

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 1, 381, 436, 313, 47

The INTROIT

(Ps.70:1-2)

P: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

C: make haste to help me, O Lord.

P: Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul.

C: Let them be turned backward and put to confusion that desire my hurt.

The COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God, of whose only gift it comes that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through Jesus Thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 29:18-19 (NKJV)

In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.

THE GRADUAL

(Ps.34:1-2;81:1)

P: I will bless the Lord at all times:

C: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

P: My soul shall make her boast in the Lord:

C: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: Sing aloud unto God, our Strength:

C: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Hallelujah!

The EPISTLE

2 Corinthians 3:4-11 (NKJV)

And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

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. Mark 7:31-37 (NKJV)

Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.”

Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

Isaiah 29:18-19

18) And shall hear in day that the deafs words of Scripture and from obscurity and from darkness (misery) eyes of blinds shall see (behold).

19) And shall add meeks (depressed ones) in Yahweh joy and needys (beggars) of Adam in Holy Israel shall rejoice (spin around).

Isaiah 29:18-19 — “In That Day: In Holy Israel”

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Isaiah 29:18-19 — “In That Day: In Holy Israel”

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

The sermon text is the Old Testament reading appointed for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity, Isaiah 29:18-19:

In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.

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

INTRODUCTION

I continue to be amazed regarding how much the Holy Spirit has built into the words of the Holy Scriptures. A person can study the Scriptures over and over and still find that the LORD has more treasure buried in His words that are recorded for us. What is even more amazing is to realize that the more that one truly hears and beholds the words of the Scriptures, the more that one hears and beholds the LORD. Moreover, simultaneously, the more that one hears and beholds the LORD, the more that one hears and beholds what is contained in the words of the Scriptures. This marvelous revelation is the work of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be forced by any cleverness of human reason and strength. Yet by grace, through faith, the Holy Spirit works this wondrous miracle for all who are truly in Christ Jesus, the LORD.

I. AND SHALL HEAR AND SHALL BEHOLD

And shall hear in day that the deafs words of Scripture, and from obscurity and from darkness (misery) eyes of blinds shall see (behold).

Truly, we are deaf ones regarding the words of the Scriptures. We are deaf to what these words declare. Before we can hear rightly, first our hearing must be restored.

Many jokes have been made regarding the hearing impaired. It seems that older people especially make jokes and have jokes made about the foibles that result from their impaired hearing capacities. But this does not happen only to older people, does it? We all have experienced times when what was said is not what we heard or perceived. Sometimes these misheard words really are quite humorous. Other times they can cause disastrous misunderstandings and even hurt feelings or worse.

The promise in the prophecy of today's text is that a day has been appointed when the impairment to our hearing, especially our impairment to hearing rightly the words of the Holy Scriptures, will be restored. The LORD has declared that a special day has been ordained when the words of Scripture will be heard by those who have been born deaf to the words of Scripture.

That day is today. That day is every day. That day began with the promise to the first two sinners that the consequences of the sin of the world would be borne by the Seed of Woman. The day of promise began when the LORD came to His fallen children to lift them up again by means of the Gospel. That day has been coming to mankind ever since. Every day since then the Gospel has been proclaimed by God's holy Church on earth. With Moses, the words were recorded in written form. With each prophet that the LORD raised up the words were expounded and recorded to new generations. Those words have been preserved and passed down even to us, with the fullness of these words revealed when the very Word of God became flesh and tabernacled in us.

Today that Word of God is being proclaimed again and we shall partake of Him in the Holy Supper. The Supper is itself the fullness of this proclamation, and by faith we receive and hear and behold the One whom the Holy Scriptures declare.

Truly, the deafs hear the words of Scripture and from obscurity and from darkness eyes of blinds behold. Yes, we are deaf and we do not hear the words of Scripture, but the Holy Spirit comes to us and washes us of our impairments both of hearing and of sight. For what we do not rightly hear we also do not rightly behold. We are surrounded in our lives in this world by all sorts of distractions and impairments to our ability both to hear and to behold the goodness of the LORD our God.

We attempt to hear and to see from the obscure perspective of darkness. Interestingly, the word for darkness also means misery. Truly we are miserable sinners. Sin has brought nothing but misery to the human race. Sin has obscured our perspective. Instead of knowing only the good that is in the image of God, mankind has chosen to become communicants of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God is good. But we cannot know His goodness on account of being born into sin. By our own powers of reason we cannot behold His goodness. We are far too busy trying to cope with all of the miseries that we encounter in our lives. Our lives and our hearts and our spirits are not filled with God's goodness, but rather, with pain of every description. Our bodies experience misery even from our conception. From the first moment of our being we are surrounded by darkness and obscurity. We get glimpses of light, but they are fleeting and incomplete.

But when we meet Jesus along the road, like Saul on the road to Damascus, suddenly we behold the light of God's goodness and mercy. When our hearing of the Scriptures is a hearing of the pure Gospel and when our perception is a beholding of the body of Christ, truly from our obscurity and darkness we behold the image of God restored to us. Then, in that day, we hear the words of the Scriptures as fresh and new and we behold the Life that lifts us out of the darkness of our misery.

II. THE HUMBLE AND THE POOR SHALL REJOICE

And shall add meeks (depressed ones) in Yahweh joy and needys (beggars) of Adam in Holy Israel shall rejoice (spin around).

Surely you noticed that the word order of the Hebrew text is quite different from our English translations. It can be very hard to translate accurately and fully what is said in a language not our own. Sometimes it cannot be translated but must be expounded.

Two descriptions of mankind are given. First the meeks or the depressed ones. The meek ones or the ones who have been depressed shall add joy to their lives. Isn't this a very

powerful description of what depressed people seek for themselves? When people have been pressed down by their inability to see any real hope anymore, when people have been pressed down by the struggles of daily living, when friends and family and doctors and lawyers and government agencies have failed to help with the burdens that press people down, they truly know nothing but depression. They are brought low in their hearts and minds and bodies and seek to be lifted up by even a glimpse of some hope of happiness.

Secondly, our text addresses the needys or beggars of Adam. Our texts translate this as the poor among men. But the prophecy actually takes us back to the origin of our neediness. In the beginning God created Man in His own image, in the fullness of the blessedness that God intended for us. In the beginning God provided Man with all that would ever be needed. There was no lack of anything for Adam and for the sons of Adam who would be born into this beautiful cosmos. Adam did not need clothes, for the world was perfectly designed for an everlasting life of comfort and joy. Adam did not need to plant or to butcher, for all of the herbs and seed bearing plants and trees produced in abundance. But when Woman was tempted by the devil and when Adam listened to his wife rather than harkening unto the words that the LORD had declared and had inscribed in Adam's heart and mind and soul, suddenly the day of decision theology was born and the sons of Adam have been enslaved by their choices ever since.

Now, instead of knowing the LORD and His goodness, now the sons of Adam imagine that they must choose to know and to follow the LORD. Now the sons of Adam imagine that they must choose between good and evil, for now they know good only from the perspective of evil. Now the sons of Adam decide for themselves that they must choose the lesser of two evils because they only know good in association with evil.

God created us without any need for choices. All that He created us to know was good. But because we choose for ourselves, we are surrounded with decisions. Now we feel desperation on account of our perceived need to choose what is good for ourselves.

But the promise of our text is that there really is no need to choose. For the LORD truly does see our need, and even from eternity, He has provided. What we need to realize is that our sense of need, our sense of desperation, is caused only by our lack of faith. We imagine that we have needs because we do not trust God's goodness. We worry about where our food will come from and where we will find shelter because we imagine that these are things that we must provide for ourselves rather than acknowledging that all good things are from God who freely bestows all good things upon His children. And so, because we return to our obscurity and miserable darkness we do not hear the words of Scripture and we do not behold what God has restored to us in Christ. Thus we truly are beggarly sons of Adam and not sons of God, at least not according to our own sinful nature and our own reason and strength.

III. IN YAHWEH: IN HOLY ISRAEL

So hear again the words of today's prophetic words of Scripture.

And shall hear in day that the deafs words of Scripture, and from obscurity and from darkness (misery) eyes of blinds shall see (behold).

And shall add meeks (depressed ones) in Yahweh joy and needys (beggars) of Adam in Holy Israel shall rejoice (spin around).

The answer to our problem is openly declared in this wonderful prophecy. The answer is not in what we choose for ourselves. The answer is not in what we strive to understand or to

hear or to behold. The answer is not in anything in us whatsoever.

The answer is in Yahweh. The answer is in Holy Israel. This is what the LORD declares. This is what God promises from His own holiness and goodness and mercy and love.

The Hebrew word order is a bit tricky to our ears, but listen to what is declared. **“And shall add meeks in Yahweh joy and beggars of Adam in Holy Israel shall spin around.”**

Have you ever watched a carefree little child spinning around. Perhaps the child has a little bottle of soap water and a little hoop for making bubbles. Perhaps the child has a little puppy or kitty or doll or toy. Perhaps the child has hold of nothing at all but simply spins around and around, laughing and singing and giggling, rejoicing in the lack of care that little children who know that they are loved and provided for express.

This is what the LORD declares to us in this wonderful prophecy. This is what the LORD declares concerning all who are brought to the knowledge of meekness in Yahweh and in the blessings of Holy Israel. When life brings us to our knees so that we confess our sins and our miserable sinful condition, in Yahweh, in the LORD, we are lifted up by His holy absolution. As we hear His pronouncement of forgiveness, as we hear that we are restored to the holiness of life as His beloved sons, no longer do we live as beggars of Adam, for we live in Christ, who is Holy Israel. By Baptism we are incorporated into Christ in His body and we live in the fullness of God’s goodness in connection with Him in His Holy Communion. And so we come forward, by His gracious invitation and command, and we eat His body and drink His blood and we are renewed in His goodness again as we partake of the Holy Eucharist, the Supper of Thanksgiving. And so in Holy Israel, that is, in the Holy Communion of Christ, we spin around like carefree children of our Heavenly Father, rejoicing in His goodness and mercy which endure forever.

CONCLUSION

Is it not amazing to hear the words of Scripture and to behold what God gives to us fresh and new as we look to Christ and behold what the LORD desires for us? Truly this is beyond what we can discover or choose for ourselves. Yet God has declared it and so we may believe it. Even this is something that God does for us. He comes to us and works this faith within us so that we believe the unbelievable and hear what only God’s regenerated children can hear and behold what only those who are in Him can behold. This is the day in which God has promised to work this for you. This is the day in which God’s blessings are yours in Christ Jesus. In the faith that He gives to you, step forward and receive His goodness and add to the joy that is in Yahweh and in Holy Israel spin around to your heart’s delight. 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.