

The Third Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 15:1-10
July 6th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

There Is Joy in the Presence of the Angels

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Gracious Lord + Jesus Christ, Who camest into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, and art not ashamed of the company of sinners, we thank Thee for Thy goodness, and beseech Thee, grant that we may daily be found walking in sincere repentance, and there be joy in Heaven over every sinner that repenteth; for Thy Name's sake, Who livest and reignest with the Father 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, as we will hear more in-depth next Sunday, today's Gospel is all about faith and mercy. Faith in the Lord God produces mercy. Faith in the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, produces mercy. Mercy comes from having faith in the Triune Lord God. That the Pharisees and scribes in the Gospel reading for today from the Evangelist St. Luke murmur against the Lord + Jesus that He was receiving sinners shows that they have no mercy and no faith. It reveals their unbelief. For faith produces mercy. What is mercy? It is not treating someone the way that he deserves to be treated. What is faith? Faith is trust in someone or something in which we find comfort and counsel.

We can have faith in many things: our jobs, our relationships, our favorite sports team, our finances, etc. By having faith in these things, however, we are placing our trust in false gods. For these things will always let us down. We can lose our job, our relationships can be shattered by infidelity, our finances can always come up short of what we need, and our favorite sports team always loses the big game in the end. These false gods will let us down time and time again. This is why true faith places its trust in the One, True, Triune Lord God. He never lets us down. He continually cares for us. Providing both sun and rain for our lawns and gardens. He continually is giving us his holy Word to create, renew, strengthen, and preserve the faith which He created in us by the work of the Holy Ghost. This faith that He created in us, clings to Him in times of trouble and woe. It clings to Him in our lives are going great. In wealth or woe, we firmly place our trust in Him, and He continues to be a God to us.

This faith in our Triune Lord God produces in us mercy. For faith teaches us how much of a poor, miserable sinner we truly are. Faith leads us to see our great need for mercy from the Lord God. On account of our sins, we deserve the Lord God's eternal wrath and displeasure. We deserve an eternity in hell. We deserve death, and every pain and suffering this life can throw at us. But our Triune Lord God in His mercy, does not treat us the way that we deserve to be treated. No, rather, He treats us with love and compassion. We have proof of His mercy right here in this place. He is treating us with mercy

by preaching into our ears the saving Gospel of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. He is showing us mercy by providing for us the Blessed Sacraments. He has baptized us, He has absolved us of our sins, and He feeds us with the very Body and Blood of the Lord + Jesus in bread and wine.

Through all this He daily and graciously forgives us all of our sins and trespasses. In all this, He shows us mercy. It is this mercy that produces faith in us to cling to Him like a burr on a dress. For we see how gracious He is toward us. This was the response of the publicans and sinners in the Gospel reading for today. They knew their sin. They were well aware of their transgressions. We know that this is true from the one word in the Gospel pericope that our Lord + Jesus uses. That word is "repent." What does it mean to repent? Well, first it is an act of faith. Faith must first exist in order for a person to "repent." Repentance does not come before faith. It is not like the Reformed bodies falsely teach that one must repent, and then that leads to faith. Repentance is a fruit of faith. We cling to the graciousness of the Lord God, and in so doing we are led into repentance. To repent literally means to turn around, or away from; to turn back.

This is why our Lord + Jesus uses it in regard to the publicans and sinners. They had repented. That is, they turned away from their sins and transgressions. They did not want to be sinners anymore. To use the language of the two parables our Lord tells in this Gospel reading, they no longer wanted to be lost sheep, stuck out in the wilderness away from the flock. They no longer wanted to be lost coins, hid from their master. They no longer desired to be sinners. They desired to be shown mercy. It was from the Lord + Jesus that they received the mercy they sought. This is why they clung to Him in faith. This is why they repented. They found the mercy that they so desperately desired. Therefore, they turned back from their sinful ways, and clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus.

This is one of the errors that is put forth when this text is taught by the false teachers. When the Gospel states that our Lord received publicans and sinners, it does not mean that they remained in their sins and trespasses. He received them because they repented. This was why there was joy in the presence of the angels of the Lord God, because a sinner had turned away from being a sinner, and sought the mercy and grace of the Lord God. They rejoiced because that person no longer wanted to be a sinner. He wanted to be done and away from it. That person hungered and thirsted for righteousness, and found it in the Lord + Jesus alone.

They certainly were not going to find in from the Pharisees and scribes. They gave the impression to the world that they were righteous and followed the Law of the Lord God. But their hearts were far from the Lord God. This is revealed in the text for today. The fact that they were murmuring against the Lord + Jesus that people were turning from their sinful lives shows their unbelief. The fact that they refused to show mercy to their fellowman shows their unbelief. When they saw the publicans and sinners turning away from their sinful lives, they should have rejoiced with the angels of the Lord God. The angels in the presence of the Lord God were certainly rejoicing! But the hardness of their hearts would not let them show mercy to these poor, miserable sinners. It is probably why their preaching fell on deaf ears; why their preaching did not lead to the repentance of these publicans and sinners. For the publicans and sinners did not receive any evidence that they would be shown mercy by the Pharisees and scribes if they did repent.

They found that mercy in the Lord + Jesus. In faith they clung to His mercy. It stands to reason that they showed that mercy to their fellowman, because it was not just one sheep, or one coin that repented of his sins. There were many publicans and sinners who repented of their sin and in faith turned toward to the Lord + Jesus. And in faith, showed mercy for their neighbors by telling them about the Lord + Jesus, and bringing them to hear His Word, too.

This is how we show mercy. This is how we show that faith dwells within us. We allow that faith and trust in the Lord God that dwells in us, to come out and affect all those who would listen. We share

with them the faith that dwells in us. We show mercy by bringing them into the sheep pen. We show mercy by sweeping the dust of sin and rebellion away from their eyes by sharing the Word of the Lord God with them. We show mercy by rejoicing when one sinner repents.

We must not get discouraged, however, when the sharing of our faith falls upon deaf ears. For the Lord + Jesus certainly did not preaching, even up to, and upon the cross in which He offered up His life as a ransom for ours. He continued to show mercy by preaching repentance towards the forgiveness of sins. But the Pharisees and scribes, and many others, refused to hear Him. They rejected His teachings, because they had already rejected the Lord God. They did not know Him to begin with. Therefore, being without faith, they were without mercy. They could not rejoice that a sinner had turned from being a sinner and clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus.

This ultimately was their problem. They hated the Lord + Jesus. They did not want Him to be the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One of the Lord God. Therefore, in rejecting Him, they rejected all those who turned toward Him. In their self-righteousness, it was easy for them to place themselves over those publicans and sinners who turned from their sinful ways. The Pharisees and scribes refused to see the unbelief and sinfulness in themselves, and so they hardened their hearts against the Lord + Jesus and murmured against Him that His preaching was changing the hearts of the publicans and sinners, and converting them into believers on the Lord + Jesus.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us also show mercy for our fellowman. Let us not bar the way, and when it is in our power, even invite them to this place to hear the Word of the Lord God. For it is in this place where the Lord + Jesus still seeks the lost sheep, and sweeps the house to find the lost coin. He does this through the pure preaching of the Gospel, and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments. We receive these things here in this place. All who come through those doors receives those things. These gifts of the Lord God create and sustain faith in us. With this faith we desire to show mercy to all the lost sheep and coins who are in this world. We welcome sinners into this place, for we know that in this place their hearts will be changed to no longer be a sinner. And when this happens, we can rejoice with the angels who are in the presence of the Lord God, for a sinner has repented, and turned in faith to the One True Savior of the world. 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!