

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 243, 240, 372, 53

The INTROIT

(Ps.27:1-3)

P: The Lord is my Light and my Salvation;

C: whom shall I fear?

P: The Lord is the Strength of my life;

C: of whom shall I be afraid?

P: When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me;

C: they stumbled and fell.

P: Though an host should encamp against me;

C: my heart shall not fear.

The COLLECT

Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance that Thy church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness; 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

Isaiah 58:6-12

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

The GRADUAL

(Ps.79:9,10; 9:4,9)

P: Forgive our sins, O Lord: lest the heathen say, Where is their God?

**C: Help us, O God of our salvation: and for the glory of Thy name deliver us.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

P: O God, Thou sittest in the throne, judging right:

C: be a Refuge for the oppressed in times of trouble. Hallelujah!

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

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 6:36-42

Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

And He spoke a parable to them: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye."

Romans 8:18-23 — "Toward the About to Be Glory to Be Revealed into Us"

INTRODUCTION

- I. FOR I RECKON AS NOT WORTHY THE SUFFERINGS OF THE NOW TIME
- II. TOWARD THE ABOUT TO BE GLORY TO BE REVEALED INTO US
- III. FOR THE AWAY-HEAD OF THE CREATION THE REVELATION OF THE SONS OF GOD AWAY-AWAITS

CONCLUSION

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Romans 8:18-23 — “Toward the About to Be Glory to Be Revealed into Us”

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

The Epistle reading for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity is Romans 8:18-23:

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

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

INTRODUCTION

How amazing is the Word of God. He comes to us and works in us and for us what we cannot see. He sends His Spirit to us to teach us to wait for that which He has purchased for us, to perceive what cannot yet be seen. He Himself eagerly awaits the day of the revelation of all that He has accomplished for us, eagerly ruling over all things until that day of the redemption of our body.

I. FOR I RECKON AS NOT WORTHY THE SUFFERINGS OF THE NOW TIME

Our text begins with St. Paul’s declaration: **“For I reckon as not worthy the sufferings of the now time.”**

This statement is enormous. This is a statement of the fullness of the Word of God. I wonder just how many people realize how much of the Word of God the Holy Spirit proclaims in this phrase!

Here the dear apostle shows us our folly. St. Paul was made to see the extent of his own foolishness when the Word of God came to Him on the road to Damascus. As an apostle, St. Paul suffered many things and learned even more fully the foolishness of the reckoning of sinful man.

Our hearts moan and groan about the trials that we endure. But this is because we do not realize the purpose of our sufferings. Worse, we do not even want to consider the purpose of our sufferings, for then we would have no reason or excuse remaining for our complaining. Rather, as St. Paul admonishes the saints in Philippi, we would rejoice in the LORD always! Nothing would ever steal away the joy that has been poured over us to cover our whole lives in Baptism.

No, we don't want to rejoice in the LORD. We prefer to wallow in our self-pity. We prefer to pile up our sufferings and give them what we imagine to be a due accounting. Oh how badly we suffer in this world!

To this the dear apostle says: **“For I reckon as not worthy the sufferings of the now time.”**

Not worthy? As compared to what? The answer is not what people commonly expect. The answer is not what people commonly twist this passage to say. For the moment, we will stay with this first part of verse 18 and not look to the second half of the verse. Let us simply give our attention to these words: **“For I reckon as not worthy the sufferings of the now time.”**

The sufferings of the now time, the sufferings that we reckon as so great and so worthy of attention and complaint, the sufferings that we cry out under as though they were worthy of notice in the Highest, St. Paul says that he reckons as not worthy. Why?

What sufferings are worthy of our attention? What sufferings should we be reckoning as worthy to raise up to the Judge of all? What sufferings are worthy of God's attention so as to move Him to act toward us mercifully and graciously?

Oh, My! Oh, Yes! St. Paul is directing us to the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. St. Paul is directing us to beseech God to be merciful to us poor miserable sinners purely for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ!

Truly, when we remember our Lord Jesus Christ and what He suffered in our place and for our sake, truly all of our sufferings we will reckon as not worthy. Surely we will realize that all of our sufferings are as we pray in the General Prayer, to be received and acknowledged as God's fatherly will. Yes! The sufferings of the now time are what God has appointed to all of the creation for the sake of man's salvation. The sufferings that we now endure are designed by God to display to us a tiny sampling of what we choose for ourselves according to our own reason and strength. Surely our sufferings are nothing compared to what our Lord Jesus suffered in our place. Surely our sufferings are nothing compared to what we deserve and would surely receive everlastingly if not for the meritorious suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely, the present sufferings are only for the sake of making us aware of our inability to believe in Jesus Christ our Lord or to come to Him, so that we will receive with glad hearts the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives through the means of grace.

Amazingly, even as Christians, we still moan and groan. God has designed that as we grow older and ordinarily nearer our end of days, that our bodies should call our attention more and more to the fact that we need God's grace and forgiveness. But rather than turning to Him, rather than giving thanks to God for Jesus, who comes to us in our baptism and in the Holy Supper, rather, we complain against God as the ancient people of Israel did. But thanks be to God that the sufferings of our Lord Jesus are worthy even to cover over this idolatry and to restore us to true faith and everlasting life!

II. TOWARD THE ABOUT TO BE GLORY TO BE REVEALED INTO US

For I reckon as not worthy the sufferings of the now time toward the about to be glory to be revealed into us.

Now we embrace the fuller meaning of that to which St. Paul directs our thoughts in the second half of verse 18. When we join him in the proper perspective regarding the now time and the suffering of the now time, when we subject our suffering of the present to the everlasting sufferings that our Lord Jesus carried for us and vanquished for us everlastingly, then we are free to look beyond the now to what awaits us. Then our hearts and minds and spirits are not weighed down by the anxieties of this present evil age, for our hearts and minds are set on the things above, where our citizenship is.

Regarding this wonderful revelation St. Paul does not use the word for *in*, but the word for *into*. This revelation or uncovering is not what we are inclined to imagine. It is really the exact opposite of what our sinful hearts make of it. This revelation is not of what is *in* us, but of what God is putting *into* us. This is not what we possess according to our own nature or according to our own selves or according even to our own faith. No. For according to these things we find nothing but the doubt of sin. We always find ourselves to have nothing within us except the stinking and rotting corruption of our sinful nature.

No, what is to be revealed is to be revealed *INTO* us. The revelation is not of ourselves, but of Jesus. This revelation is poured over us and into us our baptism. This revelation is fed to us in the body of Christ and again renewed in us through the drinking of the blood of Christ. This revelation must be continually renewed in us in this present time through the means of grace. But at the Last Day, this revelation will be revealed into us once and for all. All the world will see what the Lord of Glory reveals into us, even above our own expectations. The glory that He will reveal into us will be beyond anything that we are able even to imagine. He will reveal into us the fullness of His glory, the glory of His everlasting communion, the glory of perfection and holiness and purity of love and peace. When He comes at the Last Day in the final judgment by which He will judge us according to the worthiness of His own sacrificial sufferings and death, then will be revealed into us the fullness of what He has worked for us. For now we can see only into the glass dimly, but then face to face. Then we shall see ourselves and know ourselves as only He can know us presently. Truly this will be a day of magnificent glory revealed into us.

III. FOR THE AWAY-HEAD OF THE CREATION THE REVELATION OF THE SONS OF GOD AWAY-AWAITS

For I reckon as not worthy the sufferings of the now time toward the about to be glory to be revealed into us. For the away-head of the creation the revelation of the sons of God away-waits.

Our translations generally fall short in this passage of Holy Scriptures. Our King James Version says: “**For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.**” But what is the earnest expectation of the creature or creation? The word that St. Paul uses is literally *the away-head*. There are other words for expectation, but St. Paul chose this one. Why? As always, the only preaching that St. Paul knows is the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

For the away-head of the creation the revelation of the sons of God away-waits.

Jesus ascended to the right hand of God for a reason. He ascended in order to send the Holy Spirit to keep us in Him while He rules over all on our behalf. At the right hand of power, having carried our flesh into which He was born from above by the power of the Holy Spirit,

Jesus now fills all things both with His Godhead and with His humanity. Jesus is now ruling as the God-Man over all things, making certain that nothing can prevail against His little Church on earth, not even the gates of hell.

He has gone away from us for this reason. He has gone away from us so that we would know beyond any doubt that our place in heaven is already prepared for us. He has gone away from us so as to be ever present for us through the preaching of the Word and through the blessed Sacraments.

He is the away-head of the creation and He away-waits the revelation of the sons of God whom He will return to reveal to one and all at the Last Day. And this is the reason that we do not lose hope in this current time. We know that He is eagerly awaiting the day when He shall come to reveal us to those who have mocked us and ridiculed us and persecuted us. He is eagerly awaiting that day when the Gospel shall have reached all of His elect and the last child of God shall have been brought safely into His Holy Communion so that He may come with the thunderous voice of the archangel to reveal the sons of God everlastingly to all.

Because of this promise, we also eagerly await, as those who have received the firstfruits of the Spirit. Yes, we, too, groan under the current sufferings, continually called to look upon Jesus and His sufferings as our one and only source of comfort and hope. We, too, eagerly await the return of our Lord Jesus in the fullness of His glory when He shall take us unto Himself and into the glory of His everlasting kingdom. Yes, we await the day when the fullness of the benefits of our adoption shall be revealed into us, so that even our body shall know the redemption that we now know in our spirit.

Notice the singularity of the body, our *body*, not our *bodies*. For sin and the curse of sin came upon the entire creation through the sin of the one man. Likewise, the sin and the curse of sin of the entire creation was carried by the one man on the cross. He has one body on earth, into which we all are made one through Baptism. In Christ Jesus we are not many bodies, but one body together, in one true faith, through the one Baptism, in the one true Church. We are brought into His holy Communion together as one body and we wait as one body for the redemption of our body.

CONCLUSION

Is this not a glorious revelation regarding our God? Our God has taken into Himself our flesh and blood. He has come to redeem us and He suffered all things in the flesh on our behalf. He has fulfilled our redemption in His own body. Through Baptism He has incorporated us into His body, to receive from Him His holiness in our body. He sits at the throne of glory and power and judgment, ruling on our behalf. He is waiting, eagerly waiting, yet also patiently waiting. He is waiting until what He has fulfilled in His own body on the cross shall be administered to all who shall be brought into the kingdom through faith. He is waiting for that glorious day so that He may raise the dead and separate the wicked from the righteous by faith. He is waiting to bring His redeemed into the everlasting glory that He has prepared for us. He is waiting, and so we also wait, reckoning His sufferings as the ones that are worthy, trusting in the merit of His sufferings and death, trusting that He shall indeed come to reveal into us the glory of His grace forevermore. 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.