

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 246, 248, 309, 45

The INTROIT

(Ps.27:7,9,1)

P: Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice;

C: Thou hast been my Help.

P: Leave me not, neither forsake me;

C: O God of my salvation.

P: The Lord is my Light and my Salvation;

C: whom shall I fear?

The COLLECT

O God, who has prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love toward Thee that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 16:14-21

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. For mine eyes *are* upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes. And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things.

O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and *things* wherein *there is* no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they *are* no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name *is* The LORD.

The GRADUAL

(Ps.84:9,8; 21:1)

P: Behold, O God, our Shield:

C: and look upon Thy servants.

P: O Lord God of hosts:

C: hear our prayer. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: The king shall joy in Thy strength:

C: and in Thy salvation, how greatly shall he rejoice! Hallelujah!

The EPISTLE

1 Peter 3:8-15

Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing;

knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.

And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Ps. 119:124)

P: Hallelujah! O Lord, deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy and teach me Thy statutes. I am Thy servant, give me understanding:

C: that I may know Thy testimonies. Hallelujah!

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Luke 5:1-11

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

1 Peter 3:8-15 — “Knowing that Into This You-all Were Called”

INTRODUCTION

I. KNOWING THAT INTO THIS YOU-ALL WERE CALLED

II. FOR THE ONE WILLING LIFE TO LOVE

III. BUT THE LORD GOD SANCTIFY IN THE HEARTS OF YOU-ALL

CONCLUSION

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1 Peter 3:8-15 — “Knowing that Into This You-all Were Called”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The appointed Epistle reading for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity is 1 Peter 3:8-15:

Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.

And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

“**Finally, . . .**” Thus reads our text. Literally it reads, “**But now the end**” or “**And now the terminus.**” With this St. Peter brings us to the goal and conclusion of what he began setting before us in chapter two. At the beginning of chapter two he sets before us the beginning, where we approach the matters of the life that is by faith as newborn babes, desiring the sincere milk of the Word. In today’s portion of this Epistle we hear him draw us to the fullness and terminus of this faith.

However, both the beginning and the end have the same content. Both the beginning and the end of the life that is by faith look the same. The only real difference is that at the beginning, as newborn babes, we look to others. In the end we confess the faith in the unity of the same mind, having grown together into the same understanding. In the beginning the Holy Spirit comes to us and imparts the fullness of the faith by which we are made to be born into the kingdom of God, the holy catholic Church on earth. In the end, by the working of the Spirit through the continual preaching of the Word and through our continual communion with God in the Holy Sacrament, we are brought to the fullness or the end of faith, the singleness of mind of this one true faith. This unity of the same minding or *homophrones* is developed and strengthened through the many trials and sufferings that we endure together in the name of Jesus.

I. KNOWING THAT INTO THIS YOU-ALL WERE CALLED

Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for

railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

It is of significance that in this first verse of our text St. Peter uses no verbs, only adjectives. He writes:

Now the end, all same-minded, sympathetic, affectionate-brotherly (philadelphoi), well-boweled, affectionate-minded, . . .

This is not an admonition. This is not an imperative or command. This is a description of what the life of faith in God's Holy Communion is. This is what is observed regarding those who have suffered and endured together as the brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a statement of what we are to do, but of who we are as those who have been born into the holy family of God in Christ through faith.

In verse nine the apostle uses verbs. Until now he has been stating factually the description of what the Holy Spirit works in us as He brings us more and more into the awareness of whom we have been regenerated to be through Baptism. This is all the Holy Spirit's work, and we are the blessed recipients, as newborn babes, being nurtured and reared in the communion of the gracious love of our heavenly Father.

Not giving-over evil in place of evil or railing in place of railing, but contrariwise well-speaking (blessing), having known that into this you-all were called in order that well-word (blessing) you-all should inherit.

The two verbs are present active participles. First St. Peter declares what we will not be actively doing. Because of what the Holy Spirit has worked among us, we will not be actively giving over evil in place of evil or railing in place of railing. When others act badly toward us, we will not be inclined to give over bad in place of bad and we will not be inclined to rail in place of railing. St. Peter goes on to explain why.

The second verb tells what we will be actively doing because of who we have regenerated to be. St. Peter writes that our actions will be the opposite of what anyone would expect. He says, "**contrariwise well-speaking**" will be our response to those who act badly toward us and rail against us. This word for "well-speaking" is also used as "blessing."

Notice that this well-speaking or blessing is not in the form that people often imagine. This is not a choice that we make. This well-speaking does not have its origin in us. Contrarily, this well-speaking is what we ourselves know that we have received. What we give out in response to the evil and railing of others is not what we have within us, but contrarily, it is from our inheritance. This is the well-speaking that God speaks concerning us in our baptism. This is the blessing that God pours out to us without limit as our everlasting inheritance. The blessing or well-speaking with which we respond to others is not our own blessing or well-speaking, but rather, it is the blessing or well-speaking of God's grace to us in Christ Jesus. We respond with this blessing of God because we have heard this gracious Word of blessing from God and it has taken root in our hearts and rules our minds so that it generates in us the same-thinking as God thinks toward us. We have been born of His love so that we live in His grace, mercy, and peace. His love and His peace fill us so completely as He draws us to the means of grace where He continually renews us in His love and peace that His love and peace spill over in our actions to others.

II. FOR THE ONE WILLING LIFE TO LOVE

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.

The opening phrase is even more clear as St. Peter writes it. **“For the one willing life to love and to see days good, . . .”** The one willing, that is, wishing or desiring, life to love, is descriptive of the newborn child of God who desires the sincere milk of the Word and thereby draws together with those who gather to the pure Word and Sacraments so as to grow into the same-mindedness. One with such a desire also desires to see days good, days that are made good in connection with God’s holy communion.

This phrase is quite unusual. It does not match the thinking of the world. **“The one willing life to love and to see days good.”** According to the way of speaking that we hear apart from the Word of God, who ever even begins to talk of anyone being willing life to love? Does anyone even imagine that a person could be found who did not love life and would not be willing to love life?

This is because the world and our flesh do not know the meaning of life. According to the thinking of our flesh and of the world we think of life in terms of selfish desire. We think in terms of what is in it for me. But this is not the way of one who is willing life to love.

You see, the only one who is truly willing life to love is God. God is love. He is the one who created us in love. He is the one who planned even from eternity to redeem us and restore us to the life that we would despise and throw away. He established from the very beginning the life that included fullness of days good. But we, according to our fleshly desires do not seek days good. We do not desire the days that are ordered by God’s goodness. Rather, we seek days that are ordered according to our own selfishness, and so we are not willing life to love, and so we do not concern ourselves with what is good for all, but only with what we selfishly crave for ourselves.

The one who wills life to love and to see days good gives Himself for the sake of all. He comes to us through His Word to restore life and goodness to all who will receive Him through the means by which He has ordained to bless us.

This is why St. Peter continues, saying,

For the one willing life to love and to see days good, . . . let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

If we are willing life to love and to see days good, where will our hearts lead us? Will we not find ourselves drawn to the communion where life is loved and every day is the Sabbath day and is kept holy? Will we not naturally refrain our tongues from speaking selfishly, so that rather than demanding to have our “felt-needs” supplied that we will eagerly and earnestly desire to hear the gracious Word of the Gospel and to come to the Sacrament to be renewed in the forgiveness of Christ’s blood and the unity of His body? Will we not naturally refuse to speak guile, that is,

words of falseness and deceit, but rather hold fast to the pure doctrine of God's gracious preaching? Will we not eschew evil, that is, drive out all false doctrine and false worship so as to ensure that the congregation receives only the good and gracious acts of God in His Church? Will we not seek and actively pursue the peace of God that surpasses all understanding and guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus?

Is there any other way for the one willing to love life and to see days good?

III. BUT THE LORD GOD SANCTIFY IN THE HEARTS OF YOU-ALL

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

Does this not sound like what St. Paul writes in Romans 8?

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When we act as the Holy Spirit leads us so that we are willing life to love and to seek days good, do others ordinarily seek to harm us for this? When others speak evil against us and the Holy Spirit overpowers our sinful nature so that we do not speak evil, but contrarily speak kindly and act kindly in return, when others take advantage of us and the Holy Spirit takes our vengefulness and converts it to compassion so that we act kindly to those who hurt inside and act out against us on account of their anguish of body, mind, and spirit, are they not very often changed in their hearts toward us? Are they not inclined to wonder why we respond with willingness life to love and to seek days good rather than to hate life so as to become vengeful and disillusioned? When everything around us seems to work against us and instead of becoming depressed we turn to partake of the Eucharist and come forth in the Holy Communion refreshed and renewed with willingness again life to love and to seek days good, even with darkness encroaching in the world, do not our neighbors see this and are they not filled with wonder?

This is what St. Peter means that we should sanctify the Lord God, or the Lord Christ, in our hearts. In this way God renews in us the willingness life to love and to seek good days, and His love and life and goodness shine forth in us and through us in our actions. Then, when people come to us and ask for an explanation concerning the hope that is in us, we are well prepared to give answer to them. We answer them with the well-speaking that God speaks to us and for all who will hear it. We answer with the preparation of the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. We answer with the preparation of Baptism that motivates us and fills us with hunger for God's righteousness that He offers us continually in the Holy Supper. We answer with

what God promises and gives through the means of grace in His Holy Communion where the pure Word and the pure Sacraments are administered freely and without compromise. And yes, when those who hate Christ and His Church do persecute us and act hatefully toward us, like the saints of old we rejoice and count ourselves blessed, for we know that they act this way because of the blessedness that we have freely received and that they may also receive if only they will hear the witness that the Holy Spirit speaks through us. We count ourselves blessed and happy because we know that we are heirs of what God offers to all the world, and we know that through our sufferings God is putting His powerful Gospel on display for all to behold, so that some, like Saul of Tarsus, will eventually be converted and saved.

CONCLUSION

Is this not a wonderful description of the communion of the saints that the Holy Spirit declares to us through St. Peter? Is it not wonderful to hear that this is not something that we must make happen for ourselves or choose for ourselves, but contrarily, it is what God has already worked for us and poured out upon us in Baptism and continually renews in us through His Holy Supper? Is it not wonderful to hear that our growth to maturity and fullness of understanding of the faith is entirely God's work that He brings us to the awareness of through the trials that we otherwise would fear? Is it not wonderful to hear that the things that we otherwise fear and avoid in this world have been planned by God to work good for us and for those who come to hear of Him as they see His gracious activity and faithfulness in our sufferings and trials? Is it not wonderful to hear that the poor miserable person that we see in the mirror and that we kneel together to confess is pronounced to be converted by God's righteousness to be an heir of everlasting blessedness declared by God Himself? Oh how blest we are to be the recipients of God's well-speaking, and to be those who have been regenerated to be well-speakers of His well-speaking! In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.