

Sermon - 9/14/2024

Text: Mark 9:14-29

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

Amen.

LISTEN TO THE TEACHER AND SPEAK HIS PRAISES

Our God and Father is the Creator of all the world. He is not like a clockmaker who sets the pendulums swinging and then has nothing more to do with His creation. Instead, our God is called the Creator because, in Him and through Him, new life is constantly being made and existing life is constantly being sustained. If our God were to step aside and watch like a clockmaker, our eyes could hardly take it in. Where our God is, there is also new life.

This morning, we held the funeral of Art Joens. We mourn his loss collectively as fellow brothers and sisters at Trinity in Manilla. We join in a bittersweet moment as it is in every death. For we cannot often comprehend the loss of the relationship we once had. We cannot easily forget the way someone looked when they were happy. We cannot grasp their hand in a warm embrace and we cannot hear their voice any longer though we remember the things they used to say. Yet, these too may fade.

Death is an enemy and it is considered the power of the devil. Yet, Hebrews 2:14-17 declare, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." So Christ our Lord took the power of death away from the devil by His own glorious death and resurrection on the 3rd Day.

In the last 3 weeks, there have been instances of spiritual warfare in our readings, and in that span of time, I have attempted to say that there is no competition between our God in Christ Jesus and the spiritual forces of evil. Further, I would like to include that nothing in all of Creation is now able to separate you from that perfect plan of God to bring salvation to His people because of what Christ has done as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

However, don't listen to my words. Instead, listen to the words of Romans 8 where the question is asked whether we might be separated from the love of God by tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword. Now listen to this, Paul writes to the Romans, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Truly nothing may separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Last week, we heard of the Syrophenician woman who pleaded that her daughter be healed of an unclean spirit. Christ said that you do not take the bread from the children and give it to the dogs. The woman replied that even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. These crumbs became the full loaf when Christ our Lord held the feeding of the 4000 in Gentile lands showing the Kingdom of God to be open for all who believe and are thus called children of Abraham.

Then being transfigured before Peter, James, and John. Our Lord became abundantly white and spoke with Moses and Elijah. Then, the glory cloud of God overshadowed them and a voice spoke again from the

cloud as it did at the Baptism of Jesus saying, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him." So the words of Christ become an eternal proclamation to which God Himself declares that we should listen to Him. For, those who listen will receive the words of Christ our Lord and believe. Those who listen will speak the words that they hear.

When, a child is born it does not yet know how to speak, yet through listening they learn the language of their parents and speak those words. Similarly, all of us who are children of God should listen to the words of Jesus and begin to speak just like Isaiah says, "The Lord has given me the tongue of those who are taught..." So our Lord both creates our whole bodies, He redeems them by His death and resurrection. He also teaches us, like newborn children, how to speak.

In our Gospel reading this evening, there is yet another demon possessed boy. The evil spirit causes the boy to be deaf and mute. It causes him to be something that he was not created to be. So, anyone who does not believe in our Lord sets himself in a similar place; not hearing God's Word as children and not speaking His praises in song and hymn and spiritual song.

So we are all born apart from God by sin, yet through the working of Christ and by Baptism through water and the word all unclean spirits are driven out of you just as the boy in Gospel lesson had the evil spirit driven out of him. Then Mark recounts for us, "e..after crying out and convulsing him terribly, [the evil spirit] came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose." So by Baptism, we are ushered from death to life. Our Lord takes us by the hand and lifts us up from the water thus creating anew a life of innocence and righteousness before God. Likewise our Lord will reach His hand down into your grave when He comes again on the last day and He will take you by your lifeless hand and lift you up to new and eternal life.

So with a promise like this, as children of God, we know that the words of the letter of James to the church is for us also. That we do not speak like an unclean spirit speaks. We do not let any foul word flow from our mouth like salt water. Instead, we should be one guard that from our mouths flow the words that our Father in heaven has told us to listen to Him. Let those words flow from your mouth on every occasion. Let the words of a prayer flow like a stream before God in heaven. Then, as His children, you shall be raised to new life even when death may come your way. Amen.

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