

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 9:1-8
October 26th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald P. Dulas

Thy Sins Are Forgiven

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, ‘This Man blasphemeth.’ And + Jesus knowing their thoughts said, ‘Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, “Thy sins are forgiven;” or to say, “Arise, and walk?” But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins’ (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), ‘Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who, by Thy Son, hast promised us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life: we beseech Thee so to rule and govern our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit that in our daily need, and especially in all time of temptation, we may seek help from Him, and by a true and lively faith in Thy Word obtain the same; through + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, 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, it is truly a remarkable thing that our Lord + Jesus does for this man sick of the palsy. We are told in another Gospel that in the house with the Lord there was a great crowd, a crowd so great that the friends of this man sick with the palsy could not get in to see the Lord + Jesus. What do they do? We are told that they went up on the roof and removed the roof tiles and let down the man in front of the Lord. Now, my dear friends, we should assume, as it is with all construction, that this removing of the roof tiles was not a silent endeavor; it would have created some noise. And, as it is with all disturbances, we can imagine that the crowds started looking up at the roof to see what was going on, and that they continued to look up while this whole scenario was taking place. From the illustration on the cover of the bulletin we can ascertain just how much of the roof needed to be removed to let this man on his bed down. Therefore, this man sick of the palsy, and his friends, had the full attention of the crowds, and especially of the Lord + Jesus.

This is why the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew relates the fact that our Lord saw their faith, not just the man’s faith, but the faith of this man’s friends, who were willing to destroy the roof of the place where our Lord was living, in order to place this man in front of the Lord + Jesus so that He might be healed. Our Lord, seeing their faith, does what? We would assume after all that disturbance by the removing of the roof tiles, that the Lord would heal this man. After all, is not this the most important need of this man? Is not his palsy the most immediate need that this man has? This is why we can say that what our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, does for this poor man is truly remarkable. For our Lord heals this man of his most pressing need: He heals him of his sins.

Our Lord who sees the heart and mind knows that the trouble that stresses this man the most is

not his palsy, but his sin. This is how our Lord deals with us as well. We may have other needs that the world would point to and say, "This need is more important," but our Lord sees the trouble that lays heavy on our hearts and does not say, "Arise, and walk" to us at the first, but He addresses our most pressing need by saying, "Thy sins are forgiven."

Now the scribes that were there (for they were always watching the Lord in their unbelief to see if He would make a mistake) say within themselves, "This man blasphemeth." This accusation of blasphemy is not because of the words our Lord says, it is because of the intent behind them. The scribes point out a scriptural and theological truth: that only the Lord God can forgive sins. We discussed this in our catechetical instruction that we had at the beginning of the year. Only the Lord God can forgive sins. What the scribes are accusing our Lord + Jesus of is not just saying something that a man should not be saying, but that the Lord + Jesus is making Himself out to be God. The Lord, in saying "Thy sins are forgiven" was declaring Himself to be the Lord God. The scribes who did not believe on the Lord + Jesus, in their unbelief, accuse Him of blasphemy.

Therefore, our Lord knowing their thoughts, shows that He does indeed have authority to forgive men's sins. For He is the Lord God incarnate. He is the Lord God in our flesh. God has become man. The Lord God is the Lord + Jesus, and the Lord + Jesus is the Lord God. He has authority on earth to forgive the sins of mankind. He has authority to say to this man sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." And to show the unbelieving scribes that these words of absolution are not just empty words, He says to the man sick of the palsy, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house." So, what does the man sick with the palsy do? "He arose, and departed to his house." Showing to the scribes, to the crowds, and to all that would hear about this healing, that the Lord + Jesus was indeed the Christ of the Lord God. For only someone sent from the Lord God could forgive sins. Only the Messiah, who was both God and man could forgive sins.

What does this mean for the absolution that the minister declares at the beginning of the Service? Or for anytime that he speaks words of forgiveness into our ears? If only the Lord God can forgive sins, how can the minister say that our sins are forgiven? The crowds in at the end of the Gospel pericope from St. Matthew tell us. For this whole scene cause them great fear and caused them to glorify the Lord God, for He had given such authority to mankind. When the minister says, "I forgive thee all thy sins" he is acting on behalf of the Lord God. He is declaring this in the stead, and by the command of the Lord + Jesus, Who has given such authority to mankind.

In other words, the forgiveness of sins which is declared to us by the minister is not coming simply from someone dressed in vestments, but our sins are forgiven by the Lord God Himself through the words of the minister. The pastor is only declaring the words that he was commanded by the Lord God to speak. This is why when the minister performs the works of his Office—the Office of the Holy Ministry—we can be sure that these are efficacious for us for the pastor is only acting in the stead and by the command of the Lord + Jesus. He is acting on behalf of the Lord God.

Therefore, when the Church baptizes someone, it is not the minister who is doing the baptizing. It is the Lord God, Who puts connects His words to the water and washes away the sins of the one being baptized. It is the Lord God Who in the waters of Holy Baptism makes the newly baptized His own dear child. We who have been baptized have been made by the Lord God to be free from sin and death. It is the Lord God Who buries us with the Christ in His death, and raises us to a new life of holiness and innocence before Him. He is the One Who makes us a new creation, so that daily we may in contrition and sorrow, confess our sins, and drown the Old Adam, and be raised as a new creature before the Lord God. This is why we daily and often make the sign of the holy cross, so that we remind ourselves, daily and often, that we are the Lord God's own dear child, and He has washed us clean of all our sins.

He declares this forgiveness to us through the mouth of the minister. When the pastor declares in the Absolution that our sins are forgiven, we can know for certain that we are forgiven. But if we are not sorrow for our sins, or feel no hunger or thirst for righteousness; if we consider our sins to be a light thing, something that is no great deal, then the minister, by the command of the Lord + Jesus, retains our sins. He withholds the absolution from the impenitent as long as they do not repent. This is why in the Absolution formula that the minister speaks, he declares that the forgiveness is only for those who truly repent of their sins. It is for those who humbly confess their sins, see their great need, and desire that forgiveness.

The Lord + Jesus saw the great need of the man sick of the palsy, it was not his paralysis, but the condition of his heart. This is how the Lord desires for us to come to Him, not in haughtiness and pride, but in humbleness and lowliness of heart. This man could not come to the Lord + Jesus himself. He had to have his friends bear him before the Lord. This how much sin had affected this man. He could in no wise heal himself. He could in no wise free himself of the burden of sin that tore away at his heart. In was only the Lord + Jesus who could heal his sin-sick heart and free him of the burden that sin had inflicted upon him.

This is how we are to come to this holy altar to receive our Lord's true and substantial Body and Blood given us in, with, and under bread and wine. For we do not come to kneel before this altar to receive bread and wine from the minister, but we come to receive the Lord + Jesus Himself given in bread and wine at the hands of the minister. This bread and this Cup give what the Lord + Jesus Himself declares: "the remission of all your sins." We come to this altar to receive from the Lord + Jesus Himself the forgiveness of sins for which we hunger and thirst. And the minister, in the stead, and by the command of the Lord + Jesus imparts this remission of sins to us by placing the host in our mouths, and giving us to sup from the Cup which places the Lord's true blood upon our lips.

This, my dear friends, is a truly remarkable thing. For by simple water, and simple bread and wine, our Lord + Jesus gives to us, by the hand of the minister, the forgiveness of all our sins. He gives us the healing of our greatest malady. He heals our sin-sick hearts, and grants us forgiveness for all our sins. Even though we be unworthy on account of our manifold sins and trespasses, our Lord + Jesus sees our great need, and in His compassion forgives us all our sins, through the mouth of the minister.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us with great fear, glorify the Lord God, for He has sent His Only-Begotten Son to take upon Himself our flesh, and fulfill the Law of God which we break, and suffer the penalty of sins which we desire for our transgressions, and declares to us, "Thy sins are forgiven." Therefore, let us arise and walk in righteousness and holiness all our days, giving thanks to the Lord + Jesus for all His benefits to us. For He has healed us of our sins, and welcomes us into His eternal home in heaven. 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!