers which in love take care of their children, our heavenly Father desires to treat us as dear children. He wants us to look upon Him as our dear Father. He does not want us to have any other father, other than the earthly father He has given us to so that His will may be done to us through our earthly fathers. Even our earthly fathers are given to us by the Lord God so that they may lead us to our true, eternal heavenly Father. They do this by putting the Word of God into our hands. They pray for us. They bring us to this house of worship to learn the liturgy and Who the Lord God is through the liturgy. Our earthly fathers teach us Who our true father is.

The same is true of our spiritual fathers. They have also been given to us by our heavenly Father to lead us back to Him. Bishops, Pastors, and Deacons preach and teach into our ears the saving Gospel of our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ. They pray for us. They perform their Office by baptizing, confirming, communing, marrying, and burying us. In all these things they prepare us to meet our heavenly Father on the day when He calls us out of this vale of tears to our eternal home. The task of the holy Ministers is to lead us to our heavenly Father; to prepare us for our eternal life in Heaven with all the saints and angels.

Through our earthly and spiritual fathers, the Holy Ghost works to create faith in us. They give us the Word of God and either bring us to, or give us the Blessed Sacraments, and by these things the

Holy Ghost creates faith in us to trust in our heavenly Father. The heavenly Father wants us to rejoice in His will. His will is that we believe on and cling to in faith His Only-begotten, and Beloved, Son, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. If we know the Christ, then we know the heavenly Father, for they are One God. The Father sent His Beloved Son to us to proclaim that He has taken upon Himself our flesh so that He may fulfill perfectly the whole will and Law of God, and that He might suffer and die for our sins, and the sins of the whole world.

When we cling to the cross of our Lord + Jesus has the source of our salvation, we also are clinging in faith to our heavenly Father. If we know the Lord + Jesus, we know the heavenly Father. And this is what our Lord wants. He wants us to know our heavenly Father. This is why He has given us so many earthly authorities to assist us in knowing our heavenly Father. For if we know Who our heavenly Father is, then we also have the true worship of the One, True God. If we know Who our heavenly Father is then we have the true religion, and we do not have the false religion of the devil and this world.

The false religion of the devil and this world always tries to destroy the true religion of the One, True Triune Lord God. They mock it, ridicule it, belittle the Christ and His work. They strive to get us to look to our own works, our own strengths, as a source of our salvation. They would have us rob the Lord + Jesus of His honor and glory by claiming that we have done even a little part in our salvation. For if we can save ourselves, even a little, what use is the Christ? What use is the Lord + Jesus? His sacrifice is in vain, and He died for nought. This is what the false religion of the world wants us to believe.

The devil uses his children in this world to lead us into sin, shame, dishonor of our Lord, and other great shame and deception. All so that we ultimately despair of salvation. The children of the devil do not truly know the heavenly Father, even if they claim to do so. This is the way it was with the Jews in today's Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. They claimed to have Abraham as their father. They claimed to have God as their Father. But they knew not neither Abraham nor the Lord God. Their father was the devil. This is evident because of the words they spoke.

The words of the father are the words of the sons. The children of the devil spoke only lies, just like their father, the devil. Their hearts were filled with murder, just like their father the devil. They desired to kill the Lord + Jesus. They did not want Him for their Messiah. They did not want Him to be their Savior. The devil also does not want anyone to have the Lord + Jesus as their Lord and Savior. He does not want anyone to receive forgiveness; no one to be justified; no one to enter into eternal life. He wants all mankind to end up in Hell with him and the other fallen angels. He desires to eternally kill each and every one of us. He desires to murder all of mankind.

Therefore, he spreads his lies into all the world. Many have believed his lies. Even their earthly fathers have led them to believe his lies. They have all been led into the false religion of the devil and the world. This false religion leads to eternal death and damnation.

But this is why the Lord + Jesus and our heavenly Father, and the Holy Ghost, work through our earthly and spiritual fathers to lead us into the truth; to lead us to the one, true religion of salvation. Our Triune Lord God desires that we, and all mankind, come to the knowledge of the truth of salvation in Him alone. The Church exists in this world to pull mankind out of the net into which they have been caught. Through the pure preaching of the Word of God, and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments the Lord God, our heavenly Father, is using all the means at His disposal to draw us to Himself; to bring us to the true worship of Him.

Through our earthly and spiritual fathers our heavenly Father has given us, we are brought into the ark of Church. We are brought to the true worship of the one, true religion of this world. He keeps

us in this true religion by continuing to preach and teach the Word of God among us. He preserves us in this true faith until the day we die. For we cannot serve two masters. Either we will hate the one and love the other, or love the one and hate the other. We cannot have both the devil and the heavenly Father as our father.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us continue steadfast in the Word of God and prayer. These are the things which our earthly and/or spiritual fathers have given into our hands for our benefit and our salvation. Through these things, as through means, the Holy Ghost works to strengthen, renew, and confirm our faith in our One, True heavenly Father, until He takes us to Himself to be with Him forever and ever in eternity in Heaven. Let us rejoice that He has rescued from the bonds of the devil and the world, and brought us into His everlasting Kingdom. We will be there someday. We will be reunited with all those who have departed in the faith, and who now rest secure in His loving, fatherly embrace. May our heavenly Father grant us to be preserved in this same faith, that we may join them when we are called out of death into eternal life. 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!