

The Third Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 43, 238, 372, 50

The INTROIT

(Ps.25:16,18,1,2)

P: Turn Thee unto me and have mercy upon me;
C: for I am desolate and afflicted.
P: Look upon mine affliction and my pain;
C: and forgive all my sins.
P: Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;
C: O my God, I trust in Thee, let me not be ashamed.

The COLLECT

O God, the Protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, increase and multiply upon us Thy mercy that, Thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal; 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

Micah 7:18-20

Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

The GRADUAL

(Ps. 55:22,16,18; 18:1,2)

P: Cast thy burden upon the Lord:
C: And He shall sustain thee.
P: I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me:
C: He hath delivered my soul in peace. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
P: I will love Thee, O Lord, my Strength:
C: The Lord is my Rock and my Fortress and my Deliverer. Hallelujah!

The EPISTLE

1 Peter 5:6-11

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*. To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

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 15:1-10

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found *it*, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found *it*, she calleth her friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

1 Peter 5:6-11 — “Be Humbled Therefore”

INTRODUCTION

- I. BE HUMBLLED THEREFORE
- II. BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT, BECAUSE
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1 Peter 5:6-11 — “Be Humbled Therefore”

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

The Epistle reading appointed for the Third Sunday after Trinity is 1 Peter 5:6-11:

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

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

INTRODUCTION

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

Can we hear these words often enough? Is there any message that we need more? When we hear these words, do we really understand them and hear them? Today’s text is rightly understood only when these words rule our hearts and minds.

I. BE HUMBLLED THEREFORE

The opening words of our text reflect what St. Peter received from the Lord Jesus. These words reflect an understanding that was given to St. Peter against his will. This understanding is the exact opposite of what St. Peter understood according to his own reason and strength. Sadly, most of our translations do not actually say what St. Peter records for us. St. Peter writes:

Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that you-all He should exalt in due time.

There are scriptural texts where this humbling of self is presented as an action, but here St. Peter presents the imperative as passive. Here we are told that this humbling is an action in which we are to exist, an action that is from outside of us and is done upon us by a power that is beyond ourselves.

When one understands what the Holy Spirit moved St. Peter to teach us, the other passages that speak of humbling ourselves make sense in connection with what we are taught

about God's grace. This understanding was far beyond the Pharisees and scribes in today's Gospel reading. This understanding remains far beyond most who profess to be Christians today.

“Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God,” is not something that we are commanded to do for ourselves. Rather, it is the realization that comes over us when we look up and see God for who He is. If we should paint a picture of what this is it would be a picture of a toddler looking up while clinging to his daddy's leg with one hand and reaching up with the other hand expecting to be lifted up and held close in Daddy's loving embrace and powerful protection.

This is not a picture of what one chooses for oneself. It is a picture of what is born in a person according to the person's relationship under the mighty hand of God. This is simply the natural condition of one who lives under the mighty hand of God by grace.

Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that you-all He should exalt in due time, the entire anxiety of you-all having cast upon Him, because He cares for you-all.

This is the perfect picture of those who live in the true knowledge of God's grace, mercy, and peace. Notice that this is not spoken to individuals, but to a congregation. **“Be humbled”** is actually **“Be humbled you-all.” “Be humbled you-all, . . . that you-all He should exalt . . . the entire anxiety of you-all you-all having cast upon Him because He cares for you-all.”**

This is what we are experiencing right here and right now. We have congregated in the Name of the mighty God. We have congregated because we know that He cares for us. We have congregated in the humble faith that led us to kneel to confess our sins and to cling to God's promise of forgiveness, looking up to receive His absolution by which we have been lifted up again to stand before God in the righteousness of our Lord Jesus that has been poured over us in Baptism. We have congregated not as individuals, but as the body of Christ of which we have been made to be members together. The entire anxiety that looms over us on account of our sinfulness we have flung upon Him with a single voice. All of our sins have been confessed and cast upon Jesus, in whose name we besought and received God's forgiveness. We did this not as individuals, but as the communion of the saints. God raised us up as one to sing His praise and to confess the one true faith, again, not as individuals, but with the singular voice of the body of Christ. Now we are being lifted up by God through the preaching office so that we shall also come to the Table of our Lord where together we shall be fed the body of unity and the blood of life. This is what God desires for us and works for us because He cares for us.

II. BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT, BECAUSE

“Be sober you-all! Be vigilant you-all!” This is no longer a passive but an active imperative. In a moment we shall understand why St. Peter makes this an action on our part.

“Be sober you-all! Be vigilant you-all! Because the adversary of you-all, that devil, as a lion roaring walks around seeking what he may gulp.”

Take special note, first of all, that St. Peter is still speaking not to individuals but to the congregation. This is how we are to hear him and how we are to think and live. We are not being admonished to be sober and vigilant as individuals, but as a congregation. We are like sheep. We are easily distracted and frightened and scattered. Our safety, our strength, is not in ourselves, but in the one into whom we have been gathered. We are to be sober and vigilant as a

congregation so that we do not forget this. We are to be sober and vigilant as a congregation so that we do not begin to try to be strong on our own, but that we would rather stand firm in the means by which God's strength is poured out to us. While we are gathered to our Shepherd, while we steadfastly look to Him alone for our nourishment and protection, all that the devil can do is to prowl around the outskirts of the congregation, growling and roaring, trying to frighten us so that we become distracted and scatter. Then, when we stand as individuals according to our own puny faith, then the devil can come along and swallow us whole.

St. Peter speaks of him as the adversary of us all, that devil. He is the *antidikos*, the adversary of us all. St. Peter also calls him *diabolos*, slanderer or false accuser. *Antidikos* is a juridical or legal term. He is the one who falsely accuses us in court. This is his weapon against the saints. He marches about the outskirts, accusing the communion of the saints of false accusations, trying to distract us and confuse us and frighten us so that we are filled with anxiety about who we are and whether or not God's grace is truly sufficient. His tactic is to roar out with false accusations, such as *intolerant*, and *unloving* and *uncaring*, and *judgmental* and *arrogant* and *foolhardy*. He also roars against us with false accusations regarding our sins so that we look to our own works rather than to our baptism and to the Supper of forgiveness and life. He accuses us of not believing strongly enough and not being committed enough so that we forget that faith is God's work and we begin to try to believe according to our own reason and strength. Then we begin to look this way and that way and we are filled with doubts and fears. Soon we wander in the directions of our distractions and the devil comes along and swallows us up.

Against this St. Peter adjures us, **“Be sober you-all! Be vigilant you-all!”**

Yes, as a congregation we must be sober and vigilant, looking out for one another, making certain that no one sneaks in with false doctrine and practice, making certain that no one among us becomes deceived, making certain that no one among us forgets that the only reason that we gather as a congregation is to receive the means of grace together as God has ordained for our safety and healthy living. This is not something that we do for ourselves as individuals, but that we do together, as the body of Christ. This is what St. Paul adjures us in 1 Corinthians 11. Otherwise, some among us would fall asleep and be devoured by the devil. Love is continually sober and vigilant so that all of the members of the congregation are kept together by God's grace in the one true faith. Where such love rules, the devil has no opportunity to devour anyone. All that he can do is prowl around roaring his obscene and false accusations.

III. NOW THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

Now the God of all grace, who having called us into the everlasting glory of Him in Christ Jesus, insignificantly having suffered you-all, He wills to complete you-all, willing to stablish, willing to strengthen, willing to settle. To Him glory and dominion into the eons of eons. Amen.

The first phrase calls us together again in the understanding of Who God is and what our relationship to Him is. He is the one and only source of Grace. There is no grace that we can obtain for ourselves. St. Peter does not want us to forget that salvation is by grace, through faith, and that this is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. He reiterates that this is by His calling us in Christ Jesus. Here the office of Christ is placed before the name of salvation. For the name of salvation is meaningless unless we receive it through the office of Christ. God does not call us to believe in Jesus apart from the operation of the office of the keys. God does not call us to come to Him and to invite Him into our hearts. God does not call us to commit our lives to Jesus. No, God calls us in Christ Jesus. He calls us through the preaching of Christ crucified, who is poured

over us in Baptism and is poured out for us in the Cup of the New Testament in Christ's blood. Jesus is our Savior, but His salvation can be received only through His means of grace.

He has ordained these as the only means of His grace. He has done this for a reason. He desires to complete us as His body. He does not desire that we should seek to be complete as individuals, but as His body. He desires to establish us, so that we do not seek to establish ourselves. He desires to strengthen us, so that we do not seek to be strong by our own strength. He desires to settle us, so that we do not seek to be settled by our own efforts.

Why is He so desirous of this? Because we cannot do these for ourselves. When we seek to accomplish these things for ourselves, we no longer think and live as His Holy Communion. When we seek to be complete and to be established and to be strong and to be settled by our own efforts we cut ourselves off from the rest of His body and we no longer depend upon Him as the God of all grace. He wants us to know Him as our God, our loving God, our Father, our Savior, our Comforter, our Peace, our Hope, our Joy.

Therefore He has established for us His holy catholic Church on earth in which we commune with Him through His means of grace. In this Church He proves Himself to be the God of all grace, giving Himself to us and for us without limit, completing us and establishing us and strengthening us and settling us.

CONCLUSION

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Yes, I believe! Yes, you believe! We confess this together in connection with our baptism. We confess this as what God works in us. We confess this as those who have been humbled so as to see and to know the kingdom of God, into which God has incorporated us. We gather together under the mighty hand of God to receive from Him the grace that He freely bestows upon His saints. We gather together in the safety of the one true faith, which God preserves among us. We gather to receive the means of grace by which God removes all doubt concerning our incompleteness and our lack of commitment and our lack of strength and our unsettled nature. He calls us to Himself where He protects us from the false accusations of the devil, assuring us that Christ Jesus is our confidence. He comes to us as the God of all grace, leaving nothing whatsoever for us to do for ourselves. He calls us. He gathers us. He keeps us. 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.