

Jubilate  
St. John 16:16-23a  
May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Fort Myers, FL  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## What Is This That He Saith?

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

“A little while, and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me.’ Some of His disciples therefore said one to another, ‘What is this that He saith unto us, “A little while, and ye behold Me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me:” and, “Because I go to the Father?”’ They said therefore, ‘What is this that He saith, “A little while?” We know not what He saith.’”

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

Merciful God, faithful Father, Who chastenest all whom Thou lovest, that they may not be condemned with the wicked, we beseech Thee, Thou wouldst comfort us in our afflictions with Thy Word and Holy Spirit, that by patience we may overcome the miseries of this present world, in the firm and joyful hope that Thou wilt speedily turn our sorrow into joy and glory everlasting; for the sake of Thy dear Son, + Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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, Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! Today is the halfway point of the Easter season. This is marked by a Sunday of rejoicing. The ancient name for today, taken from the first line of the antiphon of the Introit, is “Jubilate.” Today is a day of being jubilant, of being “joyful” as the Introit states. This is the third “rejoicing” Sunday of the Church’s year. If we were in Advent or Lent, the penitential seasons, the color of the day would be rose. The other two rejoicing Sundays are in Advent and Lent. They also mark the halfway points of their seasons, too. The penitential seasons are violet in color, and so, the rejoicing Sundays, in order to present their rejoicing nature, are a lighter shade of violet. In fact, they are halfway between violet and white, that is, rose. Just as rose, the color of the day, is halfway between white and violet, so are the Sundays on which that color is used.

We come to the halfway point between another season, the season of Easter. But since this season is not a season of penitence, but rather, a season of rejoicing, the color of the day reflects that. White is the color of the day. It is the color of rejoicing. It is the color of purity, of holiness, of righteousness. This is our cause for rejoicing. We have been purified by the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. We have been made holy through His works and merits. In our Holy Baptisms, we have put on the Christ. We have put on His righteousness. But this righteousness does not come simply because water and the Triune Name was placed upon us. We are righteous, because by faith we believe that the gifts bestowed and sealed upon us in the waters of Holy Baptism are truly ours. By faith we believe that we have truly been buried with the Christ in His death, so that just as He rose again from the dead, we too now have been raised from the dead by the work of the Holy Ghost, to be a new creation. We are now

holy and righteous. We now bear the works and merits of our Lord, through faith in His promises to us.

This is what our Lord + Jesus begins to prepare His Apostles, and us, for beginning on this Sunday of rejoicing, this Sunday of Jubilate, of being joyful. The halfway points of the two penitential seasons marked a shift in those seasons. In Advent, the season shifted its focus from the end times, to the forerunner, to St. John the Baptist, who prepared the way of the Lord's coming to us in our flesh at His incarnation and birth on Christmas Day. In Lent, the season shifted focus from our contemplation upon our sinfulness—our breaking of the Law of the Lord God—to the cross and Passion of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. One season focused on His birth, the other on His death. The season of Easter shifts its focus for the Church today, as well.

The first part of Easter focused on our Lord's resurrection from the dead, upon His conquering death and the grave, upon Him leading us away from the cruel clutches of Satan and death, into the eternal green pastures awaiting us in Heaven. The season now shifts to our Lord's departure from this earth, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Over the next several Sundays of the Easter season, our Lord + Jesus prepares His Apostles, and us, for His Ascension, and for the day of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Ghost.

This is why in today's Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John we hear about the confusion of the Apostles at the Lord's words. Our Lord in today's Gospel reading says the phrase, "A little while" seven times. Both in His initial proclamation, and in His explanation after the Apostles questioned amongst themselves, "What is this He saith?" Our Lord says this phrase seven times, seven the number of perfection, or completion, to emphasize that these events will not be long in coming.

Indeed, the first "little while" to which our Lord refers is to His crucifixion and death. In a little while, He would be arrested, tried, sentence to death, crucified, dead, and buried. They would see Him no more in a little while. He would be resting from His labors upon the tree of the holy cross, resting from His labors of redeeming mankind from their sins and trespasses. But then, in a little while, they would see Him again. On the third day, He would rise again from the dead, and they would see Him and rejoice and be joyful that He had conquered death and the grave. They would see Him in His own flesh. They would see Him as we see each other here today, face to face. And they would rejoice to see Him in His flesh. They would be joyful to see Him face to face after His crucifixion and death.

But our Lord + Jesus is also preparing the Apostles for the day when they would no longer see Him face to face. They would not be able to touch and hold Him, as we are able to touch and hold each other face to face this day. For, in a little while our Lord would ascend into Heaven, and sit upon the right hand of the heavenly Father upon the throne. From thence, He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. He would be with them always unto the end of the age, even as He is with us poor sinners until the Last Day, when He calls us into our eternal home. But He would not be with them in the same way He was with them now in the Upper Room on the night before His crucifixion and death. He would be ascended into Heaven.

And so, our Lord prepares His Apostles for the day when He would not be with them. Today, He prepares us for the day of His ascension. Our Lord ascended into Heaven to claim His throne. He now rules over all things. He claimed His throne by defeating all of His enemies: sin, death, and the devil. Our enemies have also been vanquished. We are now His subjects. We are a part of His Kingdom. Through the waters of Holy Baptism, we have been made citizens of Heaven. We are simply visitors in this world. We are sojourners and travelers seeking rest and comfort where we may find it in this evil and adulterous world. Our true home is in Heaven. In faith, we cling to that home. We long for that home.

This is why we are joyful today, it is why we rejoice today, because we know that our Lord +

Jesus has ascended into Heaven to prepare a home for us. We have His promise that He will come again on the Last Day to judge both the quick and the dead. He will raise us up from the dead, and give us new and glorious bodies. All of this will come to pass in a little while. We may be sojourners in this evil world, we may endure trial, temptation, persecution, pain, and sorrow, but in a little while, there will be eternal joy, for our Lord + Jesus will come again and take us to our eternal home.

It is this hope to which we cling to in faith as we await our Lord's coming. We can rejoice today, because our Lord has promised it to be so, and His promises are faithful, they always come to pass. Even as our Lord promised His Apostles on this night in the Upper Room that in a little while they would see Him no more, then they would see Him, and then again in a little while they would again see Him no more. We are in this time right now. Our Lord + Jesus has ascended into Heaven to take possession of His Kingdom. In a little while, He will come again to take us to Heaven to be with Him.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us rejoice and be joyful this day. For in a little while we will see our Lord + Jesus as the Apostles saw Him on this night in the Upper Room. We will see Him in His flesh. We will see Him face to face. We will see Him as we see each other here in this holy place. And of our joy there will be no end. Of our rejoicing there will be no completion. We will rejoice and sing for all of eternity. But while we wait for the little while to be completed, we have a foretaste of the heavenly joys. Our Lord has left us a meal of His very, real and substantial Body and Blood given to us in bread and wine for the remission of our sins. In this meal, we meet our Lord + Jesus in His Body and Blood. We meet Him where He said He would be until the Last Day when He calls us into our eternal home.

Let us, therefore, rejoice this day that we get to meet our Lord in His Body and Blood. For by this Body and Blood given in bread and wine, we are made righteous. We are made holy. We are given His works and merits to cover over all our sins and trespasses. In this meal, there is true cause for rejoicing, for being joyful, for we are given remission of all our sins. We are given eternal life and salvation. Thanks be to the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, for His wonderful gift to us, which sustains us in this life until He comes again to us. Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! 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!*