

Holy Tuesday
St. John 12:24-43
April 15th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

If I Be Lifted Up

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself.’ But this He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die.”

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, yesterday’s reading for Holy Monday ended rather abruptly. It ended in the middle of our Lord’s speech. It ends, “The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified.” This ending appears strange until one realizes that His statement is not a dismissal of the request of the Greeks who desired to see Him. If you remember, certain Greeks at the festival came to St. Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, who probably did business with the Greeks. He enlisted the help of St. Andrew, and they both came and told our Lord that certain Greeks wished to meet Him. The statement of our Lord that His hour is come seems like a dismissal. He does not have time to deal with Greeks because He has bigger and more important things to attend to.

But this is not what our Lord + Jesus is saying. As we heard yesterday, many of the Jews had already begun to believe on Him as the Messiah, the Son of the Lord God. They had either seen or heard about the raising of Lazarus from the dead, after he had been dead four days. It was unheard of, and it was sign that this Man + Jesus had great power over life and death. And so, the Jews were ready to receive Him as their Messiah, at least some of them. Others wanted to put Him to death, including the chief priests and Pharisees. But it was not just the Jews that began to believe on Him. St. John relates the narrative of the certain Greeks wishing to see our Lord + Jesus, because it meant that even the Gentiles began to believe on Him.

This would be the way it was after His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. When the Holy Ghost had been poured out upon the Church, many Jews were baptized and became members of the Church. They joined the Apostles and clung fast to their teachings, and shared in the breaking of the bread, and in the Divine Liturgy. Still, many Jews not only refused to believe, but persecuted those who did believe on the Lord + Jesus; those who had not only witnessed His death, but also His resurrection and ascension into Heaven. St. Paul was one of those who persecuted and killed the saints at first, until he was blinded by the Lord on his way to Damascus. After the rejection of the Jews, St. Paul would then go to the Gentiles, and preach the Gospel to them. They would gladly receive it. So that the whole

world would come to have believers on the Lord + Jesus.

This is the hour of our Lord's glory to which He is referring. "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." That there would be believers in the Lord + Jesus in the whole world is the end result of our Lord's glory. It begins though by His being lifted up on the tree of holy cross.

Our Lord is using an image from the Old Testament when He says this. He is hearkening back to the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. They were on their way around Edom, because the king of Edom refused to let them pass through the land, and they began to complain. It was the same complaints they had throughout their journeys: there was no water, no bread, and they began to despise the "light bread" which we know as manna. They dishonored the Lord God by complaining about His gift of manna. He fed them with the bread of Heaven, and they despised it. Therefore, the Lord God sent fiery serpents into the midst of them so that many of the Israelites died from being bitten by the fiery serpents.

After they repented, and had asked Moses to implore the Lord God for mercy, the Lord instructed Moses to set up a bronze snake in the midst of them, so that all anyone ever had to do was look upon the bronze serpent and he would be healed. All it took for them to be saved was to have faith in the bronze serpent that had been lifted up.

Our Lord + Jesus is saying the same thing about Himself here in this Gospel reading for Holy Tuesday from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. If He is lifted up upon the tree of the holy cross, He will draw all men to Himself. The whole world will cling to Him in faith, and be saved. For by His death, He will defeat the devil and all his power. He will be cast out, and the world will be judged. The world will be judged in His death. He will take their judgment upon Himself. He will be judged in their place, so that the power of the devil to accuse mankind of their sins will be taken away. There can no longer be any accusation brought against us, for our Lord + Jesus has been lifted up upon the tree of the holy cross and paid the penalty of our sins and transgressions.

This is why the Church is not ashamed to show our Lord's crucifixion and death upon a crucifix. It shows us the means by which we have been saved. It is not just a cross that saves us, but the suffering and death of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ upon that cross that saves us. Moses was instructed to make a bronze snake and place it upon a standard to be lifted up before the people so that they might be saved from the fiery serpents. It was not the standard alone, but the fiery serpent upon that standard, to which they could look and be saved. We look upon our Lord's crucifixion and death, and not just a cross, and know that His suffering and death atoned for our sins.

We can, therefore, look upon our Lord + Jesus having been lifted up and believe on Him and be saved. For it is not the cross that saves, but the Man + Jesus, Who is the Son of God, Who hangs upon that tree which saves us. He is the One Who perfectly fulfilled the Law of God, and He is the One Who offers up His life as a ransom for ours upon the tree of the cross. It is the Man Christ + Jesus Who saves us, not simply a cross. The cross means nothing if our Lord is not the One performing His passive obedience. The cross means nothing if our Lord is not on the cross being tormented and suffering our punishment. He must endure the cross and pain so that the payment of our transgressions may be paid in full.

Having completed our redemption, and the atonement of all mankind, we can now look upon that cross and be saved. The poison of that serpent the devil no longer holds its power over us. He can no longer accuse us of our sins. Our sins have been covered over by the sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. We now through Holy Baptism, bear His righteousness. We have by faith in Him put on His righteousness, and been baptized into His death. The poison of the devil no longer can harm nor kill us. Our transgressions have been forgiven in the sacrifice of the Christ. By faith we lay claim to the

forgiveness that He won for us. By the means of grace, that faith is bestowed upon us, so that we can look upon the Son of Man being lifted up upon the tree of the holy cross and be saved.

In this is the Son of Man—the Son of God—our Lord + Jesus, the Christ glorified. The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. His Name is now glorified in all the world. For those who cling to Him in faith come from all the world. Both Jews and Greeks, males and females, young and old believe on Him and are saved. All have looked upon the lifting up of the Son of Man—our Lord + Jesus—and have received salvation from the power of the devil. We have the forgiveness of all of our sins by His death. He died so that we might never see, nor taste of death. We will live forever in Heaven. All because the Lord + Jesus was lifted up upon the tree of the holy cross, so that all those who cling to Him in faith are drawn to Him and the salvation that He brings. Thanks be to our Lord Who has glorified His Name by being lifted up upon the tree of the holy cross. Let us cling to Him in faith and be saved. 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!