

Sermon - 09/28/2024 - 19th Week After Pentecost

Sermon Text: James 5:13-20

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

“CONFESS YOUR SINS TO ONE ANOTHER” (Jm.5:16)

If you have ever considered what a life of faith looks like, then you may have noticed Abraham, the father of the faithful. He trusted God to provide and care for him so much that he left his home and went to a place that he had never been before. He did not know what the land would be like, and he did not know the struggles he would encounter along the way. And He did encounter many struggles. There was a famine so he went to Egypt; he and his wife Sarah couldn't have children, but God had promised that offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore would come from Abraham. In their old age, Abraham and Sarah had a son Isaac, and God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son; killing him by his own hand. Abraham believed God and trusted in him fully to provide a sacrifice in the place of his son. Yet, the Scriptures that have been given to us by God allowed us to get a glimpse of Abraham as he raised up the knife over the son that God promised to Abraham. So Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. The sacrifice of Isaac allows us to peer into

the heavenly realm and see what God the Father did for us by sending His only begotten Son to die at the hands of sinful men.

Now, because of that only begotten Son, the life of a Christian is utterly changed. On account of Christ who died on the cross for the forgiveness of all the sins in the whole world, the wrath of God against sin is completely ended. Now, God still has wrath, but the wrath that remains is reserved for those who do not believe in the Son who died for all. Because of Christ and the shedding of His innocent and precious blood, we know for certain that we have forgiveness of all our sin. Therefore, we can live as a Baptized child of God knowing that the grace of God covers us when we repent of our sins. Sometimes, we are like David who needs the prophet Jonathan to tell him his sin. Sometimes, we are like the people of Israel who needed to listen to the prophets rather than to kill the prophets. In our sin filled minds, we still desire to say that we are not really that bad. That the things we do against our family or those closest to us are really deserved and do not even count as sinful. We explain away and ignore and completely refuse to do anything differently.

In Luther's Small Catechism, we describe confession of sins as repentance where we not only turn from our sinful ways, but we also try to do

better. According to faith, we try to do better each and every day. In our epistle reading James helps us along the way of trying to do better and live a Christian life. James gives a bit of direction on what the Christian does when he writes, **“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” (Jm. 5:13-14)** So whether suffering, cheerful, or sick the life of the Christian has a response of faith. When suffering, we pray like David who was being hunted in the desert by Saul that we are delivered from our enemies. Likewise, when we are cheerful we should sing praises. We still do this often when someone has a birthday and we sing for them before we blow out the candles. Yet, do we sing hymns or praises to the Lord when we are cheerful with the life that God our Father has given to us? And when you are sick do you call for the pastor of your church so that he may pray for you and anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord. Pastors are placed in churches to serve the people there. Our business is for you and for your benefit. Do not think that we are too busy to come visit you when you are sick. It is also a good thing to ask your pastor to pray with you when you are physically ailing. Do not think that physical sickness and

spiritual sickness are so far removed from one another. Nor is it beneath God Himself to heal your sickness, for He made all things as the Creator and sustainer of all life. Then James speaks about having the pastor anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord. Anointing with oil is a baptismal reality. Our Lord is called Jesus the Christ. And Christ means anointed one. John the Baptist from the Jordan River pointed at Jesus and said, **“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”** Jesus went down into that very water and was baptized by John and the Spirit of God descended and rested on Jesus marking Him as the anointed one by the Spirit of God. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit of God. So we can be anointed to remember our Baptism where we were joined with Christ and our souls were sealed with Him and our names were written in the book of life. **“...he who overcomes will be dressed in white. And I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and His angels.” (Rev. 3:5)**

Today we celebrate Saint Michael and all Angels. We remember In Revelation 12 that Michael and the angels of heaven fought against the dragon who is Satan and all the angels with him. The dragon was defeated and thrown out of heaven so that Jesus notes in Luke 10:18 say, **“I saw Satan**

fall like lightning.” So Satan has been defeated and the voice from the throne of heaven spoke in Revelation 12 saying, **“Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death...”**

The accuser is defeated, the victory over sin, death, and the devil is won, so I will circle back to the confession of sins in James. **“...the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”** (Jm 5:15-16) Prayer has great power, for we believe that our Father in heaven hears our prayers and answers according to His will for us. Anytime we pray, our Father hears our prayers. Anytime we confess our sins to God our Father, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Yet, we should not only confess our sins to God, but James notes that we should confess our sins to one another and then also pray for

one another. For it is against those closest to us that we sin each day. So also confess your sin to each other and also pray for each other as our Lord taught us in the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." So confess to one another, forgive one another and pray for one another. In all things, respond like a child of God believing in Christ and building up the fellowship of the saints. Join together then as often as you can to build one another up and say that through this body and blood we are reconciled to one another as we faithfully discern the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we are all part of that same body of Christ, members in Him through Baptism of the one Holy Christian Church. So join together and partake of the food of forgiveness. Come to this table and know that you are reconciled with God. Believe in Him and pray at all times knowing that He hears you and answers your prayers. **Amen.**

Now may the peace which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.