

The Festival of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession
St. John 8:31-36
June 25th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Abide in My Word

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed Him, ‘If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”

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 in Christ, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ promises that whoever abides in His Word will truly be His disciples. To abide in the Word of the Lord + Jesus is to abide in the truth. His Word is the truth. He is the Word. He is the truth. All who abide in Him abide in the truth. All who abide in His Word abide in the truth, for He is the Whom the Scriptures reveal to be the Savior of mankind. He is the truth, because He is the Savior of the world. He is the only Savior of the world. Therefore, He is the only truth. All other ways by which people try to save themselves are false ways. There are only two religions in the world: the true religion which places one's faith in the Lord + Jesus alone, just as the Epistle to the Churches of Galatia had said, and the false religion which seeks salvation from any other source than the true source.

Those who abide in the false religion are not in Christ, and He is not in them. They are not His disciples. For they do not know the truth. They have no need for the truth. In the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John for this evening, the Jews who had believed the Lord + Jesus wanted to place their faith and trust in their ancestor Abraham. They were Abraham's seed; therefore they believed themselves to be free. But the seed of Abraham, the Jews who had believed the Lord + Jesus, were not free. They were still in bondage to sin. And if one is in bondage to sin, they are also in bondage to death. There is no salvation for one bound in death's grasp.

Those who are found in death's grasp cannot free themselves. They are trapped by death's grim clutches. This is mankind's condition on account of their manifold sins and trespasses. They are trapped in both sin and death. There is no escape for those who rely on their own works and merits to free themselves. The Jews in today's Gospel reading could not free themselves from death's grasp even though they had Abraham as their father. It is only the Son of God Who can make mankind free from sin and death. This is why those who abide in His Word have salvation, for the Word points those who hear it to the Christ, to the Lord + Jesus, Who is the One and Only Savior of the world.

Salvation is found only in Him. It is only through faith in Him that a person can be saved. It is

only through faith in the Lord + Jesus by which someone may be justified before the Lord God. But this is a scandal—a death trap—to the Jews, for they want to cling to their ancestry as the means of salvation. They want to believe that because they are the people of Israel that they will be saved. They want to believe that salvation is because of their genetics. The rest of the world also rejects salvation by faith alone, too. To them it is foolishness, it is silliness. How can one be saved by simply believing in the Lord + Jesus and His works and merits.

Mankind always wants to contribute to their salvation in some way. Whether that be the Jews trusting in their ancestry, or the Greeks trusting in their own wisdom, or the rest of the unbelieving world who place their trust in their own righteousness. A person never judges themselves to be imperfect. We tend to see ourselves in a much better light than in which we actually abide. We judge ourselves more righteous than we actually are. Therefore, it is easy for mankind to believe that they are free and are worthy of salvation when they really are not. For we do not require ourselves to be perfect. We only expect that of other people.

But our Triune Lord God does require us to have perfect righteousness. This is not something which we can obtain by our own works and merits. There is no good work which we can do which can cover over our multitude of sins and trespasses. This is why faith justifies. For faith looks for a means of salvation outside of itself. It latches onto the suffering and death of the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. It clings to the resurrection of our Lord + Jesus. It holds fast to all that the Lord + Jesus did to win salvation for mankind, and trusts that because of the grace of the Lord + Jesus, it will be gifted with redemption and salvation.

If we abide in the Lord + Jesus, we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. For the truth reveals that salvation is found only in Him. This is what we hear from this Gospel reading today on the Festival of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession. We hear this today, this text has been chosen for this festival day, because this is the point the Lutherans made in their presentation of the Augsburg Confession on this date, June 25th, of the year of our Lord 1530. The Papists had been teaching, and desired to keep on teaching, that men were saved by their own merits. The Lutheran Reformers declared that it was faith in the works and the merits of the Christ which save mankind.

This was rejected by the Papists because it was not very lucrative to have people believing that they did not need indulgences and the other abuses which kept mankind trapped in a cycle of having to do enough good works in order to be saved. They desired to keep mankind in bondage to their works. And by keeping them in bondage to their works, they remained in bondage to their sins, and to death. The Papists held the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, and made sure everybody was kept out unless they paid handsomely.

The Lutherans desired freedom from the works of the Law, they desired to be free from sin and death. They found that freedom in the Word of the Lord God. They heard the words of the Christ declaring that freedom was found in the Son of God, in the Lord + Jesus. Salvation was found in the works and the merits of the Christ. What freedom that brought to those who were sore oppressed by the works righteous religion of the Papists! Now they no longer needed to worry about whether or not they did enough works to merit eternal life in Heaven. Now they had a source in which to go for salvation which did not cost money. They found that those who abide in the Christ, and in His Word, have salvation. For they have the truth. The truth reveals that our Lord and Savior, + Jesus, the Christ, has done all things necessary for our salvation already.

He has perfectly fulfilled the Law which we are unable to fulfill even a little. He paid the penalty of our transgressions by offering up His life as a ransom for ours upon the tree of the holy cross. All who abide in this Word of truth, abide in the Christ, and He abides in them. For they abide in the one, true religion of the world, the religion that declares that salvation is found in the works and merits of the

Christ alone.

Therefore, my dear friends in Christ, let us abide in Him, that He may abide in us. Let us not place our trust in ourselves, our good works, our righteousness, our holy living, but rather let us place our faith in the One Who has endured all pain and suffering to buy us back from sin, death, and the power of the devil with His own dear and precious blood on the tree of the holy cross. It is faith in Him which justifies. It is faith in Him which sets us free from sin and death. It is by faith in Him by which we are made His true disciples. For faith clings to His holy Word, and desires to hear from Him all that the Word desires to reveal to us. The Word reveals that we have a Savior in the Son of the Lord God. We have a Savior in the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. It is in Him in which we abide, for He abides in us through His holy Word. 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!